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Wednesday, 13 October 1999

Legislative Assembly

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THE SPEAKER (Mr Strickland) took the Chair at 12 noon, and read prayers.

LIFESAVING CADETS

Statement by Minister for Youth

MR BOARD (Murdoch - Minister for Youth) [12.06 pm]: I rise to inform the House that the Cadets WA program has expanded to offer yet another cadet type - lifesaving cadets. The announcement was made by the Premier at the National Youth Development Conference held in Perth two weeks ago. Although the exact name is yet to be confirmed, the new cadet type will be jointly managed by Surf Life Saving WA and the Royal Life Saving Society of Australia's WA branch. Both organisations have a strong commitment to youth leadership and development in Western Australia. Surf Life Saving already provides this through ongoing development programs, and the Royal Life Saving Society of Australia currently provides training to schools and existing Cadets WA units. This announcement adds depth to the existing Cadets WA types, as it provides an even more diverse range of cadet training to young people in Western Australia. The lifesaving cadets will join the eight existing cadet types: CALM bushrangers, Army Corps cadets, Naval Reserve cadets, Air Training Corps cadets, Police rangers, Red Cross cadets, Emergency Services cadets and St John Ambulance cadets. The continuing strength of the community-based cadets can be judged by their increasing popularity among young people.

Two weeks ago delegates from Queensland, the Northern Territory, New South Wales, Victoria, the ACT and South Australia travelled to Perth to discuss the possibility of a national program based on Cadets WA. Currently there are 149 cadet units, catering for almost 7 000 cadets and adult instructors. The success of the program in WA has been the catalyst for the establishment of a national youth development program. The federal Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Hon David Kemp, announced at the conference that the Commonwealth Government would provide a significant package of assistance with two main elements - national accreditation and a coordination unit. This is an announcement that everyone involved in Cadets WA has been working towards since the program began in this State in 1996. Accreditation will allow young people involved in the program to be recognised for their achievements in a way that is meaningful to employers, training providers and the community.

The Commonwealth Government will fund the development of core training units for use by cadet programs Australia-wide. The Commonwealth will also establish and run a coordination unit to facilitate the development and expansion of cadet programs on a national basis. This national coordination unit will effectively draw together the cadet programs that are currently running and add value to them by the implementation of best practices and the expansion of programs to include the wider development of community groups. It will also assist in implementing a youth development program in States and Territories that presently do not have one based on this model. Victoria, South Australia and Queensland already have programs similar to Cadets WA, which will continue to grow and develop.

A national program will increase the recognition of the achievements of participating young people and will signal the intention of the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments to work cooperatively to provide a broad range of opportunities for young people. The introduction of a national program is a credit to the success of Cadets WA and the introduction of lifesaving cadets is testament to the continuing growth of that success.

SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM SERVICES

Statement by Minister for Family and Children's Services

MRS PARKER (Ballajura - Minister for Family and Children's Services) [12.09 pm]: Yesterday I launched the supported accommodation assistance program protocols file, containing material to assist government and community workers to better meet the needs of people using SAAP services. The supported accommodation assistance program plays a major role in the overall response of the Commonwealth and State Governments to the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The program provides a range of support and supported accommodation services for people who are affected by domestic violence, or families and individuals who are homeless because of crisis. However, the supported accommodation assistance program is just one part of the bigger picture of service provision to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Many other service providers, both government and non-government, also assist this group of people. Collaboration between all these service providers is therefore essential in improving our response to the needs of homeless people.

People who need and use SAAP services often experience a range of problems, which include finding safe, secure, long-term housing, drug and alcohol-related difficulties, mental health problems, income support and family counselling. I endorsed a recommendation from the SAAP State Advisory Committee to fund a project to develop protocols addressing these issues. This file represents a major first step in what I hope will be an ongoing process of greater understanding and cooperation between providers of services to homeless people. The protocols project was enhanced by the secondment to Family and Children's Services of a SAAP worker, Mr Andrew Hall, who is the agency manager of Wanneroo accommodation and support services.

The first stage of the Western Australian SAAP protocols project has been completed. It has resulted in three protocols for the SAAP program with the WA Drug Abuse Strategy Office, Homeswest and the Family and Children's Services crisis care unit. Implementing the protocols will result in better links between SAAP services and the respective government agencies

to assist people with housing problems, to manage their drug and alcohol problems and to improve assessment and referral processes through the Family and Children's Services crisis care unit.

