

# Legislative Council

Thursday, 13 September 1990

THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon J.M. Brown) took the Chair at 2.30 pm, and read prayers.

## URGENCY MOTION - "DAILY NEWS"

*"The West Australian" Purchase Legislation*

THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I have received the following letter -

Hon. J.M. Brown, MLC  
Deputy President of the Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Deputy President

At the time provided by Standing Order 63, it is my intention to move that at today's sitting: that the House, at its rising, adjourn until 11.00 am, Saturday, 29 September, 1990, in order to discuss the following matter.

"That this House support in principle, legislation to allow the purchase of the "Daily News" by "The West Australian".

Yours sincerely

Hon. E.K. Hallahan, MLC  
Deputy Leader of the Government  
in the Legislative Council

The mover of this motion will require the support of four members.

[At least four members rose in their places.]

HON KAY HALLAHAN (East Metropolitan - Deputy Leader of the House) [2.36 pm]: I move -

That the House at its rising adjourn until 11.00 am, Saturday, 29 September.

When Hon Phillip Pandal moved a motion in this House two days ago expressing concern over the imminent closure of the *Daily News* I indicated that the Government shared that concern. At that time, neither Hon Phillip Pandal nor the Government was in a position to prevent that closure. However, there was agreement that the Government should attempt to do everything possible to assist in overcoming the problem caused by the Trade Practices Commission's decision which has resulted in the closure of the *Daily News*.

The Government immediately sought legal advice on the matter. The advice received leads the Government to believe that an Act of the Parliament could be passed to overcome the effect of the TPC's decision. The Government is aware that because of the parties that would be involved in the purchase proceeding some questions might arise as to whether the legislation would result in the Government's becoming involved once again in commercial transactions. That would be inconsistent with the Government's clear position on that matter. Therefore, it is essential that I stress two matters: Firstly, there is no question of any financial support by the Government. Secondly, the Government makes it clear that it will not proceed with this proposal without the unqualified support of the Opposition parties in both Houses. Because the legislation is not yet available the motion before the House has been drafted to express support in principle for the proposed legislation that would allow the purchase of the *Daily News* by West Australian Newspapers Ltd to proceed. The only objective of the legislation would be to overcome the TPC's decision.

Hon Max Evans: What legislation will be amended?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: I do not have that with me.

Hon Max Evans: Until we know what legislation is to be amended there is no point in discussing it. Will it be the Dog Act or new legislation?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: It may well have to be an Act standing on its own.

Hon Max Evans: That is not amending legislation; it is new legislation. What are you talking about?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: We are talking about -

Several members interjected.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: Members, please may I continue?

Several members interjected.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: May I have some attention to this? This is a serious matter. The motion says that this House supports in principle legislation - whether that is legislation standing alone, a Bill standing alone or amending legislation -

Hon Max Evans: We do not know.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: Members need to be clear that we want to overcome the decision of the Trade Practices Commission. That is really what we need to know.

Hon Max Evans: Surely the Attorney General can tell us what will happen? We must know at this stage what will happen.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon J.M. Brown): Order! This is an urgency motion. Under Standing Order No 63, I cannot see any value in members repeating a question which the Minister, in her mind, has answered. Members will have an opportunity to debate this question within the time limits which the House allows. I would like the Minister to proceed without continued interruption.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: I should make it clear to members that the Government will not proceed any further with this proposed legislation unless it receives an indication of support in principle. If the Opposition parties find it possible to support the legislation in principle, and clearly and explicitly state that, we will explore the means by which we can achieve our objective legislatively. When the Bill is introduced members will be able to examine it. We need on the record at least an indication of support in principle. The draft is not available today to any member on either side of the House, but it is a matter on which we have been led to believe the Parliament can legislate in order to overcome the decision of the Trade Practices Commission. The Government will not proceed to explore how most effectively to do that if there is not bipartisan or tripartisan support for that action.

Hon P.G. Pental: You know our feelings generally. We are nervous about saying something about legislation before it is even drafted.

Hon J.M. Berinson: You are not being asked to commit yourself to the precise legislation. Of course it will be up for further consideration.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: We would need a very explicit indication of support in principle. I am not asking for more than that. Members opposite surely understand why we need that.

Hon Mark Nevill: They might have second thoughts.

Hon P.G. Pental: You are doing quite a good job so far.

Hon Tom Stephens: I think you have caught them out.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: I do not need to elaborate on the reasons for considering this action. Two days ago speakers in this House expressed their concerns for the newspaper's closing - we had seen the last edition of the paper and the staff were being advised that their positions were being terminated - and during that debate I was able to make certain information available to the House. There was the question of the jobs for 150 permanent staff, 40 to 50 people on casual staff, about 40 people in the print division of Western Australian Newspapers, and the contractors who would be severely affected. I think Hon Phillip Pental read the fax - I received it, and I presume other members also received it - from the person who has an air contract in the north west. Many other contractors were involved in the distribution of the paper, including those who distributed it individually on the street - those news boys and news girls, news men and news women.

Hon P.G. Pental: News people.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: The news distribution people. We have canvassed those concerns very clearly. We also canvassed the question of removing another source of information to the community; another medium which, in my view, is so important in a society such as ours.

Another point which the Government wants to make clear is that there is no question of intending to favour one company over another. We have proposed this intervention only because of the absence of any realistic alternative offer. Our concern is to keep an important community facility available, and in particular to overcome the serious loss of jobs which the closure has now led to. The Government will proceed with the proposed legislation only with the written assurance by *The West Australian* that if the purchase does proceed the *Daily News* will continue to operate and the staff of the *Daily News* will be re-employed.

In view of the interjections I have received, it is even more important that I should emphasise the fact that there is no question of the Government's approaching this with anything other than a belief that the community as a whole would benefit from the proposed legislation, and that the community as a whole would support it. I therefore reiterate, for the benefit of members opposite and for the information of the community at large, that there is no question of Government financial support; that all-party support in both Houses is essential; and that a written undertaking from *The West Australian* giving the assurance I have asked for must be forthcoming. Without an explicit indication from the Liberal Party and the National Party of their very clear support for this move we will not proceed. I therefore request the members representing those two parties in our House to indicate their positions quite explicitly on this Government proposal.

HON GEORGE CASH (North Metropolitan - Leader of the Opposition) [2.47 pm]: Firstly, I make it very clear to the House and to the community in general that we as a Liberal Party, and indeed as an Opposition, confirm our support for the staff at the *Daily News*, and also our concern for the plight of the *Daily News*. It is fair to say that our support was clearly indicated on Tuesday of this week by way of an urgency motion moved by Hon Phillip Pendal one or two minutes after Parliament commenced.

Hon Kay Hallahan: Let us judge the substance of your concern today.

Hon GEORGE CASH: At the first available opportunity a member of our party, Hon Phillip Pendal, moved a motion in support of the plight faced by the *Daily News*. I confirm our support for the staff and our concern for the plight of that newspaper.

For the Minister to come in here and demand unqualified and unconditional support for legislation which we have not even seen, and which the Minister admits has not yet been drafted, is absolutely presumptuous.

Hon Kay Hallahan: We are not asking for that.

Hon GEORGE CASH: It is presumptuous in the extreme for the Minister to demand that.

Hon Kay Hallahan: We are not asking for what you have just said. Read the motion again.

Hon GEORGE CASH: I am going on what the Minister said. She said she would not proceed unless she received the unconditional and unqualified support of both Opposition parties.

Hon Kay Hallahan: In principle.

Hon GEORGE CASH: In my opinion, to use those words is presumptuous of the Minister.

Hon Kay Hallahan: The legislation would have only one objective.

Hon GEORGE CASH: Before the Opposition gives unequivocal and unconditional support for such legislation, firstly, an indication should be given of the conditions provided by that legislation; secondly, the Opposition wants access to the legal advice received by the Government on this matter. We want to know whether that legal advice contains any qualifications or comments of value not only to the Opposition but also to the community in general. We need to sight the legislation so that we can be clear in our own minds that no commitment of taxpayers' funds is made, and that the situation will not represent a Rothwells-style decision made in a hasty manner.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon GEORGE CASH: As much as members opposite may react to that comment, the State of Western Australia has been caught once by the Government with a Rothwells-style rescue. We do not support that sort of deal; we want to sight the legislation to ensure that it is not designed to be a Rothwells-style rescue.

Hon Kay Hallahan: The Opposition will see the legislation.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Nothing in the motion commits the Opposition to that legislation until it is sighted.

Hon GEORGE CASH: Talking about a Rothwells-style rescue, Hon J.M. Berinson would be the last person from whom I would want advice.

Hon J.M. Berinson: That is a smart alec comment but it has nothing to do with the motion.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon J.M. Brown): Order! I have endeavoured to allow the Minister to move her motion and respond to the questions put to her. I wish to give the opportunity also to the Leader of the Opposition to make his comments so that ultimately he can receive a reply. The Leader of the Opposition needs no help from anyone else.

Hon GEORGE CASH: I stress the need for all members of this House to be properly and adequately briefed on the proposal outlined by the Government. Obviously, from the Minister's comments, she is grossly unsure about the contents of the legislation. That causes me to question the Government's motives in this regard. We do not require the whole day to study our position on the plight of the *Daily News* and its staff.

Hon B.L. Jones: Words are cheap.

Hon GEORGE CASH: Hon B.L. Jones talks about words being cheap, and she would know all about that.

Hon B.L. Jones: Your words are very cheap.

Hon P.G. Pental: Your words have cost us \$800 million.

Hon GEORGE CASH: Western Australia needs a second daily newspaper; we recognise the plight of the *Daily News*. However, the Government should come clean and produce the legislation and all the advice that has been tendered to it. In that way this House can make a reasoned and responsible decision in an attempt to assist the community - particularly in the metropolitan area but also across the State - and to ensure that a second newspaper is maintained.

Hon P.G. Pental: Hear, hear!

HON E.J. CHARLTON (Agricultural) [2.54 pm]: The position of the National Party on this matter has been well stated during debate on a recent motion introduced by Hon P.G. Pental. It is obvious to everyone in this place that no-one wishes to witness the demise of the second newspaper in this State.

Now is not the time for considering such a motion because we do not have a position to debate. The motion is not about legislation; that matter will be debated if and when legislation is introduced. One can only talk about such legislation in a hypothetical way. The Government would be well advised to consider the events outside this place rather than introducing such a motion. Members who were outside this place a few moments ago would realise that the perception in the community is that the Government is not genuine when it predicts that certain things will happen without first providing legislation to back up such statements.

I apply those comments to other legislation with which we have dealt this year such as that relating to the tax on tobacco. We have been told that legislation will be introduced in that regard.

The matter under debate is very important; we all recognise that. We all desire positive action by way of assistance to the *Daily News* because, as I have said on previous occasions, not only will 200 people lose their jobs but also the impact of the demise of the *Daily News* will be felt in other areas. People in both the public and private sectors will lose jobs for many reasons, not the least of which is the economic situation of Western Australia.

The National Party supports the need for a second newspaper in this State; however, legislation should be introduced as soon as possible.

HON KAY HALLAHAN (East Metropolitan - Deputy Leader of the House) [2.56 pm]: I am very disappointed with the response from the two Opposition parties in this House.

Hon P.G. Pental: For their support for the *Daily News*?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: No. The support is superficial. The Government is not seeking support for legislation. I reiterate we are seeking support in principle. I have already made the point that the one objective of the legislation would be to overcome the decision of the Trade Practices Commission; I cannot emphasise that point strongly enough.

Hon Barry House: We hear 7 000 people are outside shouting that they are suspicious of you! Why should we not be suspicious?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: If the member wishes to place himself in a position where he cannot take part in sensible debate, I shall continue to express my disappointment in the inability of Opposition members to respond in a realistic way.

Hon J.M. Berinson: I think the member has also shown an inability to count.

Hon P.G. Pental: You have shown that, Mr Berinson.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: I made the point also there would be no question of financial support in a commercial transaction in such legislation.

Hon P.G. Pental: Does the Minister remember the guarantees placed on Petrochemical Industries Co Ltd? Does she remember all the other guarantees?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: Will we forever have the Opposition using history as an excuse for its inability to deal with the present?

Hon P.G. Pental: I will support the legislation if, when we see it, it is good legislation.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Why did not your leader say that?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: Hon George Cash and Hon E.J. Charlton did not say that. Maybe Mr Pental should become Leader of the Opposition in this House; maybe he has the talent for that position.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson interjected.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: What a silly boy, and of much less experience; Mr Tomlinson may be looking for guidance one day.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: I wish to outline clearly the Government's proposal and the reasons for it. Despite my disappointment with the Opposition, I would have thought at least we would all agree and express genuine concern about the loss of a daily newspaper in this State.

Hon P.G. Pental: Yes we agree.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: And express our concern about the jobs that have been lost as a result of that closure. We are in agreement about that. We cannot proceed unless the Opposition gives support in principle for some mechanism that would undo those two very regrettable circumstances.

Hon Peter Foss: You do not even know how you might do it.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: We would get to that. We will not go down a track without support in principle. Hon Peter Foss should not get caught up in the crazy stand of his colleagues. He can do better than that.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister is entitled to be heard in silence.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: I have outlined the Government's position and in accordance with the formal requirements of the House -

Hon George Cash: We do not think you are dinkum.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: - I now seek leave to withdraw the motion.

Hon George Cash: You will not even tell us what you are proposing.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

## VIDEO TAPES CLASSIFICATION AND CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL

### *Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by Hon Kay Hallahan (Minister for The Arts), and read a first time.

## MOTION - PATIENTS' ASSISTED TRAVEL SCHEME

### *Operations Concern*

HON N.F. MOORE (Mining and Pastoral) [3.02 pm]: I move -

That this House supports the residents of the Pilbara who have demonstrated by their petitions that the implementation and administration of the PAT scheme is not meeting the needs of people in remote areas.

I have presented three petitions couched in similar terms from people in the Shires of Roebourne, Ashburton and Port Hedland expressing their concern about the operations of the patients' assisted travel scheme. I will set the scene by reading out the terms of those petitions so members will be aware of the feelings of a significant number of residents of the Pilbara. The petition reads -

To the Honourable the President and Members of the Legislative Council in Parliament assembled:

The petition of the undersigned respectfully sheweth:

1. That the PATS Scheme is not properly meeting the needs of residents living in the Roebourne Shire.
2. That PATS assistance is being denied on technical and bureaucratic grounds to residents living in the Roebourne Shire who believe they are entitled to it.
3. That a 44 hour return bus journey to Perth is not a suitable means of transport for those seeking specialist medical treatment in the city.
4. That specialist visits to the area are not frequent enough to meet the needs of the population.
5. That the above discriminates against the people living in the Roebourne Shire compared to their city counterparts' medical facilities.

Your Petitioners most humbly pray that the Legislative Council, in Parliament assembled, should legislate to ensure that access to specialist medical care is readily available or accessible to the residents of the Roebourne Shire and other country areas.

Three petitions were received which contained the signatures of 1 824 residents of the Roebourne Shire, 383 residents of the Ashburton Shire and 218 residents of the Port Hedland Shire. Another 300 signatures were not accepted by the Clerk because they were either written on the back of petition sheets or stuck on by sticky tape to existing sheets and were not acceptable in that form. That represents a significant number of people particularly in the Ashburton Shire from where the petition emanated. Those 2 000 signatures were obtained in Karratha and surrounding towns and provide a significant indication of the attitude of the people in that area.

The PAT scheme came from the isolated patients travel and accommodation assistance scheme set up in the late 1970s by the Fraser Liberal Federal Government to assist patients to visit medical practitioners, particularly specialists, who did not practise in their area. It was a very successful and necessary scheme. The Fraser Government should be congratulated on introducing that proposition.

Hon P.G. Pandal: Hear, hear!

Hon N.F. MOORE: In 1986, for reasons with which I am not au fait, the current State Government took over the administration of IPTAAS and its name was changed to the PAT scheme. Since that time concern has been expressed by persons living in remote areas about the way the scheme is operating. As a member of Parliament representing those areas I have had people expressing their concerns about the scheme and how it operates in their particular case. On a number of occasions I have convinced the administrators to change the situation of certain people who had experienced hardship. In recent times a ground swell of concern has developed about the operation of the scheme. That ground swell has been exemplified by the number of people who have contacted me, who have contacted newspapers in the north, or who have complained to the Minister about particular cases; and some ladies in Karratha have formed a group called Citizens for Health.