The project is a Western Australian initiative, funded jointly with the Commonwealth. It positions the State for the new directions for the supported accommodation assistance program. The new directions acknowledge that homelessness is a complex problem that requires a flexible range of responses across the breadth of the human service delivery system. SAAP is one part of a continuum of responses to homelessness and domestic violence.

On 8 August 1999, state, territory and commonwealth ministers agreed in principle to a memorandum of understanding articulating the policy directions for the fourth phase of SAAP until 2005. The memorandum was signed by the Commonwealth and all state and territory ministers. This next phase of the program will be characterised by improving client-focused service delivery, better integration and collaboration between SAAP and other services, and increasing performance, knowledge and skills to provide better services.

Based on the success of the first 12 months of the Western Australian SAAP protocols project, I have approved its continuation for a further 12 months. Another SAAP service worker will be seconded to enable work on further protocols, which will include mental health, Centrelink, Family and Children's Services and issues around immigration and ethnic affairs. This secondment approach represents a practical example of collaboration between SAAP service providers and Family and Children's Services.

I thank the project officer, Andrew Hall, and the SAAP State Advisory Committee for requesting this special project and for their advice and recommendations. I also thank all those involved in the protocols project reference group. I table the protocols booklet.

[See paper No 210.]

FREEDOM FROM FEAR CAMPAIGN AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Statement by Minister for Women's Interests

MRS PARKER (Ballajura - Minister for Women's Interests) [12.12 pm]: I am pleased to advise the House that the Government's Freedom from Fear campaign against domestic violence has won both the Premier's Award for Innovation and the overall Premier's Award for Excellence in Public Sector Management. The campaign was developed and implemented over the past year by the domestic violence prevention unit in the Women's Policy Development Office.

Freedom from Fear represents a major change in direction for the prevention of domestic abuse and is part of the Government's strong commitment to the fight against domestic violence in Western Australia. The strategy appeals directly to the perpetrators of family violence, urging them to voluntarily seek the counselling and support they need to stop abusing their partners and children. Together with the Men's Domestic Violence Helpline, it was a strategy to target those responsible for the violence, aiming to better protect victims and prevent others from joining the cycle.

Earlier this year I was able to advise the House of two other prestigious awards received. In Montreal, the campaign received the combined Novelli award for both innovation and excellence at the International Innovations in Social Marketing Conference. It also won an award for marketing excellence at the inaugural Australian Marketing Institute Public Sector Marketing Conference. As I said then, the significant benefit of the campaign has been in homes around the State in which, as a result of the campaign, more than 758 men are undertaking counselling to deal with their violent behaviour against their partners or children.

Since the start of the Freedom from Fear campaign, more than 3 610 men have contacted the Men's Domestic Violence Helpline, with over 63 per cent of them in the primary target group. Approximately half the callers were referred to men's behaviour change counselling programs. Many men have been motivated to seek help when they realise, often for the first time, the terrible effect domestic violence has on their children.

An independent evaluation of the campaign conducted in April this year also found a significant increase in awareness of the services available to help families deal with domestic violence. The evaluation found that as a result of the campaign, the proportion of men who are aware of where help can be sought for violent behaviour has increased from 21 per cent to 52 per cent. The proportion of men who are or could be violent and who are aware of a telephone counselling line for men increased from 20 per cent to 69 per cent. The evaluation found the campaign has resulted in favourable temporary changes in some beliefs of the target audience, which will hopefully lead to shifts in longer-term attitudes and behaviour.

Although the Freedom from Fear campaign is only one component of an overall strategy, and although the necessary changes in attitudes will only happen over time, the winning of the Premier's Award for Innovation and the Premier's Award for Excellence in Public Sector Management, together with the findings in the evaluation, are very encouraging.

In closing, I thank and commend all those responsible for the successful and professional development and implementation of this campaign, in particular Donna Patterson from the Women's Policy Development Office and Professor Rob Donovan from Donovan Research.

FINANCIAL RELATIONS AGREEMENT (CONSEQUENTIAL PROVISIONS) BILL 1999

STATE ENTITIES (PAYMENTS) BILL 1999

Declaration as Urgent

MR COURT (Nedlands - Treasurer) [12.15 pm]: In accordance with Standing Order No 1682, I move -

That the Financial Relations Agreement (Consequential Provisions) Bill 1999 and the State Entities (Payments) Bill 1999 be considered urgent Bills.

Under new Standing Order No 1681, debate on a Bill is adjourned for three calendar weeks following the second reading speech. With regard to both of these Bills, the three-week period expires tomorrow. Therefore, we are one day short of the required period and thus the need for this motion.