This group was set up to present the case that the changes made to the scheme were not in the best interests of the north or any other area. They devised the petition which is the subject of the motion today. They set about collecting signatures mainly in the Karratha area because that is where the group is located. However, that petition came to the notice of residents in Port Hedland who instituted a petition of their own. A number of signatures were not acceptable because the name of the Roebourne Shire was replaced by Port Hedland. That is an indication of their desire to put their names on the petition but regrettably it was not in a form acceptable to the House. It has been suggested to me by the people of Port Hedland that had they been aware of what was happening they would have collected many more signatures and testimonials from people about the way the program is implemented. The group put out a Press release when it began its endeavours to get signatures for the petition and to draw attention to the circumstances surrounding this scheme. I will quote from the Press release put out by the Citizens for Health group in Karratha as follows -

A group of Karratha residents, upset at deficiencies in the Patients Assisted Travel Scheme, have formed a local committee to fight for improved health services for people living in the Roebourne Shire district.

The group, calling themselves 'Citizens for Health', has a committee of concerned Karratha residents.

... The major concerns of the group are the reduction in the level of assistance provided under the PAT Scheme and the effect of the Government's cost cutting measures on North West patients.

Mrs. Doyle -

She is the spokesperson for the group. It continues -

- said that the group has received many complaints from patients throughout the Pilbara, particularly in relation to the requirement that patients in need of Specialist care in the city are being required to travel by bus, regardless of the state of health of the patient.

She said that the current guidelines and the application of those guidelines are poorly understood. Most people have no prior knowledge of the guidelines and only come into contact with the PAT Scheme when they are about to use it.

... 'CITIZENS FOR HEALTH' have organised a petition to the State Parliament, and are busy collecting signatures and testimonials from Pilbara residents who have been or are adversely affected by the Government's cost cutting measures.

"We are not prepared to sit back and accept a second rate medical service when we pay more than our fair share of taxation", Mrs. Doyle said.

That was the action taken by the Citizens for Health in respect of what they considered to be poor treatment from the persons operating the patients' assisted travel scheme in the area. Not only did that group collect signatures on petitions, they also collected testimonials from people living in the north of this State who were prepared to write down the details of the problems they were experiencing with the PAT scheme. It is important that this House be informed of some of the concerns of people living in the Pilbara to appreciate the circumstances in which these people find themselves. Members will then understand that this issue is not something I am unthinkingly presenting to the House, but is my response to the level of concern expressed by people in the north about the way in which their health care is being handled by the Government.

I received a copy of a questionnaire; I do not know who was responsible for distributing it. At the bottom of it is a statement that it is a survey being compiled by a group, the results of which will be sent to the Minister for Health and the local member for Parliament, Mrs Pam Buchanan. I understand that the survey was undertaken prior to the Citizens for Health group being formed. One of the questions on the questionnaire is, "Do you think the PAT scheme works efficiently enough in remote areas like Pannawonica?" The answer on the questionnaire which I have is, "Definitely not!!" The next question is, "If you have used the PAT scheme before, do you have any complaints about it?" The answer is, "Yes. Pannawonica is a long way from Perth and most specialists sort for are for children. It is too long a trip in a bus with no sleep - the appointment is then expected and there is a 19 hour trip back." The next question is, "Do you have any comments that you wish to make in regard to the PAT scheme?" The answer is, "I often use PATS for my child and since the scheme changed to transport by road only I feel it is disgraceful. Not only is it extremely tiring but it has caused a great deal of arguments in my family. These include who is going to look after my other child for a week at a time all because of travelling. Why do our children have to pay the penalty? We live in a remote area and are condemned for doing so." Another person, in response to the question "If you have used the PATS scheme before, do you have any complaints about it?" answered in this way, "Yes. I flew to Wickham with my leg in plaster (on site plane) - was expected to get to Karratha to pick up tickets for a flight to Hedland and back to Wickham for the plane. I couldn't do it."

The questionnaire revealed several points and one of them is that there is concern that patients are being required to travel by bus when that is not the most appropriate means of transport. The second major concern is that people are being required to wait in their localities until such time as a specialist visits their town before they are able to receive attention. They do not have the option of travelling to Perth even though a specialist may not be visiting the area for some considerable time.

It seems to me that the people administering the scheme are not using their discretion sufficiently enough to look after the needs and interests of patients in the north.

Another letter provided to me is from a person in Pannawonica and was sent to the Minister for Health. It reads -

I am referring to the changes in the P.A.T.S. system which are not viable to people living in the north. I feel the changes have caused a great deal of concern and difficulties for many families as I am just one of many who have experienced problems.

I have a 13 yr old daughter who was born with deformed feet which therefore require a considerable amount of treatment by specialists in Perth. My husband and I have had a lot of time off work as we both work fulltime. As a town of this size does not have a highschool we keep our daughter at home with us because of her medical problem.

The way P.A.T.S. is running now they have told my husband that we must take a bus to Perth for her next appointments. We have already missed one appointment as we will not send our daughter on the bus, on her own for 18 hrs. The bus does not come into Pannawonica so we must drive out to the coast, 47 klms at between 10 pm and 2 am to board it. We do not wish to take more time off work as we feel it may jeopardise our employment.

When I rang P.A.T.S. in Perth I was told it was the bus or nothing and that I should re-consider which was more important, my child or my job. I feel both are important as without a job I cannot support her.

Until now we have only claimed flights to and from Perth and our family in Perth has run us around. We have not claimed any other benefits off P.A.T.S. and when possible we have taken her for appointments while on holidays.

If we take the bus every time it means a week off work each appointment and no employer would stand for that amount of time off. With the flights we can attend appointments by sending our daughter direct to Perth and have family meet her at the airport.

Hon Tom Helm: Is that letter from a person in Pannawonica?



Hon N.F. MOORE: Yes, it is from one of Hon Tom Helm's and my constituents. The letter continues -

As we pay very high taxes and we do not receive any benefits including child endowment we feel this is not much to ask for. As I have already stated we are not the only ones who have these problems. It affects all of us.

Another letter I have was written to Citizens for Health by a local general practitioner in which he expressed concern about the way in which the scheme is being implemented. His letter states -

I would strongly encourage you in your representations and it is obvious from my limited time on this earth that those who speak the loudest and most often are the ones that get things done. If your group would require any more information or encouragement I would be happy to assist.

I have a number of letters, but I will not quote from all of them. However, I will quote from a couple to continue to demonstrate to the House the feelings of the people in the north about this scheme. The next letter from which I quote was forwarded to the Minister for Health, Mr Wilson, and reads -

I would like to know if you can explain why all of a sudden the people of Karratha have been denied the same access to medical specialists in Perth that the citizens of the metro area have.

... We work hard up here Mr Wilson. It takes a lot to be able to save the money for an airfare to Perth on our salaries. We have harsher and more expensive living conditions here than the people in the city.

I have heard that you will allow us bus travel on PATS. Do you know what it is like to sit for 22 hours on a bus, especially if you have arthritis in your legs.

... I am sure that all the people of Karratha would much rather be treated here instead of going away, but there are special cases when you cannot get the same basic medical help here as you can get elsewhere.

... Mr Wilson we in the country are getting sick to death of being treated as second class citizens by our city counterparts. Please re-install our basic right to be able to see specialists in Perth when we need to not when someone or other decides to pay a flying visit to Karratha, or else give us proper access to specialists that come to Karratha every 4-6 weeks not every 6-12 months.

Hon Tom Helm: Where is the person who wrote that letter from?

Hon N.F. MOORE: From Karratha.

Another letter from a person in Karratha states -

I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with the reduction in the Patients Assistance Travel Scheme.

In January of this year, my husband required an operation which could not be performed in Karratha. Therefore he had to go to Perth. On applying for what we thought would be assisted air travel, we were told that this no longer applies. We would receive the equivalent of one return bus fare to Perth or be paid kilometer assistance if we wished to take a private car. I think this is totally unsatisfactory.

In the end, we decided that bus travel was totally out of the question because after going through this operation my husband would be in no fit state to travel for 22 or so hours on a cramped bus. Also if some sort of complication arose during the trip, the bus driver is not qualified to assist.

The important point is that if people go to see a specialist they are not doing so because they feel like a ride on a bus but because they have a medical condition which requires treatment in a way that a local general practitioner cannot provide, and to suggest that those persons ought to sit on a bus for 22 to 24 hours on their way to see a specialist is quite absurd. Further on the letter states -

We decided to take our private car, but in doing this, my husband was forced to ask his father to accompany him on the trip because he himself would certainly not feel up to driving for 16-18 hours on the return trip. . .

I really don't see why, just because we are living in a remote area of this State, that we should suffer. We have a million dollar hospital in Karratha which has never, to my knowledge, operated at capacity. So if it happens that we must go to Perth for medical treatment, at least we should be able to get there in the quickest most convenient way possible.

I sincerely hope that this situation is reviewed and rectified in the near future.

Another person from Karratha wrote to me, in part, as follows -

The PATS system is not meeting the needs of the people in Karratha.

The people of the North West are greatly discriminated against as opposed to our city counterparts. Parents and children are expected to endure a 22hr. bus trip in order to see a specialist or as in quite a lot of cases in order to receive treatment in hospital. This adds trauma to a already stressfull situation. It is also disruptive to the family unit.

In many cases people are beening denied assistance because access is supposedly available to visiting specialist.

I think that means "by" visiting specialists.

What is not taken into account is that some people are in need of immediate attention and have to wait either for the specialist or an appointment months down the line. Also people are being refused assistant to return to Perth for follow up visits. This is unacceptable, people should not have to start afresh again with a completely different doctor.

I would be interested to know how many of these people making decisions have to undergo the same hardships just to see a doctor.

As it stands now, the people in the North West are not recieving a reasonable level Health Care. Could you please give your attention to this important issue. . .

The issue that needs emphasising here is that in a number of cases people have been provided with a PATS voucher to travel by air or bus to see a specialist in Perth and then have returned to the north on the understanding that they will need to see that specialist again after a period. When they have gone to apply for another travel voucher to go back to that specialist for their next appointment they have been told, "Sorry, you cannot go, because a similar specialist will be visiting Karratha or Port Hedland, your nearest area, in the next month or so so and you will go and see them."

Patients are being denied an opportunity to see the specialist they saw originally. It is unfair that patients, particularly those needing to see specialists, should be required to visit a different specialist as circumstances dictate. Surely they are entitled to be attended by the one doctor if they have an illness requiring specialist treatment. I have a final letter from a person in Karratha, as follows -

As a resident of the northwest and having a young family and a pregnant wife, I am deeply distressed to hear of unfavourable changes in the PATIENT ASSISTED TRAVEL SCHEME.

Due to the high export income generated by projects in the northwest and the extremely high amount of income tax payed per head of population in the northwest, I think it is a reasonable request to have adequate medical care and assistance and to gain such medical care without being put through the ordeal of a 22 hour bus trip where as our city counterparts possibly travel 1/2 an hour at a maximum.

I hope you will see the validity in my appeal for a fair go for the people of the northwest. I am not asking for special privileges but just a chance to have medical care under similar conditions to our counterparts in the city.

Therein lies the whole basis of the argument. The people of the north are arguing that they are entitled to similar medical facilities to people in the city. The whole aim of the program when first set up - with the IPTAAS scheme way back in 1970 - was to endeavour to provide that level of service. For a while it seemed to be working, but for some reason it is not working now. People do not believe it is working now.

I will talk about the Minister's response in a moment. First I will refer to the response of the local Labor members of Parliament who decided to put their bibs in, if I can put it that way, when this group started to raise its concerns about the scheme. Mr Leahy, the member for Northern Rivers, wrote to the Citizens for Health group in the following terms -

Contrary to your belief that there has been a cutback in the Patients Assisted Travel Scheme (P.A.T.S.) the opposite is in fact the case. The State Government has increased its contribution to the Scheme by some 30% in the past 12 months.

Hon Kay Hallahan: That is correct.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I will deal with that in a moment, because it is not correct. The letter continues -

With the blowout in the cost of administering P.A.T.S. there was obviously a need to comply with the guidelines on eligibility to eliminate the often fraudulent exploitation of the Scheme.

I doubt whether there is anybody residing in the north of W.A. who doesn't know someone who has exploited the Scheme. Business and shopping trips to Perth as well as holidays paid by P.A.T.S. were fairly common.

Nice work Mr Leahy, a nice insult to the people in the north west who have had to attend a specialist in the city.

Hon Kay Hallahan: He is not insulting the people who have had to attend a specialist.

Hon N.F. MOORE: My colleague, Hon Philip Lockyer, will explain to the House later how Mr Leahy's supposed supporters are dealing with him.

Hon Doug Wenn: Are you saying it does not happen.

Hon N.F. MOORE: It may have happened on an odd occasion. However, I do not agree with the proposition put by Mr Leahy that everybody knows somebody who is ripping off the system, because they do not: I do not know anybody who has ripped off the system.

Hon Kay Hallahan: You do not live there.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I spend a lot of time up there, lady, and talk to a lot of people and I do not know one person who has ripped off the system. There may be such persons, and if the Minister can provide examples and statistics about that when she responds I look forward to hearing them.

Hon Kay Hallahan: The Minister for Health would have them. We do not supply that information to the Opposition. You proved today that you are a hopeless Opposition and do nothing constructive. Why should you be supplied with anything after today's effort?

Hon N.F. MOORE: I cannot believe the childish approach adopted by the Minister, or her making a comment like that. I asked for information to substantiate allegations made by the member for Northern Rivers to a group of citizens in Karratha and the Minister says that we are not entitled to that information.

Hon Kay Hallahan: We do not supply information about people's personal complaints.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The Minister could say whether there are 57 a year, or there were 128 last year.

Hon Kay Hallahan: If the member puts his question on notice to the Minister for Health he may receive another 12 page answer as he did recently. He is putting his case in a most unconstructive way because it suits him to do so.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Again, it is quite interesting that this Minister should say that I am not putting forward a good argument.

Hon Kay Hallahan: You are not putting forward a constructive position.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Yet for most of the time I have been talking I have been reading from letters which are the testimony of people in the north complaining about the scheme this Government has let run down and the Minister will tell us nothing about. She will not tell us the amount of money spent. If the Minister reads the long answer to the question I asked she will see how much money is being spent. If she can work out a 30 per cent increase from those figures she is a better mathematician than I, but I will come to that detail in a moment.

That was Mr Kevin Leahy's response - "Stop complaining. We all know someone who is ripping off the system. What are you going on about?" Hon Tom Helm has a similar attitude when writing to newspapers such as the one in Newman, which operates from the office of Hon Tom Stephens, which is probably why he gets his remarks published. One article, under the heading "Helm replies to Hodge", states -

May I repeat for the benefit of Cr Hodge that funding for PATS has been increased. The irresponsible advice he passed on to your readers that they should "play" the system is perhaps one of the reasons why the criteria for PATS is constantly reassessed; a small minority of people who have successfully abused the system to the detriment of most of us who have a legitimate need to see a specialist. Or does Cr Hodge support those who use the system for shopping trips to Perth at the tax-payers' expense?

Again another unsubstantiated allegation which I am sure the member will substantiate in his response.

Several members interjected.

[Resolved, that motions be continued.]

Hon N.F. MOORE: That is the attitude of the two Labor members who have responded to Citizens for Health and others who have been promoting the argument that the way in which the scheme is being implemented is not in the best interests of the people living in the north. If people get up and substantiate what they are saying - that some persons are ripping off the system in huge numbers without giving names - I would be delighted to hear it, and so would people in the north. We would know where these people are coming from and what their arguments are all about.

Hon Doug Wenn: They are ripping off the system.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The member must substantiate that that is what is happening, and I suppose the Minister will do that in a minute. We will then know what she says about it, and we will be able to say, "This is what the Minister says is happening; you people are doing this; you are ripping off the taxpayers." We will then hear the response.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: Listen very carefully.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I asked a very long question of the Minister for Health on 5 July 1990, and one of the questions was, "What was the total cost of the PAT scheme in the financial years 1985-86, 1986-87, 1987-88 and 1988-89 and 1989-90?" This is the answer: The PAT scheme started on 1 January 1987, and that is why no figure was given for the previous year. For the first six months of its operation the amount was \$2.5 million. In 1987-88 the amount of \$5.4 million was allocated. The answer does not say how much was spent. From 1 July 1988 to 30 June 1989, \$5.6 million was allocated, an increase of about \$200 000, but \$6.8 million was spent. The allocation in 1988-89 was \$5.6 million, and \$6.8 million was spent - obviously as a result of the demands on the scheme. In 1989-90 \$7.3 million was allocated, which I presume is the 30 per cent increase from the \$5.6 million. However, only \$5.9 million was spent.

That answer demonstrates that the Government is going around saying, "We have allocated an increase of 30 per cent for the PAT scheme", but in fact it has spent less. The Government spent \$8.6 million in 1988-89, and in 1989-90 it spent \$5.9 million. The Government spent less in real dollars.

Hon Kay Hallahan: It allocated more.

Hon N.F. MOORE: But it did not spend it.

Hon Kay Hallahan: It was allocated.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon J.M. Brown): Order!

Hon N.F. MOORE: I doubt whether the Minister would sit in a bus for 22 hours, even if she were healthy, and regard that as a proper way to visit a specialist. If a person has a broken leg -

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! I do not mind a two way conversation, but when it is three ways it is very difficult for Hansard and for me. It would be better if we heard only from the member on his feet.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The Government is claiming that it has increased funding for this scheme by 30 per cent. It has allocated 30 per cent more but it has not spent it. The reason people are complaining is because the Government has not spent enough. These people are travelling on buses when they should be on aeroplanes. They are waiting around in places like Karratha, Tom Price and Newman for a specialist to visit, and then they must drive across 250 miles of dirt road to see the specialist in Port Hedland. That is why the Government is saving money; because the money has not been spent. Just because the money has been allocated does not mean -

Several members interjected.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Just let me finish this sentence. Just because the Government has allocated 30 per cent more does not mean that it can claim the people are 30 per cent better off. The Government did not spend the money. It spent less in the last financial year than it spent in the previous financial year. That is what really counts when we look at a scheme. It is not how much is allocated; one can allocate whatever one likes to a scheme and say how wonderful it is, but if the dollars are not spent people do not benefit from the scheme. The Minister seems to think there is something very amusing about this.

Hon Kay Hallahan: The Minister is not amused.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I suggest that at some time or other she should get on one of the buses which travel between Perth and Karratha. She should do that some time instead of sitting in her big Fairlane; she should travel up that highway in a bus, especially after coming to Perth for an operation.

One person whose letter I did not read out talked about coming to Perth and having an operation on his knee. He had a splint on his leg and was on crutches. He had to return on the bus, which involved a 24 hour overnight trip. The bus stops eight times and every passenger has to get out every time it stops. This person had just had an operation and he could not walk except on crutches, and he was required to put up with that sort of transport system.

Hon Fred McKenzie: Didn't I hear you say the Government allocated \$5.4 million and spent \$6.8 million or something like that?

Hon N.F. MOORE: That is right.

Hon Fred McKenzie: It spent more than was allocated.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The previous year; that is right.

Hon Kay Hallahan: Then we allocated more.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The Government spent \$6.8 million in 1988-89, and allocated \$7.3 million for 1989-90, which is an increase of \$500 000. That is fine. Had the Government spent it, that would have been all right, but it cut the expenditure from that allocation to \$5.9 million. Expenditure was \$1.5 million less than the allocation. The reason the people are complaining is because that \$1.5 million would have paid their air fares, or it would have enabled them to take their children to see specialists in the city instead of having to wait around in the north for a specialist to arrive.

Another example concerns a lady who came to see me in Karratha. She has a two year old child with a very serious eye problem. She has been to Perth by air on three occasions on the PAT scheme to see an ophthalmologist. Now she is told that as a result of the changed rules, even though her general practitioner has recommended that she should go back and see the same specialist in the city, she must wait until the ophthalmologist visits Port Hedland. This lady lives in Karratha and she has to wait for the specialist to come to Port Hedland. The specialist visits Port Hedland for three days, but the child has to have five days of continuous treatment. She has been told to get herself from Karratha to Port Hedland on the bus with her two year old child and wait there for the specialist, who will probably recommend that she goes to see the specialist in Perth; he will not be there long enough to do the treatment. She will then have to get herself back to Karratha and apply, on the recommendation of that

specialist, for a PAT scheme travel voucher to Perth. She will then be told to go to Perth on the bus, another 22 hours, with a two year old child.

Hon Tom Helm: That is a fairy tale.

Hon N.F. MOORE: It is no fairy tale. I will give to that lady with a two year old child with a very serious eye problem the honourable member's comment.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: Let her ring him up.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Hon Tom Helm's comment is disgraceful! It is on a par with Kevin Leahy's remarks about people ripping off the system. The member knows that many people up there have very serious problems.

Hon Kay Hallahan: There are dozens of people well served by the scheme.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I will jump in the creek if the Minister can find a couple of people who support what is being done. Two thousand people from Karratha alone have signed the petitions and only about 7 000 people live there.

Hon Tom Helm: There is no wonder about that.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I had nothing to do with the petitions; I wish I did. The bottom line is that the Government reduced the amount spent on the PAT scheme between 1988-89 and 1989-90.

Hon Kay Hallahan: That is untrue. That is not the amount that was allocated.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The Minister accuses me of saying something that is untrue. I am not telling any lies.

Hon Kay Hallahan: The second last comment you made was a lie.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I will repeat the answer that was given to me in the Parliament; if it is not right it is a lie. The answer stated that from 1 July 1988 to 30 June 1989, \$6.8 million was spent and from 1 July 1989 to 30 June 1990, \$5.9 million was spent. If that is not a reduction I do not know what is.

Hon Kay Hallahan: The allocated amount was \$7.3 million.

Hon E.J. Charlton: What has allocation got to do with it?

Hon Kay Hallahan: For people to apply for it, you dopey people!

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon J.M. Brown): Order!

Hon N.F. MOORE: Is the Minister suggesting that the Government allocated this money and people were too stupid to apply for it? They are applying for the same conditions they did before but are not receiving the money. The air fare allocation was slashed dramatically.

Hon Kay Hallahan: That is not true.

Hon N.F. MOORE: It is.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: Look, you stupid woman, it is true!

Hon N.F. MOORE: I can give the Minister the number of people who flew to Perth assisted by the PAT scheme.

Hon Kay Hallahan: I will tell you what I think when I speak.

Hon N.F. MOORE: It was a dramatic decrease. The Government made a policy decision which made people in the Pilbara travel by bus. That is what the Government has done and it does not care less that travelling by bus is not satisfactory. Travelling by bus over that distance is bad news even if one is fit and healthy; it involves 24 hours of travelling.

Hon Tom Helm: Where do you come from? When was the last time you were on a bus?

Hon N.F. MOORE: About three years ago I travelled from Carnarvon to Perth by bus. I will never do it again.

Hon Tom Helm: You won't need to; you can go by plane.

Hon N.F. MOORE: If I were travelling to see a specialist or coming back from seeing a specialist the last place I would want to be sitting would be on a bus for 21 to 24 hours. It

involves virtually a whole day's travelling. One can encounter real problems if anything happens while one is on a bus between Minilya and Carnarvon.

Many people in the Pilbara are disgusted with the way this scheme has been implemented. They are disgusted with the money grubbing, penny pinching attitude of this Government. They know all about WA Inc.

Hon Fred McKenzie: Because you have told them.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The thousands of people standing outside Parliament House today know about WA Inc, including unionists, Mr McKenzie. They are the member's people, not mine. They are out there with a big sign reading "WA Inc stinks". They are unionists telling the Government that they have had a gutful. The people in the Pilbara are telling the Minister for Health through their petition that they have had a gutful of the way the Government is operating this scheme.

Hon Fred McKenzie: The person carrying that sign was a Liberal fellow. There are Liberals in unions too.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I will tell the member this -

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! I think the member should tell me.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Those people outside today may be members of the Civil Servants Association but I can guarantee they will be Liberal voters next election.

The implementation of the PAT scheme is causing great consternation to people in the Pilbara. I have other letters which I will not read out because it will take up too much time of the House, but any member is welcome to read them. The petitions have been tabled. There was no trouble getting people to sign them; in fact, sheets of paper had to be attached to the petitions in order for people to sign them because not enough copies were available. These petitions have subsequently been ruled out of order. The only response from the Government is that it has allocated 30 per cent more and does not know what people are complaining about. One hundred and fifty million dollars could be allocated and it could be said that the PAT scheme was wonderful, but it would account for nothing if the money were not spent. The Government is spending less now than it spent before and the people in the Pilbara know because they are the ones who are being deprived.

My colleague, Hon Phil Lockyer, will add to the comments I have made. I ask the House to support the motion not because I have moved it but because the people in the Pilbara have argued that they are being denied proper health services and they deserve something better.

*Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.00 pm*

[Questions without notice taken.]

HON KAY HALLAHAN (East Metropolitan - Minister for Planning) [4.32 pm]: The patients assisted travel scheme is under review and Hon Norman Moore is well aware of that. On 5 July he asked the Minister for Health a very detailed question - question 538. The Minister provided a detailed, 12 page response. PATS commenced in January 1987 and replaced the Commonwealth Government's isolated patients' travel and accommodation assistance scheme, which ceased operating on 31 December 1986. PATS is administered by the Health Department of Western Australia through its public hospital system. It was established to provide country residents with assistance to meet travelling expenses when seeking essential specialist medical attention not locally available or not available from visiting practitioners. Since the scheme's introduction, 94 925 patient assisted trips have been provided at a cost of \$20 052 071. That is a significant expense and recognises that people outside the metropolitan area have special medical needs.

The Government is aware of the concerns of Pilbara residents and has responded to the grievances of a group of Karratha residents called the Citizens for Health. The group made a series of allegations about the deficiencies of PATS. Those allegations included the fact that a cutback has been made in annual funding. That is not true and is demonstrated by the response given by the Minister for Health that in 1987-88, \$5.4 million was allocated to PATS, that in the following year \$5.6 million was allocated and that during that year overexpenditure reached \$1.2 million, bringing the cost to \$6.8 million. In response to that, the Government allocated \$7.3 million for the following year - a 30 per cent increase. In his

letter to constituents on the matter, the member for Northern Rivers, Mr Kevin Leahy, made the point that the allocation increased but the number of applications did not increase.

Hon N.F. Moore: That is not true; you stopped them from using aircraft.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: That is not true. Hon Norman Moore does not want to hear the Government's response. He is fanning misinformation with his continual unruly interruptions. The Citizens for Health group has also made unsubstantiated allegations about changes in the policy which governs the provision of air fares and about unescorted children being forced to travel to Perth by bus. Although the Commonwealth Government's contribution towards funding remained static, funds provided by the State Government increased by 30 per cent. That is clearly stated in the Minister's response to Hon Norman Moore. At least 40 per cent of the total expenditure for PATS is provided to the Pilbara. To date, the Citizens for Health group has not supplied the Health Department with specific details on the allegations that unescorted children are being forced to travel by bus.

The guidelines governing the provision of air fares under PATS have remained unchanged since its introduction. Patients are required to travel by surface economy transport unless the referring medical practitioner indicates that the patient's medical condition warrants air travel.

Hon N.F. Moore: Patients have had the decision overridden by the administration.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: Like all entitlement schemes, eligibility criteria for PATS ensure that the scheme is properly targeted. The community would expect no less of such a scheme. To be eligible for assistance, a patient must be referred to the closest resident or visiting specialist service. The scheme was not designed to provide a choice of specialists. If a visiting specialist's schedule cannot accommodate the urgency or the treatment required, exceptions can be made. Similarly, benefits are not payable for access to health care providers other than specialist medical practitioners.

Ways in which the scheme can respond to regional circumstances without threatening the financial viability of the scheme are presently being assessed in an administrative review of the scheme. The review is expected to be completed in the very near future. It is intended that the amended guidelines will be widely publicised to ensure that all those with an interest in the scheme are clear about the assistance it offers.

The Minister for Health, Hon Keith Wilson, was concerned about the complaints; he visited northern centres earlier this year and talked to a number of community groups, hospital staff and mine managers to gain their views about PATS and how it is operating. It seems that people really need to understand how the PAT scheme operates, how to apply for it, and what they are entitled to. As a result the Health Department is preparing a booklet which will be distributed in order to advise people about the details of the scheme. There is a misunderstanding about those details, and it may be that that is causing some dissatisfaction. In saying that, the Minister has demonstrated his concern. He is aware that people in the Pilbara are particularly concerned. As a result of the review I have mentioned, he will have the matter attended to in order to address those concerns. Generally, the view is that the scheme is working well overall. It is a very good scheme, and apart from some areas where one encounters problems, it is a scheme which should be in place; this review will overcome some of the difficulties being voiced, particularly where those difficulties can be substantiated. Members know that schemes must work within guidelines and within reasonable resources, and the Government responded to the demand for that scheme by increasing its funding by 30 per cent in the last financial year. That was a response by the Government to meet the needs of people who had to travel to the city to attend specialists.

Hon Norman Moore would be much better advised to make constructive suggestions on how the scheme could be improved rather than saying what he did today in his speech and by way of interjection; he continued to reinforce the ill-informed comments about the scheme and spread misinformation about it. He has a responsibility, as a local member of Parliament -

Hon P.H. Lockyer: He is doing a very good job.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: He is not doing a very good job here. It is fair of members to raise concerns. The member knows a review is under way, but he wants to take advantage of this fact. He will not accept that there has been no change in the guidelines.



Several members interjected.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: He must go back to the electorate and keep reinforcing the benefits of this scheme. It is poor for a member of Parliament to do what he has been doing. We should all acquaint ourselves with the facts and pass them back to our electorates. That does not prevent us from bringing forward these concerns, but what I have heard today does not convince me that Hon Norman Moore is addressing that matter -

Hon N.F. Moore: What about the letters I have read out?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: When people live outside the metropolitan area there can be a lot of dissatisfaction about these schemes. There can be a lot of worry and agitation. The Minister for Health would like evidence that children are travelling unescorted. It is an automatic provision of the scheme that people under 17 have an escort provided. If that is not occurring, the Minister or his department need to be advised of specific examples of centres which have refused assistance.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: Hon Norman Moore did not say that.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: That is one of the allegations of the group in the Pilbara. I understood from Hon Norman Moore's comments that he had a very close liaison with that group.

Hon N.F. Moore: They sought my assistance.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: I would have thought they would have made that clear. Mr Moore, concerned as he is supposed to be, would have been able to make it clear to this group that people under 17 years of age would automatically qualify for an escort. We need information about which centres are refusing that assistance so that that problem can be fixed immediately. It is an entitlement under the scheme. I personally think that the PAT scheme is a very good one.

Hon N.F. Moore: You know nothing about it.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: The review set in place by the Minister will examine what needs to be done to improve the scheme to meet the needs of people. The State Government has increased its allocation by 30 per cent, the guidelines have not changed, and children are eligible for an escort on their trips to Perth. Those things need to be noted by the House.

On behalf of the Minister for Health I indicate that I think the PAT scheme meets the needs of people living in the Pilbara. Those people in the Pilbara would be in dire circumstances without the scheme and I cannot support the motion as it is worded, even though I would never want the concerns of people not to be raised. From what has been put forward today, it seems that there is a misunderstanding of the scheme and what it provides. I am concerned that Hon Norman Moore has not acquainted himself with the facts and passed those facts back to his constituents.

Hon P.G. Pandal: You passed those letters back to them.

HON TOM HELM (Mining and Pastoral) [4.46 pm]: Anybody who uses disadvantaged persons for political gain should stand condemned.

Hon N.F. Moore: What a stupid thing to say.

Several members interjected.

Hon TOM HELM: It is true.

Hon N.F. Moore: Absolute nonsense!

Hon TOM HELM: We have had selected quotes from the mover of this motion, and some evidence of letters he said were written to him, and other quotes from material which perhaps was not written to him. Let us tell this to members for the Mining and Pastoral Region: These are the simple, basic facts.

Several members interjected.

Hon TOM HELM: Members should listen. I will come to the meeting with the Citizens for Health group because they wrote a letter to me as well. For those who do not live in isolated areas, or in the north, the PAT scheme works on the basic premise that the scheme is a matter between the patient and the general practitioner. They decide between them how the patient will travel or be treated by specialists who are available, or by specialists in Perth.

Shall I tell members why we have specialists in the north west? It is because patients in the north west have legitimate claims to ask for a specialist to be brought to them rather than their being sent away from their homes. They may be away for days, whether they go by air or by bus, to meet that specialist. In response the Government has provided specialists. The Minister has told us that the PAT scheme has been going since 1987. We have also been told that the guidelines are the same.

Hon N.F. Moore: I do not believe that.

Hon Tom Stephens: You have been told.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon J.M. Brown): Order!