MR KOBELKE (Nollamara) [12.16 pm]: On the face of the matter, what the Treasurer has said seems reasonable in that we are only seeking to vary the new standing orders by bringing on this matter for debate one day before the due date, that being tomorrow, Thursday, 14 October. Under the old arrangements, there normally would have been one full sitting week before debate, whereas we have had two recess weeks when members have been committed to duties all over the State and, therefore, have had their time committed in various ways. These Bills are complex. We will not go to the barricades and attempt to vote the Government down over one day. However, it should be placed on the record that this is a matter in which the delay has been caused by the Government. It may wish to blame the national Government, because this is obviously a complex matter of relationships between all the State Governments and the Commonwealth. Also, by their very nature, these are complex issues for people to understand.

The pressure has, therefore, been put on the Opposition to scrutinise these Bills in the shortest possible time to make sure that we understand the full impact of the legislation. A range of issues contained in the Treasurer's speech indicate that the Government has not been able to sort out exactly how it will deal with matters. In that speech we were promised that when the matters are sorted out, we will have retrospective legislation to do certain things. However, it would be much better if we could do those things under this legislation now.

I have said that the Opposition accepts that the issue is complex. That causes problems for us. It also recognises that the Government must deal with complex issues here. However, bringing the matter on one day early means that the Opposition has not been able to study the legislation as thoroughly as it would like. This legislation is important. Although we restate our opposition to the goods and services tax, in this Bill we are dealing with mechanisms which must be put in place, given that we are moving towards the establishment of a goods and services tax in this State. We will deal with those matters during the debate. At the moment we are simply dealing with the motion to declare these Bills urgent, therefore bringing them on a day early.

I reiterate that the Opposition is being pushed on this matter. The Government has taken a great deal of time to bring this legislation forward. The provisions with regard to other Bills, which we do not have before us now, were intended to be in place on 1 July. The Premier has moved a special motion with regard to the Financial Relations Agreement (Consequential Provisions) Bill. It is my understanding that the Government wishes to have a cognate debate on that Bill and the State Entities (Payments) Bill. Perhaps the Treasurer will clarify whether we need a second motion, or how it is to be handled.

MR RIPPER (Belmont - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [12.20 pm]: I support the remarks of the member for Nollamara, the manager of opposition business in this place. The fact that we are dealing with this legislation today is evidence of the paucity of this Government's legislative program. The Government has run out of legislation which it - more particularly, members of its back bench - is prepared to deal with. It may be that ministers want to deal with some legislation, but there is a huge logjam in the coalition party room and the nervous Nellies on the back bench are standing in the way of necessary legislation that should be coming to this House. We therefore have a pretty thin legislative agenda before the House. That is one reason we are having to deal with the legislation, although it was introduced only three sitting days ago. We have had a parliamentary recess period but, as the member for Nollamara pointed out, members often have significant commitments through those periods and this makes it difficult to deal with complex legislation. To give an example, the Opposition was briefed on this legislation on only Monday of this week.

My colleague the member for Nollamara has pointed out that there have been delays in the Government's presentation of this legislation, given the price monitoring which is part of the second package of Bills relating to this issue, which was supposed to operate from 1 July. Those delays are common across all of the States; however, we are the first State to have to deal with this legislation. That underlines the point I am trying to make:

The Government has not much else to deal with in this Parliament; everything else is stalled, or held up in the party room, or has become too difficult for it. It is left with the bean counters' agenda and that of its commonwealth colleagues because the Government's legislative agenda has run into a brick wall. There will be a shortage of matters for the Parliament to debate, so we can expect to see more motions such as this. I know we will have a second motion from the Treasurer almost straightaway. In succeeding weeks, as we run up to Christmas, I think we will see a few more of those motions.

Question put and passed.

FINANCIAL RELATIONS AGREEMENT (CONSEQUENTIAL PROVISIONS) BILL 1999

Cognate Debate

On motion by Mr Court (Treasurer), resolved -

That leave be granted for the Financial Relations Agreement (Consequential Provisions) Bill 1999 and the State Entities (Payments) Bill 1999 to be considered cognately, and that the Financial Relations Agreement (Consequential Provisions) Bill 1999 be the principal Bill.

Second Reading

Resumed from 23 September.