Hon TOM HELM: Members should not misunderstand me. Hospital administrators have changed, and their interpretation of the guidelines may have changed. That is a fact of life.

Hon N.F. Moore: Their interpretations might have changed.

Hon TOM HELM: We are talking about human beings.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: You are not telling us the administrators are making those decisions without directions from the Government?

Several members interjected.

Hon TOM HELM: The answer is no. Administrators do not make decisions without directions from the Government.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: Thank you.

Hon N.F. Moore: You are changing the interpretation.

Hon TOM HELM: To emphasise the point, the guidelines are the same as they always have been. The situation is under review as a result of problems which have arisen in interpretation by hospital administrators in the country towns in the north west. Here is a member coming in and using people who are disadvantaged, those who are ill, and exaggerating their troubles. Such a person is lower than a legless snake.

*Withdrawal of Remark*

Hon N.F. MOORE: I regard that comment as quite unparliamentary and ask that it be withdrawn. I suggest that I would have done the same with the previous comment too.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Doug Wenn): Order! The member has asked for the comment to be withdrawn.

Hon TOM HELM: I was not pointing at anyone, necessarily. I said if somebody brings it in.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! The member has asked that it be withdrawn.

Hon TOM HELM: If the member is insulted -

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! The member has asked for the statement to be withdrawn and I ask Hon Tom Helm to withdraw it.

Hon TOM HELM: I withdraw, Mr Deputy President.

*Debate Resumed*

Hon TOM HELM: I am trying to point out to the House that we have a medical trauma: Young children are involved, and people who may be away from their homes, no matter how they travel, for some length of time, which means a loss of earnings and an absence from loved ones and a homemaker. They will be faced with uncertainty which might not necessarily be there. I am not saying it will not be there, but it certainly should not be exacerbated by a motion of this kind. People should understand that the patients' assisted travel scheme is the same as it always was.

I was quoted in a letter from the newslink. I do not resile or withdraw from that; that is perfectly true. It was in Newman, and Councillor Hodge, to whom I addressed my Press release, knows the person very well. I am not going to come between a patient and his doctor.

Hon N.F. Moore: Are you talking about one person?

Hon TOM HELM: That is what I said - one person in Newman, whom I knew before that incident.

Hon N.F. Moore: So you cast aspersions on thousands because of one person?

Hon TOM HELM: I must explain that the guidelines have not changed because someone ripped off the system; but he and I are aware of one person who did it, that is all. I will not use the privileges of this House to name anybody, but that is exactly what happened.

I will tell Hon Norman Moore something else: He did not quote from the letter I wrote to the Citizens for Health, because as soon as they wrote to me with their complaints and problems I went to see them in Karratha. It is only 200 kilometres from my home to Karratha, and the Citizens for Health were good enough to see me when I went there. One lady in particular had a case in which I interceded on her behalf; I have not heard anything more since then. However, a member of that group, who had a heart complaint, said to me quite outspokenly that she was quite happy with the PAT scheme but she was most concerned with the likes of Hon Norman Moore running around these isolated towns saying it was a disaster and that people were expected to go by bus to Perth, if they were to be treated at all. That is an outright misinterpretation of the truth.

Hon Kay Hallahan: Trying to create discontent.

Hon TOM HELM: That is what he is doing, and we can do without that. If he lived in the place, he would probably understand the importance of the matter and how some of the people feel who are trying to get to Perth for treatment.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: You know very well he is right.

Hon TOM HELM: If I believed there was one skerrick of truth in what Hon Norman Moore says I would not be on my feet, but there is no truth in it; unless I have misinterpreted him and he is saying - and he is not - that people fall through the system and administrators have interpreted the guidelines wrongly. If he is saying that, I will sit down; but if he is saying that the Government has changed the guidelines, that the Minister for Health is not treating people who use the PAT scheme the way they were treated when it was a Federal scheme, he is totally wrong, as usual, and does not understand what is going on. I suggest he is using this only for political expediency. He has been told to get some work done up north. He has done some, too; the only problem is that he undermines all of the good work he does in representing his constituents by moving this kind of motion and making these statements which have no basis in truth whatsoever.

Hon N.F. Moore: I am sure the people who wrote to me, and to you, and to the Minister would be pleased to hear that you are suggesting they are telling lies - and I will tell them that.

Hon TOM HELM: If the member kept his ears and eyes open he would know that I travel my constituency and my home area quite extensively trying to deal with problems of that nature, only because I appreciate at first hand the difficulties and worries people have. I do not treat them lightly. If Hon Norman Moore were to ask anybody who has been to my office seeking help in connection with the PAT scheme, he would find I have done exactly that.

Hon N.F. Moore: So have I.

Hon TOM HELM: I know, but Hon Norman Moore has made a political football out of somebody's misfortune. Among other things, when Hon Norman Moore was quoting he quoted selectively.

Hon N.F. Moore: You can have all the letters, if you wish. I quoted selectively from the point of view of time. I am not hiding what was in the rest of the letters.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon TOM HELM: I will look in *Hansard* later on to check whether I asked for those letters. I did not ask for them. I do not doubt that the quotes Hon Norman Moore made were right.

Hon N.F. Moore: You are accusing me of making selective quotes, but I am saying it was from the point of view of time. You can have all the letters to read at your leisure, if you wish.

Hon TOM HELM: Hon Norman Moore did not quote from the letter I wrote to the Citizens for Health group.

Hon N.F. Moore: I do not have the one that you wrote.

Hon TOM HELM: In the letter I wrote to the person who is the secretary or president of that group - which was never acknowledged, and I am surprised about that - I asked her to collate and forward all the problems of which she was aware, and I am still waiting for an answer. It makes me a little suspicious of the influence Hon Norman Moore might have on that group; that is all I am saying.

As to the letter Hon Norman Moore received from the local general practitioner, I sometimes wonder about people's motives. Why would a general practitioner write to a member of Parliament? I will go through it again so that we all understand: The patient goes to see the general practitioner and they have a talk about the medical condition the patient has. Between them they make a decision as to whether the patient should see a specialist, where the specialist is, how soon the patient must see the specialist, and what mode of transport he should use. That is between the patient and the general practitioner - it has nothing to do with politicians or administrators. The general practitioner ticks the appropriate box as to whether or not that patient should travel to Perth. Members can read into that all the interpretations they like; they can say the doctor or the patient is wrong, but it does not behove politicians to make any input towards that decision making process. I would like conversations between me and my doctor to be confidential. Any decisions that are made are not to be questioned. It is my health and I am his or her patient. It is not up to a politician to give an opinion on that.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: When they get knocked back; that is the problem.

Hon TOM HELM: They can get knocked back - by their doctor.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: That is not always the case.

Hon TOM HELM: Does the member have any examples?

Hon P.H. Lockyer: Yes, I have.

Hon TOM HELM: Yes, he would have, because there is another letter which has not been quoted from - one I sent to the Administrator of the Tom Price Hospital. In it I pointed out that, of all the hospitals in the north west of which I was aware had problems, there were more problems at Tom Price. I received a letter back from the administrator, who was quite adamant that all he was doing was following guidelines. I did not make any criticism but merely pointed out and asked him to be aware of the fact that very few hospitals in the north west refused to give patients the air fare to Perth. There are a number of letters going around the place of which Hon Norman Moore is not aware.

Hon N.F. Moore: You are right - I have not got that one.

Hon TOM HELM: I do not understand why a general practitioner would want to write to a member of Parliament.

Hon N.F. Moore: He wrote to the Citizens for Health.

Hon TOM HELM: Well, I do not understand that, because surely general practitioners are the people who are constantly exposed to this situation. They are constantly involved in the medical traumas of their patients. People become patients only when they become ill, whereas a doctor is exposed to these traumas all the time. This is the only doctor I have ever heard of who wrote to the Citizens for Health group. Why he should write to them and not the local members of Parliament, I do not know. They are the ones who should be doing what Hon Norman Moore should be doing; that is, getting the Government to change its mind, not coming here exacerbating the difficulties people in the north west already have. Surely they have enough without making any more.

Hon N.F. Moore: Is the member suggesting that Parliament is not the place to raise these matters?

Hon TOM HELM: I am suggesting that if a person does not understand the system he should work behind the scenes and talk to the Minister for Health; if that person is not satisfied with the answers, at that stage he should bring such a motion forward.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: That is what has happened.

Hon TOM HELM: It is not. The member has demonstrated by the trite nonsense he has trotted out, and the selected quotes given, that he does not understand the system. If he does understand, and carries on in this way, he is wasting time.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: This is one of Hon Tom Helm's best performances. He is making a mess of this.

Hon TOM HELM: I feel very strongly about this matter. I live at Port Hedland and my friends and I are exposed to this system.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon TOM HELM: A member of Citizens for Health has expressed the view to me that she was satisfied with the PAT scheme, even though she has a heart complaint.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: What about the people who signed the petition?

Hon TOM HELM: I hope those people never have to use the PAT scheme. People can express a view but I hope that the majority of those people who signed the petition will never need to use PATS. If people do not need to use the scheme why do they need to know about it? Members of Parliament need to know about such schemes. If people are not exposed to the scheme why would they sign a petition? If people who have never used the scheme sign petitions how can we tell whether the petition is an indication that the scheme is not meeting the needs of residents of the Roebourne Shire?

Hon N.F. Moore: We talk to people and they tell us their problems.

Hon TOM HELM: The member should listen to my question. If someone approaches a person who knows nothing about PATS - that person has not heard of it or had cause to use it -

Hon N.F. Moore: That person probably would not sign the petition.

Hon TOM HELM: Is the member telling me that those 4 000 people have been exposed to PATS or actually used the scheme?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon TOM HELM: I am not questioning the validity of the petition -

Hon N.F. Moore: You are!

Hon TOM HELM: Is it logical to accept that 4 000 people in the Shire of Roebourne are aware of and have used the PAT scheme?

Hon Reg Davies: Is the member saying that those people signed the petition only because it was put in front of them?

Hon TOM HELM: The member can form his own conclusions.

Hon Reg Davies: That is what you are saying.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon TOM HELM: I am only posing a question. The petition states that specialist visits to the area are not frequent enough to meet the needs of the population. Hon Norman Moore offered a throwaway line regarding the Shire of Roebourne - and most of his lines should be thrown away.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: What about the 4 000 people who signed the petition?

Hon TOM HELM: The member mentioned in his speech that the specialist visits every six or 12 months. I wish to place the facts on the record. I quote the following points that apply to Nickol Bay Hospital at Karratha: A dermatologist visits every six months -

Hon N.F. Moore: That is if a problem is not faced in the middle of that six month period.

Hon TOM HELM: The person will be sent to Perth. The member should understand that if a doctor states that a person should see a specialist - and a specialist is not due to visit for, say, six months - the person will fly to Perth to have the problem fixed.

Hon N.F. Moore: The member believes in fairies; the system does not work in that way.

Hon TOM HELM: Is the member saying that the GP does not tick the appropriate box?

Hon N.F. Moore: A number of examples have been given where the GP's wishes have been overridden by the administrators.

Hon TOM HELM: Can the member be specific about those examples?

Hon N.F. Moore: Yes; but not by name.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Tom Helm should direct his remarks to the Chair. All other members should not interject. We all want to go home tonight.

Hon TOM HELM: I feel very strongly about this issue; it is one which is being exaggerated by Hon N.F. Moore. My information is that at Karratha a dermatologist visits every six months; an ENT specialist visits every two months; a general surgeon visits fortnightly; a gynaecologist visits fortnightly; a medical registrar visits fortnightly; two orthopaedic surgeons each visit monthly; an ophthalmologist visits every six months; a paediatrician visits monthly, and two paediatricians visit two monthly; a plastic surgeon visits quarterly; a psychiatrist visits monthly; and a rheumatologist visits six monthly. I cannot give an example of a specialist visiting only yearly. The ophthalmologist visits six monthly and the rheumatologist six monthly, but in all other cases the visits by specialists are more frequent. I suggest the reason they do not visit more often than six monthly is that the number of patients does not warrant more frequent visits.

I agree with Hon Norman Moore that the people of the north west are entitled to a better service; they are entitled to a hospital of the same capacity as Royal Perth Hospital in every mining town. The people of the north west are entitled to have access to brain surgery, heart transplants and other services. The point is that it is easy to say they are entitled to those services but the provision of funds is a different story altogether.

I have referred only to one town - Karratha, in the Shire of Roebourne. The information I have offered is useful because the petitioners have been misled by Hon Norman Moore.

Hon N.F. Moore: That is rubbish! It is their petition; they organised it; it has nothing to do with me.

Hon TOM HELM: You presented it.

Hon N.F. Moore: As their local member; it was their idea.

Hon TOM HELM: The member pointed out to those people, did he, that the petition was incorrect but he would deliver it anyway?

Hon N.F. Moore: The people initiated the petition.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon TOM HELM: I suggest if a member presents a petition in this place he takes some responsibility for it. The petition comes from the Shire of Roebourne and I wish to point out to the people in that shire that they have been misled by Hon Norman Moore.

The Roebourne Hospital is visited by an obstetrics and gynaecology specialist monthly; Dr Ives travels down from Hedland.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon J.M. Brown): Order! This is not the first time I have referred to cross-Chamber chatter when a member is attempting to address the Chair. Such chatter is not fair to the member on his feet nor to the Hansard reporter; it is particularly discourteous to the Chair. Members should remember my remarks before interjecting again.

Hon TOM HELM: The petitioners live in Karratha. I have been explaining the situation with specialists travelling to the Nickol Bay Hospital. Nickol Bay Hospital has 14 specialists allocated to it; an obstetrician is provided on a monthly basis, a gynaecologist on a monthly basis, a paediatrician on a two monthly basis, and a medical specialist on a monthly basis. The number of specialists who are sent to Karratha and Roebourne Hospitals every year is greater than mentioned by Hon Norman Moore in his speech.

Referring to the distribution of funds, \$7.3 million was allocated and \$5.9 million was spent.

I can only suggest that an expectation was held by the Health Department and the Minister that a certain amount would be spent according to previous figures; however, during that time we had the pilots' strike. If people wanted to travel to Perth, they did not have the option of flying, and the return bus fare is one of those things that makes people suspicious, because it is much lower than the air fare. If members think about it, this will explain why the sum allocated was not all spent. Everybody was cutting back and much less was spent on air travel during that period.

Hon N.F. Moore: Go and talk to Ansett WA; you might learn something.

Hon TOM HELM: I speak to Geoff Court a lot and he never mentioned anything to me.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: Raise the matter with him.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I would prefer the member to raise the matter with me.

Hon TOM HELM: Why do we need to send people to Perth when the specialists are provided for the north already? The specialists should be taken up to the patients.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: I agree.

Hon TOM HELM: We are doing that.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: It was you who said that it was up to the doctors.

Hon TOM HELM: Of course it is up to the doctors. If one has a broken leg and no bone specialist is available at, say, Port Hedland Hospital, one would be referred to a specialist by the doctor.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: If he says go to Royal Perth Hospital, that is what one would do - by bus.

Hon TOM HELM: But who ticks the boxes?

Hon P.H. Lockyer: Why are people screaming?

Hon TOM HELM: I did not say that we did not have a problem. I said that these matters are administered by human beings. I have spoken to people on local committees who have demonstrated to me that we have some problems with PATS; some people fall through the safety net and are treated wrongly in some cases. Hon Norman Moore, Hon Phil Lockyer, Hon Tom Stephens and I have been involved in these cases which have fallen through the loopholes; however, we do not bring them to the Parliament and say that it is a major problem.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: It is a major problem.

Hon TOM HELM: It is a major problem for the people who are affected; but across the board there is not a major problem.

Hon E.J. Charlton: You have made your point very well.

Hon TOM HELM: I feel very strongly about this issue because it is the worst kind of beat up - it is a political game. I know that members realise that I am a sensitive fellow and easily hurt, but these statements involve the worst aspects of human nature in that it amounts to exploitation of the disadvantaged. There is no justification for that. It is possible to say that things are wrong with this Government, but it cannot be said that it is not responding to the needs of the community in the north west. A dire need for specialists existed in the area, and they have been provided. One must also recognise that the population of the north west includes people who do not belong to Western Australia, as some of them come from strange places with no family or support system in Perth.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Some even come from overseas!

Hon TOM HELM: Yes, we allow foreigners into this country. In view of requests that specialists be provided in the north, they have been provided. Hon Norman Moore was asking us to provide trips down to Perth whether the patients wanted them or not.

Hon N.F. Moore: Don't be stupid!

Hon TOM HELM: I am sure members opposite know people who do not like flying and if someone is sick and must see a specialist the flight certainly will not help the situation.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: That is a spurious argument.

Hon TOM HELM: If Hon Phil Lockyer and Hon Norman Moore are suggesting to me that Ansett WA will tell me that there is a down turn in PAT flights -

Hon P.H. Lockyer: Methinks you doth protest too much.

Hon TOM HELM: I cannot protest enough. I feel very strongly that people who are sick need support; they do not need to be told that their livelihood is in jeopardy or that their complaint could be made worse by travelling for 22 hours on a bus because of the kind of information spread around by Hon Norman Moore. We must reassure people and not beat up the issue. The situation must be explained.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: I have listened to your argument carefully and I reject it.

Hon TOM HELM: The member has listened to my argument and rejected it, but the fact is that a pilots' strike occurred so the budget allocation was not spent - he rejects that. He also rejects that specialists were requested by people in the north west and that the Government has responded to that request.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: I reject your argument that there is no problem.

Hon TOM HELM: I did not say that there was no problem; I said that anybody who brings a matter to the House in this way brings disrespect on himself.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: Nonsense.

Hon TOM HELM: The cases to which I have had to respond have indicated that some hospital administrators have misinterpreted the guidelines.

Hon E.J. Charlton: The answer is to get number one or number two on the ticket next time.

Hon TOM HELM: We may get number four next time!

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! I ask the member to address the motion.

Hon TOM HELM: What Hon Eric Charlton said might have come true if Hon Norman Moore had decided to continue his line with his north west constituents, because he was a worry and was doing rather well. However, by the rubbish he is putting out now he is treating the constituents in the north west like idiots. The people who have had to use that system will not appreciate the remarks that have been made about them. I ask the House to consider what I have said and reject the motion by Hon Norman Moore.

[Question put.]

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon J.M. Brown): Order! I paused for a long time after voices were called. I am not trying to stifle debate, but members know the rules. When the President or his deputy puts the question and call for voices and no-one is on his feet he must put the motion. I had already noted the ayes when Hon Norman Moore made a decision to stand. On this occasion I will allow him the right to reply. However, I want members to pay a lot more attention to the business of the House.

#### *Point of Order*

Hon TOM STEPHENS: As the Deputy President will appreciate, arrangements are made behind the Chair. Hon Phil Lockyer was expected to speak, and as a result I was waiting for the appropriate opportunity to take the call, but Hon Phil Lockyer seems to have chickened out. Would you be able to put the question again to provide the opportunity of my taking the call?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I have no intention of upholding that point of order. Irrespective of any arrangements made behind the Chair I had put the question to the House. I fulfilled my responsibility by asking for those against it. However, I have already determined that Hon Norman Moore has the final call.

#### *Debate Resumed*

HON N.F. MOORE (Mining and Pastoral) [5.23 pm]: I apologise for my tardiness in getting to my feet, but I expected Hon Tom Stephens to speak in defence of the Government's position. The Minister who responded on behalf of the Government demonstrated an obvious lack of knowledge of the system. She stood up and simply said that



the system was wonderful, that it was working well and that I had no valid reason for moving the motion and should go away and do something else. Her response demonstrated a total lack of sensitivity and concern for the petitioners. In their own handwriting they set down the circumstances that had affected them. They are prepared to provide testimonials to the Minister for Health, to me, and to other people so that we are aware of the existing state of affairs.

I take great exception to the remarks made by Hon Tom Helm. He has accused me of politicking with the misfortune of others. That is not so, and I will explain the circumstances again for the honourable gentleman's information.

I have received representations from people in my electorate about the operation of the PAT scheme. Occasionally we have a victory and occasionally we do not, but in recent months an increasing number of people have complained about the scheme. When I visited Karratha a number of people asked me to come and see them.

Hon Tom Stephens: That must be an unusual event.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I have an office in Karratha, which is more than Hon Tom Stephens has.

Hon Tom Stephens: I share an office and facilities with my lower House counterpart.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Yes, paid for by the Government. I pay for my own.

Hon Reg Davies: That is an indication of how keen the member is.

Hon N.F. MOORE: People in Karratha used to go to the Labor member but they come to me because they get a service from my office which they do not get from the absent member for Ashburton. That will come home to roost - take that on board.

Hon Tom Stephens: Is the member going to run for Ashburton?

Hon N.F. MOORE: Not at all. The Liberal Party has people who will stand for Ashburton and who are fine candidates.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The member should confine his remarks to the motion.

Hon N.F. MOORE: A group of residents who were concerned about the PAT scheme established a committee called Citizens for Health and asked if I would help. The group said they intended to present a petition so I suggested they should petition Parliament. They informed me that they intended making their position known to the media and to get testimonials from people on their problems with PAT. I said, "Go for your lives."

Hon B.L. Jones: Did you check whether their information was correct before you encouraged them?

Hon N.F. MOORE: I had already taken up the concerns of a number of my constituents who had experienced problems with the scheme.

Hon B.L. Jones: I am referring to the air travel part of it.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The system is breaking down and the Opposition will do something about it. I told the Citizens for Health people that I would present their petition to Parliament. To demonstrate that they are non-political they also gave petitions to the member for Ashburton in the other House. At the instigation of my constituents, I responded to a situation which developed in the Pilbara. I told them that I would be moving a motion to draw attention to their petition, and that is what I am doing today.

I hope Hon Tom Helm clearly understands that this is not something I initiated. My constituents wrote their letters without discussion with me. I do not know 99 per cent of the people who wrote the letters; I have never met them. They wrote the letters in an attempt to publicise what they considered a serious problem in the Pilbara. Hon Tom Helm and the Minister said that there had been no changes to the guidelines, but they did acknowledge there may have been changes in the interpretation of the guidelines. It does not matter whether the guidelines have changed or the interpretation of them has changed, there has been a dramatic decrease in the number of patients travelling by air. Hon Tom Stephens should talk to Ansett WA to find out what sort of decrease there has been.

Hon Tom Stephens: Has Hon Norman Moore heard about the patients who attend doctors in Darwin? Has he heard about the cost savings involved in that scheme? Has he tried to find out? He is a mischief maker.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon N.F. MOORE: Hon Tom Stephens cannot get up on his feet and make a speech -

Hon Tom Stephens: The member knows I was tricked out of my speaking time.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Before the debate collapsed Hon Tom Stephens could have got on his feet and made a speech.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! I would appreciate if Hon Norman Moore would address the motion before the House. I remind the member on his feet that I have already canvassed other speakers. I have allowed Hon N.F. Moore the right to close the debate and I do not want any further interjections.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Hon Tom Stephens could have made a contribution at any time; instead he chose to waste my time.

It is the duty of members of Parliament to bring the concerns of their constituents to the Parliament and that is what I am doing. I have presented the genuine concerns of several thousand Western Australians about a reduction of 20 per cent in the money spent on the PAT scheme between 1988-89 and 1989-90. That is the fact of the matter, not the absolute tripe and nonsense trotted out by the Minister about a 30 per cent increase. There has been a 30 per cent increase in the allocation, but \$150 million could be allocated to this scheme and the Government could say it had increased it by 10 000 per cent. However, that would be misleading and the Minister knows it. The claim that the scheme has been increased by 30 per cent is totally misleading.

I am prepared to accept Hon Tom Helm's view that no change has been made to the guidelines and say that the reduction has been brought about by a change in the interpretation of the guidelines. Whatever it is, fewer people are travelling by air and considerably more are travelling by bus. Twenty-two hours on a bus is not right. Hon Tom Helm read the names of some specialists who visit the north. What he said was right, but that is a very small drop in the bucket when one considers the number of specialist areas that exist. He then said that some specialists visit the north only every six months. If one is sick in between the six months, that is bad luck, according to some people.

This is not a beat-up; it is a genuine attempt to bring to the attention of the House the concerns of my constituents, who are happy for that to happen. They hope as do I that, by bringing this matter to the attention of the Government, it will not bury its head in the sand and say there is no problem but will do something about it.

Question put and passed.

## STATE FORESTS - REVOCATION AND PARTIAL REVOCATION OF DEDICATION

*Nos 1 and 45; 4, 15, 30 and 41 - Assembly's Resolution*

Message from the Assembly received and read requesting concurrence in the following resolution -

That the proposal for the revocation of State Forest Nos 1 and 45 and the partial revocation of State Forest Nos 4, 15, 30 and 41 laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly on 21 August 1990 by command of His Excellency the Governor be carried out.

*Motion to Concur*

HON KAY HALLAHAN (East Metropolitan - Minister for Lands) [5.32 pm]: I move -

That the proposal for the revocation of State Forest Nos 1 and 45 and the partial revocation of State Forest Nos 4, 15, 30 and 41 referred to in message No 49 from the Legislative Assembly and laid on the Table of the Legislative Council on 21 August 1990 be carried out.

Members will note that the proposal relates to the revocation of six areas of State forest which have a combined area of about 3 381 hectares and that the gain to the forest estate through exchanges contingent on three of these proposals is 52 hectares. The loss of 3 329 hectares can be attributed to two areas proposed for inclusion into the Tuart Forest and

the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Parks. I draw members' attention to the fact that dedications as additions to State forests in 1988-89 totalled 627 hectares, while 73 125 hectares were revoked, resulting in a net loss of 72 498 hectares. This decrease was predominantly due to the excision of portions of State Forests Nos 38, 40, 41, 43, 55 and 59 to enable the creation of the Shannon and Mt Frankland National Parks. It gives the Government great pleasure to sponsor this proposal. It continues the pattern this Government has followed in converting to national park areas of State forest which are of considerable value to recreation and conservation. Such is the case with areas Nos 1 and 6.

Area No 1 is situated approximately 18 kilometres south west of Bunbury townsite. It is the last remnant of State Forest No 1 and comprises about 264.5 hectares. This area is known as the Minnipup block. It supports a tuart forest which has important scenic and conservation values. Being isolated from the Tuart Forest National Park, the area is unique in terms of landscape and biota. It is proposed that the area be set aside as a separate reserve which will form part of Tuart Forest National Park. Such action would be consistent with a recommendation within the regional management plan for the Department of Conservation and Land Management's central forest region.

Area No 2 is a portion of State forest having an area of about 2.1 hectares and situated approximately six kilometres south of Collie townsite. It is proposed that it be exchanged for reserve 9290. This land exchange proposal was put forward by the Shire of Collie on behalf of the Preston Road Bush Fire Brigade. The brigade is interested in securing an area of land on which to store its fire fighting equipment. The portion of State Forest No 4 being sought supports a poor quality forest. Its proximity to established pasture has led to the invasion of weeds. Reserve 9290 has an area of 4.0469 hectares. It is set aside for the purpose of sanitary site and is not vested. The reserve contains an open jarrah/marri forest of reasonable health and quality. There is some evidence of leaf miner attack to the jarrah but no signs of dieback. In general the vegetation on this undeveloped reserve is typical of the locality. The proposed exchange will enhance the forest estate while consolidating management boundaries.

Area No 3 is an area of about 0.4 hectares situated approximately five kilometres north of Collie townsite. This portion of State Forest No 15 will be severed from the remainder of the forest by a realignment of the Collie-Tallanulla Road. Once the realignment has been completed the Department of Land Administration intends to sell the isolated piece of land which is presently dedicated as State forest, plus some redundant sections of road reserve, to the adjoining landowner. It is considered that the proposed excision and sale of the subject portion of State forest represents sound land use management.

Area No 4 involves two portions of State Forest No 30 situated adjacent to Bridgetown townsite which have a total area of about 19 hectares. It is proposed to exchange these areas for reserve 15109. The portions of State forest are required by the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes for the establishment of a rubbish disposal site. Although only three or four hectares would be used for refuse disposal, the council is seeking additional land around the proposed site so that the operation can be screened from the Boyup Brook-Bridgetown Road and neighbouring properties. The Health Department of Western Australia has indicated that it supports the shire's application. Given their size and location, the areas of State forest are difficult to manage. They have no outstanding features and are already affected by unauthorised gravel removal and illegal dumping of rubbish. From the viewpoint of disease management there would be difficulties in keeping the areas free of dieback.

Reserve 15109 is set aside for the purpose of water and is unvested. It has an area of 20.2343 hectares. The reserve carries a predominantly healthy, mature age forest with thick scrub in the gullies. The latter supports a wide range of fauna and provides good nesting areas for a variety of birds. Along with the adjoining State forest, reserve 15109 forms part of a proclaimed disease risk area. This facilitates protection of the area from the introduction or spread of dieback. Inclusion of the reserve into State forest would rationalise the forest boundary by removing a salient. The proposed exchange is deemed to be of mutual benefit to the participants.

Area No 5 is of about 28 hectares situated approximately 15 kilometres east of Northcliffe townsite. This portion of State Forest No 41 is proposed for exchange with an equal area of nearby private property. If the exchange eventuates, the applicant will construct a dam and

develop a marron farm on the land he receives. The area of State forest earmarked for release supports a poor quality jarrah/marri forest with some karri trees, a creek line and a large area of swamp vegetation. It contains only a small volume of marketable timber. The land on offer has been partially cleared. About 25 per cent is open pasture while a further 25 per cent is parkland, cleared and carrying a stock of karri poles with pasture underneath. All mill logs have been removed from the remaining 50 per cent which now carries a good quality mixed age regrowth karri forest. The cleared sections are suitable for growing karri and other merchantable forest produce which would exceed the value of the standing timber on the portion of State forest suggested for exchange. It is considered that the proposed exchange offers advantages to both parties.

Area No 6 is of about 3 067 hectares situated approximately 21 kilometres north west of Augusta townsite and being the whole of the land contained in State Forest No 45. This area has impressive stands of regrowth karri forest. It is currently known as the Boranup management priority area. The purpose of the MPA is to conserve the flora, fauna and landscape values of the Boranup forest. In accordance with the regional management plan for the Department of Conservation and Land Management's central forest region it is proposed that the area be added to the adjoining Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park.

I commend the motion to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon Barry House.

## **SOUTH WEST DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AMENDMENT BILL**

### *Receipt and First Reading*

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by Hon Graham Edwards (Minister for Police), read a first time.

### *Second Reading*

**HON GRAHAM EDWARDS** (North Metropolitan - Minister for Police) [5.41 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The South West Development Authority was established by the Government in 1983 as a division of the Department of Regional Development and the North West. In 1984 legislation was passed to establish the authority on a statutory basis. The functions of the authority, as laid down in the Act, are "to plan, coordinate and promote the economic and social development of the south west region". The south west region has grown substantially in population and employment since the authority began in 1983. A significant increase has occurred in the economic benefit the region delivers to the State as a whole, while, at the same time, the people of the region are now better served by a much wider range of human services and facilities. Much of this has been as a result of the wide ranging activities of the South West Development Authority.

Initially, the authority focused essentially on developing Bunbury as a regional capital, with some activities in the wider south west region. In 1985 an office of the authority was established in Mandurah and in 1988 offices were established in Collie and Manjimup. The authority now takes a completely regional approach to economic and social development. The amendments proposed to the Act reflect the evolution of the authority and will enable it to service the south west region more effectively. The three major components in the structure of the authority are the board of management, the advisory committee and the staff. The amendments aim to improve the structure of the authority as it relates to these three areas.

Under the present Act, the board of management consists of a chairman, a deputy chairman and one other member. The chairman is the director ex officio of the authority. The amendments related to this area establish a board of up to seven members appointed by me as the Minister for South-West. The board will consist of a chairman, a deputy chairman, the executive director of the authority ex officio, and up to four other members. One of the members will now be nominated to the Minister by the local authorities in the south west region. I shall speak more about the position of executive director shortly. The effect of these amendments will be to separate the duties and responsibilities of the board chairman,

who is appointed by the Minister, from those of the senior executive officer - appointed under the Public Service Act - who is responsible for the day to day operations of the authority. Enlarging the board from its present three to up to seven members will enable the interests of the whole south west region to be more effectively represented. Board members are expected to have extensive knowledge of the region as well as expertise in management, policy formulation and knowledge of economic and social sectors and issues. Given the diverse nature of the south west region, which presently has 13 shires as well as the City of Bunbury and the new City of Mandurah, it is difficult to cover all the matters affecting the subregions adequately, as well as economic and social issues, with three board members. The present board members support the amendments to enlarge the board.