MR RIPPER (Belmont - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [12.23 pm]: This piece of legislation and the companion piece of legislation implement at state level the commonwealth goods and services tax regime. I say very clearly at the outset that Labor does not support the goods and services tax. Neither state Labor nor federal Labor supports the implementation of that tax; however, we have a degree of difficulty when it comes to dealing with these pieces of legislation. They are consequential to the Commonwealth's decision endorsed, unfortunately, by the Commonwealth Parliament to implement a goods and services tax. Were we in this Parliament to defeat this piece of legislation, we would be adding to the burdens to be placed on Western Australian taxpayers by the goods and services tax. We have adopted the approach of not opposing this legislation as it goes through this House, but we will take the opportunity to point out all of the negative aspects of the goods and services tax for not only this State, but also Western Australians.

I now turn to our attitude to the goods and services tax. We oppose the goods and services tax because, first, it is regressive; second, it is a centralist tax; and, third, it will be a compliance nightmare for small business. The GST is an unfair tax. It hits people on low incomes much more severely than it hits those on higher incomes. It is particularly regressive because it is part of a package which delivers significant income tax cuts to higher income earners. The Australian Democrats in the Senate tried to make the goods and services tax fairer by excluding most food items from the application of the regime - a mission impossible. It is not possible to make the goods and services tax fair. By its very nature, it is a regressive tax. Following the intervention of the Australian Democrats, we now have a package that will see the essentials of life, such as some food, clothing, footwear, transport and housing, all taxed at 10 per cent. Despite the attempts of the Australian Democrats, allegedly, to make the tax fairer, all of those essentials of life will still be taxed. As part of the package, the lion's share of tax cuts will go to the top 20 per cent of income earners. Everyone will pay the goods and services tax on the essentials of life, but those earning \$75 000 or more per annum will receive tax cuts of \$62 a week, compared with a person on an income of \$10 000 a year, who will receive a tax cut of only \$5.40 a week. That is the unfairness of the package. It is a double unfairness: The GST is unfair, in itself, and when it delivers grossly disproportionate tax cuts to higher income earners, it becomes doubly unfair.

We say that the GST is a centralist tax. A lot of misinformation and propaganda spin has been placed on the way in which the GST will affect state finances. The Federal Government has said the GST revenue will go to the States. That does not make it a state tax; it is a commonwealth tax, administered by the Commonwealth under commonwealth legislation, the distribution of which the Commonwealth will in the end control. This tax will undermine the autonomy of this State.

The GST will be a compliance nightmare for small businesses. Hundreds of thousands of small businesses, which in the past have not had to bother with the wholesale sales tax regime, will now become tax collectors for the Commonwealth Government. I will deal with some of those matters in more detail later in my remarks. For the reasons that I have briefly canvassed, Labor has argued against the goods and services tax in both this Parliament and the wider community. We will continue our argument against the goods and services tax in this debate, and we will use the consideration in detail stage of the debate to closely examine the impact of the goods and services tax on Western Australia.

I will now turn to an outline of the legislation before us before I then comment on some other matters in more detail. Currently we are debating two Bills in this cognate debate - the Financial Relations Agreement (Consequential Provisions) Bill and the State Entities (Payments) Bill. The first Bill seeks to put in place a number of measures agreed to by the Commonwealth and the States. The Bill seeks to include the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Reform of Commonwealth-State Financial Relations in schedule 1 of the Bill. It seeks to abolish financial institutions duty from 1 July 2001. It seeks to amend the Fuel Suppliers Licensing Act to provide for the cessation of state diesel fuel subsidies. It seeks to exempt increases in salary payments directly attributable to the goods and services tax from the payroll tax base. It seeks to apply stamp duty to prices inclusive of the goods and services tax. It proposes to abolish stamp duty on quotable, marketable securities from 1 July 2001. It also will repeal the Tobacco Sellers Licensing Act and will make some other minor amendments.

I will discuss the first element of the legislation; that is, the intergovernmental agreement on financial reform. The intergovernmental agreement that will be put into Western Australian legislation is a result of the negotiations between the Australian Democrats and the Prime Minister. It is a modification of the original intergovernmental agreement, which is not beneficial to this State. Under the original agreement, nine state taxes were meant to be abolished. The nine state taxes that were to be abolished were financial institutions duty; debits tax; stamp duty on marketable securities; stamp duty on non-residential conveyances; stamp duty on non-quotable, marketable securities; stamp duty on leases; stamp duty on mortgages, bonds, debentures and other loan securities; stamp duty on credit arrangements, instalment purchase arrangements and rental arrangements; and stamp duty on cheques, bills of exchange and promissory notes. The amended intergovernmental agreement preserves seven of those nine state taxes, and releases Western Australian taxpayers from only two taxes - the financial institutions duty and the stamp duty on marketable securities. There is an assertion that the debits tax might be abolished in 2005. I think that is wishful thinking. It seems unlikely to me, given the other financial impacts of the goods and services tax on the State, that the debits tax will be abolished in the end.