The function of the advisory committee is to advise the authority on the exercise and performance of its powers, functions and duties under the Act. The advisory committee consists of a chairman and up to 12 members from the community, and an official representative from local government. The chairman and deputy chairman of the board are ex officio members. The advisory committee will be appointed by the Minister for South-West, following advertisements calling for nominations from the community, and, as far as practicable, the appointments aim to reflect the diverse nature and interests of the people of the south west. Again, however, the population growth in the south west over recent years, and approaches from subregional areas within the south west for additional representation on the advisory committee, have caused the Government to seek the power under the Act to establish area advisory committees to represent the needs of particular areas within the region where appropriate.

The function of an area advisory committee will be to advise the authority on the exercise and performance of its powers, functions and duties under the Act in relation to the particular area within the south west for which the committee is established. The effect of this amendment will be to give to the people of the south west region an improved avenue of representation to the authority on matters most particularly affecting their area. The Peel subregion is one area in which an area advisory committee will be established. The population of this subregion has grown markedly in recent years, and with Mandurah now declared a city, a clear need exists for a bigger say for the people of this area in the direction of the activities of the authority in that subregion.

Under the present Act there is an area of anomaly in the duties and responsibilities of the director, deputy director and senior executive officer. The amendments proposed will remove this anomaly. It is intended to abolish the positions of director and deputy director. The position of senior executive officer will be replaced by that of executive director. The executive director will be appointed under the Public Service Act and will be the senior public servant and responsible for the day to day operations of the authority. The executive director will be an ex officio member of the board. The effect of this amendment will be to clearly separate and define the duties and responsibilities of the chairman of the board and the senior public servant, the executive director. The executive director will report to the chairman of the board.

Two other amendments are proposed to the Act. Inclusion of the Shire of Boddington: The South West Development Authority presently services 13 shires, the City of Bunbury and the new City of Mandurah. The shires are Murray, Waroona, Harvey, Collie, Boyup Brook, Bridgetown-Greenbushes, Manjimup, Nannup, Augusta-Margaret River, Busselton, Donnybrook-Balingup, Capel and Dardanup. The Shire of Boddington adjoins the Shires of Murray and Collie in the north east of the region and has approached the authority to be included in its area of responsibility. The shire says that it has strong links with the Shire of Murray and the City of Mandurah. Its interests are more closely aligned with the Peel subregion, rather than the shires on its eastern and south eastern boundaries. The South West Development Authority has had a number of contacts with the Shire of Boddington and the board has visited to discuss ways that the authority could service it. The amendment to the Act makes provision to include Boddington in the area of responsibility of the authority.

Under the present Act, a review of the operation and effectiveness of the Act was required to be carried out after four years. That review was undertaken in 1988. The amendment will require a review to be undertaken five years after the commencement of the South West Development Authority Act 1990.

While these amendments may appear relatively minor, in fact they are each significant in ensuring the continued effective operation of the authority for the future. There can be no doubt in anyone's mind, especially the people of the south west and the local governments in the region, of the effectiveness and worthwhile nature of the South West Development Authority. It has become a benchmark for regional development in this State and has resulted in a measurable improvement in the economic and social wellbeing of the people of the south west region.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon Barry House.

## WESTERN AUSTRALIAN (SHARK BAY) HERITAGE PROTECTION AUTHORITY BILL

### *Second Reading*

HON P.G. PENDAL (South Metropolitan) [5.47 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

For some time now many people in the Shark Bay area have been alarmed at the prospect of the region being nominated by the Hawke Government for World Heritage listing. These people, who recognise the environmental significance of the region, are fearful that ultimately the livelihood of many will be put in jeopardy because a hidden agenda exists to close down such industries as fishing, pastoral and salt production.

The Liberal Party has not, and does not, oppose World Heritage listing per se. What it does oppose and resent is the unilateral action of any Federal Government in proposing a nomination to Paris in the face of State or local opposition. There is no doubt that feelings are running high in the region. The clear belief is that Shark Bay has become the token that the Hawke Government offered environmental extremists on the eastern seaboard in return for electoral support at the Federal election in March. The Liberal Party does not believe that protection of the undoubted environmental qualities of the area is dependent on a world committee which sits in Paris and whose membership often is made up of nations with less than perfect records in quality of life issues. With that in mind, the Opposition takes the view that Western Australian assets can best be preserved and enhanced by Western Australians. Significantly, this was the view of the Western Australian Labor Government until quite recently. The change of stance by the present State Administration has never been explained.

In June 1988 the then Dowding Government adopted the Shark Bay region plan which was produced by the State Planning Commission and the Department of Conservation and Land Management. In the adopted plan the then Premier Mr Dowding provided an accompanying statement of his Government's direct endorsement. He rightly drew attention to an area unique in natural beauty and history. He correctly observed that it was the site of the first recorded European landing in Western Australia and is the home of the now famous dolphins at Monkey Mia. The area also has the fortune to have at Hamelin Pool some of the best examples of stromatolites. Mr Dowding went on to acknowledge the point I seek to emphasise; that is, the area is also important because it is used for fishing, pastoralism, salt production and tourism. Because it was necessary to address the needs of all these sectors and because of the desire to protect the area's conservation value, various authorities were given the job of producing a strategy for its future management. Subsequently Mr Dowding was able to say that the document he was then endorsing represented, in his own words, the "final plan". He concluded -

The strategy has been widely accepted and recognises community economic and conservation needs . . . It uses a balance of commonsense and practical knowledge.

In applauding that stance of the previous Premier, one is again obliged to ask: What, since the adoption of that plan, has prompted the new Government to head off to Paris in a bid to gain protection? It is clear from Mr Dowding's remarks and the professional and scientific work of the State Planning Commission and the Department of Conservation and Land Management that the region plan is an excellent strategy for the future. As the nomination date to Paris draws near, and as both the Federal and State Governments come under

increasing pressure from the extremist elements in the conservation movement, the Liberal Party and its members of Parliament made arrangements to visit the area again, to look at all aspects of the matter, and to spell out any alternative plan if, indeed, one existed.

This Bill is that alternative. It seeks to create, as a statutory instrument of this Parliament, a special Shark Bay Heritage Protection Authority. The task of the authority will be to oversee the implementation of the 1988 plan which has been referred to and which was endorsed by Mr Dowding and his Government. We see this local, Western Australian control and management as infinitely preferable to Canberra or Paris-based control. We see no reason why others outside the State would manage such a diverse resource better than can be achieved locally.

The authority will have six members, including a chairman. We envisage that the interests of conservation, industry, the State and local government will be represented. It is our intention to use existing resources within Government to service the authority, although provision exists to seek the appointment of staff members. The Bill will be widely circulated in the region and to other interested parties. It may well be that suggestions will come from these sources that will lead to changes as the Bill makes its way through the Parliament. In fact, we would welcome that process. I might add, as a matter of interest, that the general concept of introducing this Bill to create a new authority has been canvassed among local groups and local government, and it has been welcomed. We believe this is a clear case where the Government should join the Opposition on a bipartisan basis.

We recently came by a set of proposals called "Shark Bay Commonwealth/Western Australian Management Arrangements, Proposed Complementary Legislation". Frankly, I am appalled at some of the contents. For example, under subsection (9b) headed "Shark Bay Management Committee" specific reference is made to the interests of "parks and reserves, fishing zones, and pastoral lands". No mention is made of salt production. I would have thought society would welcome the salt production industry, given that it relies exclusively on solar energy in its production process.

I also point to a serious deficiency in that the proposed Ministerial Council will be chaired by the Western Australian Minister responsible for the proposed Federal-State legislation. No doubt that will be the Minister for the Environment. It has been put to me that it would be as inappropriate for that Minister to chair the Council as it would be for the Minister for Resources to do so. A counter suggestion is that the Minister for Lands would be more appropriate. But, thankfully, the proposals contained in the document to which I have referred appear not to have found favour with Mr Pearce. I note that a Press statement dated 6 September said -

He is writing his own proposals. If that's the case, he may be in a position to support this Bill, and if necessary amend it.

... the proposals his office had received from the Commonwealth officers were unacceptable to the local community and the State.

That precisely is our view. Mr Pearce goes on to say he was disturbed to hear reports that the Commonwealth proposals he had taken in good faith to Shark Bay had not been approved by the Commonwealth Minister, Mrs Ros Kelly. All the reasons listed in that 6 September statement as to why the Commonwealth's proposals are unacceptable are all the reasons the Government can support this Bill. For example, Mr Pearce condemns the Federal proposals because they will give the Commonwealth the main say over administration of Shark Bay, they will exclude local control, and the boundaries will not be in keeping with State and local community views. This Liberal Bill now before the House will correct that position. I repeat that the Bill -

- (1) Seeks to retain State and local control over the area.
- (2) Envisages industry, environmental, State and local representation.
- (3) Sticks to the boundaries contained in the 1988 report.

Shark Bay is a beautiful area with conservation values that are in need of protection and management. We see no clash between achieving that protection and management on the one hand, and protecting legitimate productive sectors such as fishing, pastoralism and salt production on the other hand. The fact that all those interests are recognised in the

Government's 1988 region plan for Shark Bay leads us to believe that all parties in this Parliament can support this Bill. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon Tom Stephens.

*House adjourned at 5.58 pm*

---



## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

### TAFE - "ACTING" EMPLOYEES

#### *Substantive Experience Claim*

662. Hon REG DAVIES to the Minister for Planning representing the Minister assisting the Minister for Education with TAFE:

Is the Minister aware that a recent decision by the Office of TAFE allows those in positions with no permanently appointed incumbent to claim "acting" time as substantive experience, this affording these "acting" employees a distinct advantage when permanency is on offer?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

The following information has been supplied by the Minister assisting the Minister for Education with TAFE -

A procedure was developed in agreement with the SSTU in April 1989 for the filling of vacant Education Act positions. The purpose of the agreement is to have teaching positions within the Department of TAFE filled on the basis of merit. The department advertises temporary vacant positions to all staff in order to seek expressions of interest, upon receipt of which a bipartite selection panel recommends an applicant to "act" in the position. This procedure is part of TAFE's ongoing commitment to merit based promotion and appointment. This approach accords with employees' recognition of "acting", which is appropriate given the selection procedures that take place prior to placement in the vacant position. In addition, it should be noted that "acting" is only one aspect that is considered as part of the merit based selection process for promotion or appointment.

### TAFE - TUITION HOURS REDUCTION

#### *Student Capabilities Reduction*

663. Hon REG DAVIES to the Minister for Planning representing the Minister assisting the Minister for Education with TAFE:

Does the Government believe that its decision to reduce the number of tuition hours for full time TAFE certificate and diploma students will not cause a reduction in the capabilities or capacities of graduating students?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

I refer the honourable member to the answer to Legislative Assembly question 1113, 1990.

### TAFE - NEW ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

#### *Cost Effective Areas*

664. Hon REG DAVIES to the Minister for Planning representing the Minister assisting the Minister for Education with TAFE:

Will the Minister indicate in what areas TAFE's new administrative structure is more cost effective than the system which it has replaced?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

I refer the honourable member to the answer to Legislative Assembly question 1113, 1990.

### TAFE - TUITION HOURS REDUCTION

#### *Reason*

665. Hon REG DAVIES to the Minister for Planning representing the Minister assisting the Minister for Education with TAFE:

Until 1989 the tuition hours for all full time TAFE certificate and diploma students was at least 24 hours class commitment per week. Since then the Office of TAFE has issued directives to TAFE colleges to reduce tuition hours for full time students in all certificate and diploma courses, by between six and eight hours per week.

- (1) Is the main reason for the cutback in hours a money saving exercise?
- (2) If the answer is yes, how does this decision tie in with the Government's much publicised commitment to better quality vocational training?
- (3) If the answer to (1) is no, can the Minister -
  - (a) list the educational logic which rationalised the implementation of cutbacks in hours; and
  - (b) name the vocational training or educational experts who recommended the implementation of these class commitment time reductions?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

I refer the honourable member to the answer to Legislative Assembly question 1113, 1990.

### TAFE - TUITION HOURS REDUCTION

#### *Secondary School Tuition Hours*

666. Hon REG DAVIES to the Minister for Planning representing the Minister assisting the Minister for Education with TAFE:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that students in full time secondary education in years 11 and 12 receive as many as 26 hours of class commitment tuition per week, whilst a student of similar age in a full time TAFE certificate or diploma course may receive as few as 16 hours' class commitment tuition per week?
- (2) Do the cutbacks in hours of class commitment imply that TAFE students are considered less worthy of a rounded general education to assist maturation than do their counterparts in secondary schools?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

The Minister assisting the Minister for Education with TAFE has provided the following reply -

I refer the honourable member to the answer to Legislative Assembly question 1113, 1990.

### SHEEP - LIVE SHEEP TRADE

#### *City of Fremantle and Traffic Effects - Bulk Cargo Jetty Loading Potential*

703. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the adverse impact that the live sheep trade has on the City of Fremantle and traffic which passes through adjoining residential suburbs?
- (2) Is the Minister aware of the potential that exists at the bulk cargo jetty for the loading of live sheep?
- (3) Will the Minister undertake to commission an independent assessment of the use of the bulk cargo jetty for the loading of live sheep which can be economically modified to facilitate the trade, providing significant opportunities for improvement in environmental management?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

- (1) The Government is aware of the impact of the live sheep traffic which passes through Fremantle and has restricted the entry to Victoria Quay for these vehicles to the No 3 gate at the eastern end of the wharf, thereby eliminating completely the need for them to travel through the city centre.

- (2) The use of the bulk cargo jetty for the loading of live sheep has previously been considered; however, the present infrastructure in the inner harbour is more suitable for this trade, particularly as frequently up to three ships can be loading simultaneously.
- (3) No. The bulk cargo jetty is designed specifically to handle bulk cargoes and must be retained for that purpose. Considerable interest is being shown in the bulk cargo jetty by exporters of dry bulk commodities. This interest, together with an increasing demand for the port's sole bulk loading facility, will no doubt lead to the erection of a bulk loader on the bulk cargo jetty.

**TAFE - TEMPORARY EDUCATION OFFICER GRADE 1 (TEACHING METHODS)**

*Staff Development Centre, Mt Lawley - Appointment*

720. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Planning representing the Minister assisting the Minister for Education with TAFE:

- (1) Has a position for a temporary Education Officer Grade 1 (teaching methods) to be located at the Staff Development Centre, Mt Lawley from September to December 1990, been recently advertised?
- (2) If so, do the essential qualifications for the position require an applicant to have a teaching qualification?
- (3) If not, why not?
- (4) What is the salary range to be paid to the appointee who may have a recognised vocational qualification but not a teaching qualification?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

The following information has been supplied by the Minister assisting the Minister for Education with TAFE -

- (1) Yes, according to information supplied by the executive director of TAFE, by way of expression of interest, advertised within the Department of TAFE.

(2)-(3)

Yes. However, a teaching qualification was inadvertently listed as a desirable qualification, rather than essential. In regard to this, the Minister assisting the Minister for Education with TAFE has requested that in future, if a job advertisement is in any way incorrect, it should be readvertised. However, in this case as the selection processes for the position have been completed, the position will not be readvertised. The Department of TAFE made a decision not to readvertise, as the error in the advertisement was not viewed as disadvantaging anyone wishing to apply. The error had no effect on the selection process as the teaching criteria listed as desirable and in fact the recommended applicant for this position holds several teaching qualifications.

- |     |                     |                   |
|-----|---------------------|-------------------|
| (4) | Four year trained - | \$40 297-\$43 260 |
|     | Other -             | \$37 152-\$39 489 |

**TAFE - TUITION HOURS REDUCTION**

*Student Enrolments*

721. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Planning representing the Minister assisting the Minister for Education with TAFE:

- (1) How many hours tuition each week are full time TAFE students studying for associate, diploma and certificate courses required to undertake?
- (2) Has there been a reduction in these hours in the past 12 months?
- (3) If so, how many hours per week have been cut back and for what reasons?
- (4) How many TAFE students were enrolled in recognised TAFE courses as at December of the last four years?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

The following information has been supplied by the Minister assisting the Minister for Education with TAFE -

(1)-(3)

I refer the honourable member to the answer to Legislative Assembly question 1113, 1990.

(4) Numbers of students enrolled in prevocational and vocational TAFE courses over the past four years were -

1986	76 373
1987	83 427
1988	90 969
1989	93 440

#### KWINANA STRIP - EMPLOYEE STATISTICS

*Heavy, Medium and Light Industries*

752. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations:

- (1) What is the total number of employees in the heavy, medium and light industries within the area known as the Kwinana Strip?
- (2) According to ABS statistics, what percentage of those employees live within -
  - (a) five kilometres;
  - (b) 10 kilometres; or
  - (c) more than 10 kilometres from their place of employment?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

The Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations has provided the following reply -

The statistics requested are not available in existing Australian Bureau of Statistics data sets and require new cross tabulations to be undertaken. The honourable member will be provided with the information in writing as soon as this task has been completed.

#### PORT KENNEDY REGIONAL RECREATION CENTRE - DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT TABLING

765. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Finance and Economic Development:

Given that the Government has now made public its conditions against which the development proposal for the Port Kennedy Regional Recreation Centre - Becher Point stage 1 may be implemented -

- (1) When will the Minister table the formal development agreement which the State will enter into with the developers of the Port Kennedy Regional Recreation Centre?
- (2) Has a draft agreement proposal been prepared?
- (3) If so, when was it prepared?
- (4) Have consolidated and amended commitments toward the development been prepared, and if so, when were these prepared?
- (5) Will the Minister provide copies of these consolidated and amended commitments?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

The Minister for Finance and Economic Development has provided the following reply -

- (1) Yes, subject to the parties to the agreement giving their consent, when it has been accepted by the Government and the proponent.

- (2) Yes. An initial draft of an agreement proposal was prepared.
- (3) This was prepared early in 1989.
- (4) A final form of agreement is in the course of preparation, incorporating conditions included in the statement by the Minister for the Environment that the proposal may proceed.
- (5) See (1) above.

**"ONTRACK" MARCH 1990 EDITION - LANDBRIDGE SCHEME**  
*"Deal Highly Attractive" Factors*

771. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Transport:

In the March 1990 edition of *Ontrack*, published by Westrail, the Commissioner of Railways was reported on page three as stating -

Under the landbridge scheme containers destined for the eastern states would be unloaded at Fremantle and then railed to their destinations.

Clients will get flexibility, reliability and fast turnarounds and our rates will make the deal highly attractive.

Would the Minister advise -

- (1) Specifically what factors would make a "deal highly attractive"?
- (2) How those factors can be expected to vary between east-west and west-east movements on rail?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

- (1) As stated by the commissioner, flexibility, reliability, fast turnarounds, and freight rates would make a deal highly attractive.
- (2) The factors on both the east-west and west-east railway corridors are similar and Railways of Australia's objective is for continued improvement in performance.

**SPORT AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT - NARROGIN OFFICE**  
*Two Employees' Employment Termination*

779. Hon E.J. CHARLTON to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

- (1) Why were two employees of the Department of Sport and Recreation in Narrogin given notice that their employment will be terminated?
- (2) Will this mean the closure of the Narrogin office of the department?
- (3) Is it correct that both employees will be paid for two years after their employment has been terminated?
- (4) If the answer is yes, why are these employees being paid for this period?
- (5) If the answer to (3) is no, how long will they be paid for?
- (6) Who will be paying their salaries after they no longer work for the Department of Sport and Recreation?
- (7) Is this normal practice within the department?
- (8) If the answer is yes, under what authority?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Sport and Recreation has provided the following response -

- (1) Notice of termination of employment has not been given to employees at the Ministry of Sport and Recreation, Narrogin office.
- (2) The actual location of the centre to serve the central south region will be considered as part of the Budget process and resources allocated as appropriate.

(3)-(8)

Refer to answers to questions (1) and (2) above.

**PORTS AND HARBOURS - FREMANTLE HARBOUR***"Report of Computer Model of Fremantle Inner Harbour Operations" -  
North Quay Berths Reallocation*

785. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the report in *The West Australian* on Wednesday 22 August 1990 in which it was stated that a report from an independent consultant had been forwarded to the Minister in respect of computer modelling of the inner harbour operations, and ask -

- (1) Will the Minister confirm that the report has been received?
- (2) Will the Minister confirm that the report includes inter alia an assessment of the feasibility of removing Victoria Quay from service and the relocation of North Quay berths to accept all trading vessels?
- (3) Will the Minister table a copy of the report in Parliament?
- (4) If not, why not?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

(1)-(4)

I understand that the report referred to is the report commissioned and controlled by Fremantle Terminals Limited. I have written to Fremantle Terminals Limited and requested a copy of the report. To date, I have not received a copy of the report and I am, therefore, not familiar with its contents.

**PORTS AND HARBOURS - FREMANTLE HARBOUR***"Report of Computer Model of Fremantle Inner Harbour Operations" -  
North Quay Berths Reallocation*

786. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the report "Report of Computer Model of Fremantle Inner Harbour Operations", July 1990 and ask whether the report concluded that, provided there was a complete reallocation of North Quay berths space to meet the needs of each type of cargo vessel, average vessel queuing times would not be substantially increased?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

The honourable member is referred to the response to question 785.

**DELUXE COACHLINES - CLOSURE***Travellers' Arrangements*

790. Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that hundreds of travellers, having purchased tickets from Deluxe Coachlines are now stranded at various country centres around Western Australia?
- (2) If so, what arrangements, if any, are being made to cater for those who have actually paid for travel and may not have the ability to repurchase?
- (3) What arrangements are being made for substitute services to fill the gap caused by the closure of this bus line?
- (4) Is Westrail able to run emergency services immediately?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

- (1) When Deluxe ceased its operation there were a number of passengers stranded throughout the State and I am advised that this situation has now been resolved.
- (2) (i) Bus Australia, Greyhound and Pioneer Express have honoured Deluxe tickets for travel on a "free-of-charge" basis. This expired 1200 hours, noon, 31 August 1990.
- (ii) As from Friday evening 31 August, 40 separate services were operating throughout Australia. These services were given voluntarily by Deluxe drivers on the major routes.

Fuel and insurance have also been donated by various organisations. These services were only available to stranded Deluxe passengers.

- (iii) On Thursday, 30 August the Western Australian Tourist Centre in Perth instigated a telephone "hot line" to assist stranded passengers; 93 calls were received on Thursday, 30 August and 19 on Friday, 31 August.
- (3) The private sector is adjusting its schedules to cover the demand.
- (4) Westrail has honoured the presentation of Deluxe Coachlines tickets without additional charge and passengers have been accommodated on scheduled services without the need to run additional or emergency services.

#### SCHOOLS - COUNTRY HIGH SCHOOL HOSTELS

##### *Government Funding*

792. Hon MARGARET McALEER to the Minister for Planning representing the Minister for Education:

In the light of declining numbers of resident students in country high school hostels, can the Minister reassure the Parliament that adequate funding will be provided in the Budget to ensure the ongoing provision of these facilities?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following answer -

The Government will meet existing commitments to enable country hostels to operate for the 1990 school year. The overall funding of country high school hostels with declining student numbers is currently being reviewed and a report and recommendations will be provided to Cabinet for consideration prior to the 1991 school year.

#### LEONORA SHIRE - FACSIMILE MESSAGE

799. Hon N.F. MOORE to the Minister for Planning representing the Minister for Local Government:

Further to the answer to question 724 of 1990 -

- (1) Will the Minister advise the time and date the facsimile message was sent to the Shire of Leonora?
- (2) Will the Minister table the facsimile message?
- (3) If not, why not?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

The Minister for Local Government has provided the following response -

- (1) The Shire of Leonora received a facsimile of the letter advising Julian Grill, MLA of the decision at 10.22 am on 24 August 1990.

- (2) Yes, the letter reads as follows -

Dear Mr Grill,

Thank you for your letter of 16th August 1990 requesting approval for the burial of the late Joan Issacs at Wilsons Patch.

Under the provisions of section 12 of the Cemeteries Act I approve of the burial of the remains of the late Joan Issacs at Wilsons Patch.

It would be appreciated if you could convey this advice to the Issacs family at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

SIGNED: GORDON HILL

- (3) Not applicable.

**PORTS AND HARBOURS - VICTORIA QUAY, FREMANTLE**  
*Redevelopment*

806. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of a proposal for redeveloping Victoria Quay and the potential this will create by providing development opportunities for riverfront facilities which would greatly enhance Fremantle as a tourist destination?
- (2) Is the Minister aware of support from local business organisations in Fremantle of the need to improve tourism potential of remantle?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

- (1) Victoria Quay plays an important and strategic role in shipping and cargo handling operations within the Fremantle inner harbour and it will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. It is not appropriate at this stage to relinquish it for alternative purposes. When the study into future port development options which is currently under way is completed and its recommendations are available in 1991, it will be possible to review the future of Victoria Quay as part of the consideration of long term planning strategies for the whole of the inner harbour.
- (2) Yes. The Government has, and will continue to actively develop and support appropriate initiatives to promote the tourism potential of Fremantle.

**PEAT PROJECT - LAKE TORDIT GURRUP, MANJIMUP**

812. Hon W.N. STRETCH to the Minister for Resources :

- (1) Has the Minister been briefed in detail on the development of the peat resource at Lake Tordit Gurrup near Lake Muir in the Shire of Manjimup?
- (2) If the answer is yes, I ask the Minister -
  - (a) when did the last briefing take place;
  - (b) what are the employment numbers projected for -
    - (i) the development and construction phase of the project; and
    - (ii) the operating and production phase of the project;
  - (c) what is the estimated production life of the project on -
    - (i) the proven resource; and
    - (ii) the estimated future resource?



- (3) What income benefit is expected for the Western Australian economy in terms of -
  - (a) Government royalties;
  - (b) export earnings;
  - (c) import replacement value?
- (4) If the answer to (1) is no, will the Minister undertake to be briefed in detail on this project?
- (5) If not, why not?
- (6) Will the Minister make a statement to the House detailing the answers to parts (2) and (3) of this question?
- (7) If not, why not?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) 9 August 1990.
- (3) (b)-(c) The public environmental review (PER) previously submitted by the proponent has been withdrawn. It is expected that the document will be resubmitted to the EPA when additional work has been carried out.

(4)-(5) Not applicable.

- (6) No.
- (7) The information will be publicly available through the EPA process.

**BUILDINGS - OXFORD STREET BUILDING, LEEDERVILLE**  
*Occupational Health and Safety Training - Lease*

824. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations:

- (1) Which locations were considered prior to agreement being reached on the leasing of the building in Oxford Street Leederville, which is used for occupational health and safety training?
- (2) What is the period of the lease on the building and what rental is paid annually for the premises?
- (3) Who are the owners of the building?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

The Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations has provided the following reply -

The honourable member has sought this information previously in question 604, 1990, and a response has been supplied accordingly.

**PAYROLL TAX - RECEIPTS**  
*Rural Based Employers - Abolition*

825. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Finance and Economic Development:

- (1) What was the estimated and actual payroll tax receipts for each of the -
  - (a) 1987-1988;
  - (b) 1988-1989; and
  - (c) 1989-1990
 financial years?
- (2) What would be the reduction in revenue if payroll tax was not collected from employers located outside the metropolitan area?

- (3) Will the Government consider abolishing payroll tax for rural based employers outside the metropolitan area as an incentive for those employers to maintain employment opportunities in rural Western Australia?
- (4) If not, why not?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

The Minister for Finance and Economic Development has provided the following reply -

I refer the member to question 618.

#### GERALDTON CARNATION WEED - AGRICULTURE PROTECTION BOARD CONTROL

829. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Agriculture:

I refer to an article in the Wanneroo Times of 21 August 1990 titled "Poisonous weed plagues Yanchep" and ask -

- (1) Is the infestation of the weed known as Geraldton Carnation (*Euphorbia Terracina*) receiving treatment from the Agriculture Protection Board?
- (2) If so, will the Minister provide details?
- (3) How extensive is this infestation?
- (4) Does the infestation present any health risk to stock or humans in the area?
- (5) Is any assistance being given to the Wanneroo City Council in combating this infestation?
- (6) If so, will the Minister provide details?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Agriculture has provided the following response -

- (1) No. It is not a declared species in the area.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) The plant occurs along sandhills and coastal roadsides in the area and is widespread in similar situations from Geraldton to Esperance.
- (4) Heavy grazing may cause stock poisoning. Broken stems exude a sticky white sap which may cause temporary blindness if allowed to come in contact with human eyes.
- (5) No.
- (6) Not applicable.

#### SCHOOLS - GAS HEATERS *Explosions*

833. Hon MURRAY MONTGOMERY to the Minister for Planning representing the Minister for Services:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that at least 11 gas heaters, similar to those that exploded in the classroom recently, have been taken out of use by SECWA in the Albany area?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that the cause of the explosions has now been identified by the BMA as a build up of dust near the pilot light of the gas heater?
- (3) Has the Minister for Services publicly apologised to the teachers who were publicly blamed for the explosions by not following lighting procedure?
- (4) If the answer is no, why not?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

The Minister for Services has provided the following reply -

- (1) Yes.
- (2) As has been previously stated, the cause of the explosion was someone repeatedly trying to light the heater which led to a build-up of gas. The build-up of the lint was what prevented ignition, but it was not the fundamental cause of the explosion.
- (3) No.
- (4) I have not blamed teachers. I have merely pointed out that when lighting these heaters the correct operating procedures should be followed. If heaters fail to light, people should wait until the gas dissipates before trying again to light the heaters. When heaters do prove difficult to light they should be called in to the BMA as faults.

**McCUSKER REPORT - NATIONAL AUSTRALIA BANK**  
*\$150 million Government Guarantee - Attorney General's Necessity Question*

834. Hon E.J. CHARLTON to the Attorney General:

- (1) Is the McCusker Report correct in stating (on page 30) that the Attorney General -  
 ... questioned why, if everyone was so sure that the indemnity would never be called on, there was any need for it ...  
 the Government guarantee to the National Australia Bank of \$150 million on behalf of Rothwells -  
 ... to be given?
- (2) If the answer is yes, which person or persons answered the Attorney General and convinced him that the Government's involvement was necessary?
- (3) What steps did the Attorney General take to satisfy himself that the \$150 million guarantee was
  - (a) necessary; and
  - (b) prudent?
- (4) What did the Attorney General understand at the time of the granting of the \$150 million guarantee of Rothwells to be the reason or reasons for
  - (a) the guarantee; and
  - (b) the \$150 million from the National Australia Bank?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The main responses were by Mr Beckwith of Bond Corporation and Mr Yonge of Wardleys.
- (3) Due to the critical time constraints there was no opportunity to obtain information other than at the meeting at which the State's support was given.
- (4) As I understand the position, the bank loan was to meet cash flow requirements. The need for the State indemnity in addition to the loan and the \$150 million invested by leading Australian companies was stressed to be necessary to bolster public confidence in the effectiveness of the rescue package.

**SHARK BAY - WORLD HERITAGE LISTING**  
*Boundaries*

837. Hon P.H. LOCKYER to the Minister for Planning representing the Minister for the Environment:

When will the present position of boundaries for proposed world heritage in Shark Bay be available?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

The Minister for the Environment has provided the following reply -

Boundaries are currently subject to discussion and are not finalised. Details of agreed boundaries should be available towards the end of September.

### FISHING - DAMPIER ARCHIPELAGO

#### *Prawn Trawlers*

840. Hon N.F. MOORE to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Fisheries:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of concern amongst recreational fishermen in the Dampier/Karratha area at the activities of prawn trawlers in the Dampier Archipelago?
- (2) If so, what action does the Minister propose to take?
- (3) Are there any areas of water in the Dampier Archipelago which are "off limits" to prawn trawlers?
- (4) If so, what are these areas and why are they "off limits"?
- (5) Has any research been undertaken to assess the impact of trawlers on -
  - (a) recreational fishing; and
  - (b) coral reefs?
- (6) If so, what research has been undertaken and what were the findings?
- (7) If not, will the Minister commence a research program?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Fisheries has provided the following response -

(1)-(2)

No. However, if there is major concern held by recreational fishers in respect to trawling in the archipelago, it would be opportune for them to specify in writing the areas of concern.

Such a submission should be directed to the Fisheries Department so that the matter can be raised at its next meeting with the prawning industry in October 1990, and the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee which is undertaking the review of recreational fishing in Western Australia.

Submissions to the advisory committee do not close until 30 October 1990. Alternatively, the concerns of fishers can be raised through the Pilbara Recreational Liaison Committee which will be formulating a report to the advisory committee after studying 'local' fishing issues.

(3)-(4)

No. However, discussions are being held with the Port Authority in relation to the possible closures within the port limits because of shipping traffic.

(5)

(a) No.

(b) No. However, operators of prawn trawlers avoid coral reefs to reduce habitat damage and gear loss.