One of the big arguments for the introduction of the goods and services tax was that all of these inefficient, regressive, nuisance - according to some people - state taxes would be abolished. We now find that, with the package that has been agreed to by the Commonwealth Government, endorsed by the Commonwealth Parliament and put before this State Parliament for us to assist with, we will still be left with seven of those nine taxes. We then have a nefarious combination: A new regressive goods and services tax and the retention of a range of the State's so-called nuisance taxes. That is not the

only impact on Western Australia. We face a crucial issue in this Parliament; that is, the State's budgetary situation, which is not a comfortable one at the moment.

Mr Court: What do you mean "at the moment"? It is never a comfortable position.

Mr RIPPER: It is particularly uncomfortable at the moment. The Premier needs to be reminded that, on a cash basis in the general government sector, and according to Australian Bureau of Statistics guidelines, he is running a financial deficit this year of \$638m. That is the largest budget deficit in this State's history.

Mr Court: I suggest you do your homework.

Mr RIPPER: It is the largest budget deficit of any of the States at the moment. The situation will not improve significantly next financial year. On the basis of the forward estimates, the Premier will be running a budget deficit on a cash basis in the general government sector of \$261m in the next financial year. We have a poor budgetary situation at the moment in this State. It is poor by comparison with the State's history and with other States. On top of that, we now have this new commonwealth goods and services tax regime which will replace financial assistance grants to the States from the Commonwealth with goods and services tax revenue, and will require the State to give up some of its taxation revenue.

We on this side of the House are concerned about the ultimate impact of all of these changes on an already poor budget situation. The State Government will be required to give up revenue as part of the legislation that we are now considering. We feel that the State Government has underestimated the revenue that will be given up. If the State Government has underestimated the revenue that will be forgone, that would be consistent with the way in which it has treated revenue estimates since it came to power. We have noticed that the State Government consistently receives more revenue than it forecasts in the budget papers for each financial year. That is possibly a neat accounting and political trick from the point of view of the Government's domestic political position. However, it becomes very counterproductive if it is applied to negotiations with the Commonwealth Government. The Commonwealth Government and the State Premier say that there will be no impact on the State because the Commonwealth has given a guarantee that no State will be worse off. The key, though, is in the calculations. On what basis do the Commonwealth and the State reach an assessment of whether the State is better or worse off? If they reach an assessment on the wrong basis, despite their assurances and guarantees, the State will suffer. The State Government has underestimated the revenue forgone as a result of the Commonwealth's tax reform package and, because the Commonwealth bases its guarantee on the joint assessment of what has been forgone, the State is likely to be the loser.

There is a second area in which the State will be severely affected and more vulnerable. This legislation requires the State to give up some of its taxation revenue. That taxation revenue will be replaced by a commonwealth tax - the goods and services tax. We will receive a bigger proportion of our revenue from the Commonwealth than we have in the past, which will, therefore, be subject to the deliberations of the Commonwealth Grants Commission.

The problem of vertical fiscal imbalance, to use the technical term, is made worse by the Commonwealth Government's tax reform package. The State's ability to be independent in financial matters is made worse by the tax reform package. The State's vulnerability to eastern States' notions of what is a fair distribution of commonwealth tax revenue is made worse by the tax reform package. All of us in this Parliament are aware of cuts to the Western Australian share of financial assistance grants in recent years. We have all heard the Premier complain long and loud about the way the Commonwealth is treating Western Australia. We all know that Western Australia has significant differences of opinion with the Commonwealth about what would be a fair share of commonwealth financial assistance to the States. I ask the question: Why will this problem not continue? If it does continue, as I expect it will, it will apply to a much larger slice of the State's revenue than it has before. As a result of accepting this legislation and as a result of the Premier agreeing with his Liberal colleagues at the federal level on this tax reform package, Western Australia will be both less independent in financial matters and more vulnerable to commonwealth government decisions which will take revenue from this State and distribute it to other States, perhaps New South Wales, Victoria or Queensland.

I am not alone in suggesting that there will be problems for the state budget because of the goods and services tax package. An article in *The West Australian* of 9 September 1999 headed "GST: little gain to WA" states -

The State Government will get little benefit from the introduction of the Federal goods and services tax due to its exemption of food, according to a conservative think-tank.