(6)-(7)

A research program has commenced to study the effects of prawn and scallop trawling on the ocean bottom and on recreational fishing in the waters from Fremantle to Geographe Bay. The results of this study will improve our understanding of the effects of trawling.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**McCUSKER REPORT - CHANGES**

*Paragraphs 11.6 and 11.14*

582. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Attorney General:

I refer to question without notice No 554 of 4 September and ask -

- (1) Has the Attorney General investigated whether changes were made to paragraph 11.14 on page 290 of the McCusker report and, if so, what changes were made to that paragraph and when were the Attorneys General advised of those changes?
- (2) Were the words contained in paragraph 11.6 on page 281 the same words contained in the report forwarded to other Attorneys General around Australia and, if not, what changes have been made and when were the Attorneys General advised of such changes?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

I thank Hon George Cash for some advance notice of the question. I have consulted Mr McCusker and I have his agreement to the following reply.

(1)-(2)

By letter dated 27 August 1990 Mr M.J. McCusker QC forwarded to me corrigenda to his report which he had delivered to me on 7 August 1990. In his letter Mr McCusker indicated that some amendments in the corrigenda were made following a further hearing he conducted after 7 August 1990 involving one person. Mr McCusker indicated he had taken this course in fairness to the person concerned. Consequent upon that process Mr McCusker modified the two paragraphs referred to in the questions. Paragraph 11.6 was substantially rewritten and two sentences were changed in paragraph 11.14. The corrected copies of the report were sent to the other Attorneys General on 30 August 1990. They were advised on 29 August that corrected copies were then being printed.

**McCUSKER REPORT - EVIDENCE, SUNDAY 26 AUGUST 1990**

*Further Interview - Vrisakis, Mr Alec*

583. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Attorney General:

I have a supplementary question -

- (1) Was that evidence taken on Sunday 26 August 1990 after the McCusker report had been tabled in the Parliament?
- (2) Was the person who Mr McCusker interviewed Mr Alec Vrisakis of Sydney?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) There is only one McCusker report and that was tabled in this House. I cannot on the spur of the moment fix the dates that the Leader of the Opposition is referring to, but I can certainly say that any further interviews must have occurred before the tabling of the report in this House. The document that was tabled is the one and only report.
- (2) The House will have noted that Mr McCusker conducted the further hearing in fairness to a particular person. I believe it would be contrary to the spirit of the reasons provided by Mr McCusker to identify particular people or to go into any further detail.

**McCUSKER REPORT - TABLING**

*No Further Interview Inquiry*

584. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Attorney General:

I have a further supplementary question -

Will the Attorney General confirm that no interview was conducted by Mr McCusker of any person after the report was tabled in the Parliament?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

As I previously indicated I believe the proper procedure in respect of any matter related to the McCusker inquiry and report is to submit that inquiry to Mr McCusker for such response as he in his discretion feels is appropriate. I will deal with this question in the same way.

#### BUDGET - RELEASE DATE

585. Hon E.J. CHARLTON to the Leader of the House:

Would the leader advise the House when the Budget is likely to be introduced?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

The question of the actual date can vary under the different requirements of Treasury, the printer and so on. I ask that the honourable member put that question on notice.

Hon N.F. Moore: Will it be this year?

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I am sure that by Tuesday I shall be able to provide an answer.

#### SENIOR CITIZENS - SERVICES AND PROGRAMS INFORMATION

586. Hon B.L. JONES to the Minister for The Aged:

Would the Minister tell the House what the Government is doing to ensure that seniors receive the information they need on the services and programs available to them?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

Seniors need a wide range of information on everything from how to apply for a pension through to where to join a local walking for fitness club. In order to provide seniors with up to date and comprehensive information the Government established the Aged Open Line in 1986. Since then the Aged Open Line has taken nearly 80 000 calls from seniors and their families. About 30 000 of these calls were received in the past year alone, which demonstrates that the demand for the services of the Aged Open Line is growing.

In order to reach even more seniors throughout the State, including those in country areas as well as nursing homes and hostels, the Aged Open Line has begun an outreach program. Through the outreach program the Aged Open Line will be increasing its visits to country areas and providing information displays at shopping centres, nursing homes and other venues. In this way the Government is ensuring that Western Australian seniors get the information they need to live an independent and fulfilling life.

#### TECHNOLOGY PARK - MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

*Bryce, Mr Malcolm*

587. Hon MAX EVANS to the Leader of the House:

- (1) What are the current management structures of Technology Park?
- (2) What is its correct name?
- (3) Who is on the board?
- (4) What position does Mr Malcolm Bryce hold at Technology Park?
- (5) Is he on the payroll and, if so, what salary and benefits is he receiving?
- (6) Has Mr Malcolm Bryce any other paid appointments with the Government; if so, what are they and what are the salary and benefits paid to him?
- (7) Is Mr Bryce working in the office of Deloitte Ross Tohmatsu? If so, what work does he do and why is he located there?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

I have had some notice of the question and I am advised that the answer to the question is as follows -

- (1) Technology Park is managed by the Ministry for Economic Development. Chesterton International has been engaged to manage property matters.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) There is no board of management.
- (4) Mr Bryce is Chairman of the Technology and Industry Advisory Council which is located in Technology Park.

(5)-(6)

See the answer to question 996 of Thursday, 21 December 1989.

(7) No.

# STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION - CROWN IMMUNITIES AND PRIVILEGES

## *Legal Advice - Companies (Western Australia) Code Compliance*

588. Hon PETER FOSS to the Leader of the House:

Has the Government ever received advice about whether the State Government Insurance Commission was entitled to the immunities and privileges of the Crown and whether it must comply with the provisions of division 4, part IV of the Companies (Western Australia) Code?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

Without having the Companies Code available, I cannot be specific about the part of the code to which the member has drawn attention.

Hon Peter Foss: Section 136.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Long after all the events which gave rise to the difficulties involving the SGIC, I asked the Solicitor General to provide me with some information on that question. On the spur of the moment I cannot recall the precise nature of the question and certainly not of the answer. It was well after all relevant events had occurred. I will take that question on notice for any further elaboration that may be appropriate.

# STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION - CROWN IMMUNITIES AND PRIVILEGES

## *Legal Advice*

589. Hon PETER FOSS to the Leader of the House:

Was the question as to whether the State Government Insurance Commission was entitled to the immunities and the privilege of the Crown raised with the Leader of the House at any time prior to 3 May 1988?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

To the best of my recollection, no. I can go further and say that the advice to which I referred earlier would have also been sought and obtained long after that date. I have no recollection of an inquiry of that sort coming to me. I would not normally expect it.

# ARTS - INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL EXCHANGE AGREEMENTS

590. Hon B.L. JONES to the Minister for The Arts:

Has the Minister taken any action to ensure that the arts develop policies for the export of cultural products?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of her question. The Department for the Arts has been involved in formulating cultural exchange agreements, most

recently in Zhejiang Province in China and in East Java. This means that WA now has three formal exchange agreements in place, the other being with Hyogo Prefecture in Japan.

The Department for the Arts is extending its contribution to international cultural developments this year with a series of practical initiatives in advice, information, targeting of cultural opportunities both in marketing Western Australian cultural products and identifying needed skill, exhibition and studio exchanges. The initiatives will be aimed to ensure skill development not simply for entertaining but for the integration of design into industrial applications.

The establishment of a working party to coordinate Government initiatives and to ensure that the contribution of the arts is part of all cultural exchanges is one step being taken. The scope is unlimited and the department will pursue opportunities to allow the Western Australian arts industry to broaden its export potential.

#### PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES - PROGRESS

591. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Leader of the House:

Is the arrangement for the Parliamentary Secretaries proceeding or has that plan been scrapped?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

That proposal is certainly proceeding and legislation has been drafted. I believe it may have been introduced into the Legislative Assembly already, but that would be subject to checking.

#### BELL GROUP SHARES - REES, MR W.

##### *Investment Deal*

592. Hon MAX EVANS to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Will the Minister advise of the exact time and date of the return to Perth in April 1987 of Mr W. Rees to finalise the Bell Group Ltd shares?
- (2) Who discussed the Bell deal with Mr Rees overseas?
- (3) Did he rush home to finalise the deal?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

I am advised as follows -

- (1) Mr W. Rees returned to Perth in the early morning of 27 April 1988 to be briefed regarding a potential strategic investment in Bell Group and to chair a special board meeting that afternoon.
- (2) The acting chairman discussed with Mr Rees the potential of making a strategic investment in Bell Group.
- (3) See answer to (1).

#### BELL GROUP SHARES - EDWARDS, MR KEVIN

##### *Holmes a Court, Mr Robert - Purchase Offer*

593. Hon MAX EVANS to the Leader of the House representing the Treasurer:

- (1) Will the Leader of the House confirm that Mr Kevin Edwards made an offer to Robert Holmes a Court in April 1988 to purchase the Bell Group shares?
- (2) On what date did Mr Holmes a Court first discuss this with the SGIC and/or Kevin Edwards?
- (3) Did Mr Edwards have SGIC board approval to make the offer; if so, on what dates and who was present at the meetings?
- (4) Did Mr Edwards discuss the deal with any Ministers; if so, what was the name of the Minister/s?
- (5) Which Minister gave approval to Mr Edwards to make the offer to Mr Holmes a Court?



Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

The following answer has been provided by the Minister for Finance and Economic Development representing the Treasurer in her absence. I am advised as follows -

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The National Companies and Securities Commission transcript states that Mr Edwards first approached Mr Holmes a Court on 19 April (paragraph 13).
- (3) Board approval was given on 27 April 1988.
- (4)-(5)

The SGIC is unaware of any discussion.

#### GOODWYN PROJECT - GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE PACKAGE

##### *Goodwyn A Platform Module Work*

594. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Minister for Resources:

Earlier this year, the Government announced a joint package of assistance with the Commonwealth to secure the Goodwyn A utilities module work for Western Australia. Will the Minister advise of the progress and benefits arising from this investment by the State?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

I thank the member for some advance notice of the question. Members will recall that the negotiations which led to that package of assistance were very difficult and protracted but, especially in view of current economic circumstances, it can hardly be doubted that whatever effort was invested in the work towards securing that package was very valuable for the industries concerned. I am advised as follows -

The financial assistance has secured for Western Australia some \$80 million worth of fabrication and erection work on a project which will involve the latest technology in offshore module construction.

The project is on schedule and work is progressing both at the Jervoise Bay and in various fabrication sites in the metropolitan area. The most critical and technologically advanced part of the Goodwyn A platform is the main control room and this comprises part of the module work to be carried out by the Press-Clough joint venture.

So far the State has invested about \$2.3 million in site buildings which are owned by the Industrial Lands Development Authority and leased to the Press-Clough joint venture. These buildings will remain for future offshore construction work. The current work force associated with the project is around 150. This will rise to 500 by approximately March 1991.

#### BUNBURY HARBOUR CITY CONCEPT - GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE

595. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for South-West:

Some notice of this question has been given to the Minister.

- (1) What is the total amount spent by the State Government on the Bunbury Harbour City concept to date?
- (2) How has that money been spent; that is, on consultancy fees, brochures, etc?
- (3) What work has been carried out on the harbour area as part of the city concept to date?
- (4) What is the value of the land which the Minister has asked the Bunbury City Council to hand to the State Government?

- (5) Will the Minister consider handing over the harbour city concept to the Bunbury City Council for future administration?
- (6) If not, why not?
- (7) Will the Government honour its commitment made during the 1989 election campaign to remove the waste water treatment plant from the harbour city area within two years?
- (8) Will this take place prior to the next election?
- (9) If not, why not?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

I thank the member for notice of the question. The Minister for South-West has provided the following answer -

- (1) The South West Development Authority has spent approximately \$1.3 million on the Bunbury Harbour City concept to date. This amount excludes expenditure on the Leschenault retaining wall and foreshore development. This figure also does not include salaries for South West Development Authority staff involved in the project.
- (2) The money has been spent on consultancy fees for planning, management design and investigation; model construction; promotion; landscaping; and kiosk upgrading.
- (3) The only activity carried out in the Casuarina area has been planning design and investigation work.
- (4) The value of the Crown land vested in the Bunbury City Council, reserves 28032 and 28033, depends on the status of the land and the purpose for which it can be used. A value of the land has been included in the cash flow projections for the Bunbury Harbour City project, but it is being kept confidential for marketing advantage.
- (5) The Minister for South-West will consider any proposal which will enable the Bunbury Harbour City project to be advanced.
- (6) Not applicable.
- (7) The Government's undertaking to remove the waste water treatment plant was made on the basis that -
  - (a) the effluent could be satisfactorily disposed of at another location; and
  - (b) the waste water treatment plant removal was critical to the project proceeding.

The recent tightening of standards for future treated effluent disposal to the ocean, and the desirability of awaiting the conclusion of research at the Beenyup outfall have delayed resolution of alternative effluent disposal.

An environmental assessment for the Bunbury Harbour City project currently in progress, and due to be completed in April 1991, will enable a timetable for removal of the waste water treatment plant to be established.

(8)-(9)

Answered by (7).

#### BELL GROUP SHARES - MEETINGS, 25 APRIL 1988

596. Hon PETER FOSS to the Leader of the House:

Is the Leader of the House aware of any meetings which took place on 25 April 1988 with regard to the acquisition of Bell Group shares, other than the meeting he attended?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

I do not know whether one would call it a meeting but I have indicated previously that following the discussion which I had in the morning of 25 April, I told the Premier that I had not found that meeting of any use. I was in the Premier's office, as I recall it, during the early afternoon of the same day for that purpose, and for completeness, and in order to save Hon Peter Foss the additional question, I remember there was another person present - Mr Edwards - who had also been at the earlier meeting.

**PUBLIC SERVANTS - CIVIL SERVICE ASSOCIATION CAMPAIGN**  
*Staff Levels Concern*

597. Hon DOUG WENN to the Leader of the House:

In view of the current Public Service campaign, will the Leader of the House indicate whether the anticipated staff levels in his department reflect the concern now being expressed?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

It goes without saying that I am not in a position to anticipate Budget decisions by way of prior announcement. However, it will also be clear that at least the general picture will have emerged by now. I find nothing in the likely outcome of my own department's submissions to reflect anything like the level of concern that has been expressed by the Civil Service Association. I have not been up to date with its current campaign and, in fact, it was only this morning that I heard for the first time on my car radio an advertisement which appeared to indicate a view by the CSA that something like 15 000 Public Service positions were at risk.

That is such an extraordinary proportion of the present public work force that I simply cannot understand how the CSA could be suggesting cutbacks of that nature in any serious way. As it happens, in my departments I may well end up with an increase in staff overall.

Hon George Cash: Is a special task force shifting in?

Hon J.M. BERINSON: No. The reason is that the impending opening of the Casuarina Prison involves a substantial increase in the number of prison officers required as opposed to the number of prison officers who will be freed by the closing of the Fremantle Prison. That is an unavoidable commitment and must be proceeded with.

There is only one area in which there may be a substantial reduction on paper - I stress on paper only - which relates to the staff of the Corporate Affairs Department if the Commonwealth takeover of corporate law is, in fact, finalised in this financial year. However, I stress here, as I have previously and to the staff of the Corporate Affairs Department on many occasions, that whatever happens in respect of that transfer, it will not result in the loss of a position by any member of that department. In other words, officers in that department will either be able to transfer to the new Commonwealth body or they will be guaranteed continued permanent employment elsewhere in the State Public Service.

As for other matters related to the question, or my specific response to them, I must wait on the Budget outcome.

**POWER STATIONS - FUTURE DECISION**  
*Mt Lesueur Proposal*

598. Hon E.J. CHARLTON to the Minister for Resources:

- (1) Will the Minister advise the House when the Government will make a decision about the future power station in Western Australia?
- (2) Will he also advise whether the Mt Lesueur proposal is still under consideration?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

I should indicate in the first place that the main carriage of this question of a new base load power station is with the Minister for Fuel and Energy. However, as might be expected, the Department of Resources Development is closely interested in that question and I am kept reasonably well informed. No firm timetable exists. The assessment of the proposal is still under way, but is near finality.

As to the question of the Mt Lesueur proposal, I have made it clear publicly on a number of occasions that that proposal remains as one of the group subject to assessment and that certainly nothing has happened since the invitation for proposals to be lodged that has had the effect, or could be understood to have had the effect, of excluding that proposal from consideration on its merits in the same way as any other proposal. About three weeks ago media reports were released which might have indicated something to the contrary and I immediately took the opportunity to issue a statement to correct any impression that might have been created in that respect.

---