Institute of Public Affairs executive director Mike Nahan said yesterday the reduction of the GST pie to be divided between the States might even make it more difficult for them to balance their budgets.

We have a conservative think tank supporting the Opposition's observations about the probability of a negative impact on the State's already difficult budgetary position. In his comments, Mr Nahan also supported the view put forward by the Opposition about the State's vulnerability to increased federal control of its sources of revenue. The article continues -

Mr Nahan said the GST underlined one of the weaknesses of Australian federalism - that the States can be left out of negotiations over a tax change with enormous repercussions for their finances.

There is concern not only among opposition members of Parliament but also among conservative commentators about the impact of the GST on Western Australian state finances.

I turn now to the next section of the legislation; that is, the proposal to abolish financial institutions duty from 1 July 2001. Under the original GST tax package, both financial institutions duty and debits tax were to end on 1 January 2001. As I have already said, the abolition of debits tax has been deferred to 2005 and quite possibly, even probably, will never occur. Of

course, bank customers will welcome the abolition of financial institutions duty. However, I do not think bank customers should necessarily believe that they will get cheaper banking as a result of the abolition of this duty.

Mr Court: The bank customers will be lucky if they get a bank the way things are going.

Mr RIPPER: That is an interesting comment. We have seen the bad news that Westpac - also known as Challenge Bank in Western Australia - will be slashing its employee numbers, setting off a further round of staff cuts and redundancies in Australian banks. I imagine those staff cuts will have particular repercussions in regional Western Australia. I hope the Government will be using whatever influence it can muster on the banks to retain those services for country towns and communities in Western Australia. It is devastating for small communities, particularly for the small businesses in those communities, when banks go. Let us return to the position of those people who will have access to a bank and let us assess whether they will receive any particular benefit as a result of the abolition of financial institutions duty. I very much doubt customers will get cheaper banking as a result of the abolition of this duty because other elements of the tax package will impact on them. I do not think we need to go past the evidence of the senior executives of the banks themselves in order to demonstrate the truth of that proposition.

Mr Court: Can I interject to provide some history while you are talking about financial institutions duty? When I was in opposition I was handling our opposition to its introduction. Brian Burke was the Premier when it was brought in and his Treasury adviser was Kerry Sanderson. It was a debate that went through the night - until about four o'clock in the morning from memory - and Kerry Sanderson was about eight months pregnant at the time. I said to the Premier that we did not mind debating it another day, but he was very keen to get it through that night so we kept sitting until the Bill was passed. It is interesting that we have seen the financial institutions duty come into this House and now we will see it go out of the House.

Mr RIPPER: The point I am making is that while the abolition of FID might look like an advantage for bank customers, other aspects of the package will cause them grief.

Mr Court: I thought you would be interested in that little bit of history.

Mr RIPPER: I thank the Premier. On 14 August 1999 an article entitled "Higher bank fees to cover GST cost" appeared in *The West Australian*. It states -

Banks are planning to raise fees and charges to recoup an estimated \$500 million in extra costs forced on them by the introduction of the goods and services tax.

The banks will be faced with a choice between absorbing the extra costs or passing them on after the Federal Government's decision to declare banks "exempt" from the GST.

It sounds like a good thing for an organisation to be declared exempt from the goods and services tax but it means that when that organisation pays GST on its business inputs, it cannot claim a credit for those input tax payments. Therefore, those payments must be financed in some other way. According to this article, the banks have told the Prime Minister that they will be recouping that money from customers. The article continues -

Earlier this week, the four chief executives of the big banks told Prime Minister John Howard in a private briefing that the banks' exempt status would cost the industry \$260 million.

But since then estimates by the big four point to total net pre-tax cost increases of up to \$100 million for each of the biggest banks alone.

The Commonwealth Bank's chief financial officer is quoted in the article as having stated -

"That's \$60 million - \$70 million after-tax each year off our bottom line. How can we look shareholders in the face?"

It is clear that despite the abolition of financial institutions duty, the banks will be seeking to claim from their customers the input tax credits which they cannot claim from the Government as a result of the way in which it has implemented the goods and services tax. I believe that no member of this House would doubt that the banks will not go ahead and do that, given their historical and traditional approach to customers and bank fees. Any member who believes the banks will be generous to customers as a result of the application of the goods and services tax has a very poor knowledge of the history of the banking industry in this country. This Government might think this will benefit customers but in the end it will not.

Part 3 of the Bill seeks to amend the Fuel Suppliers Licensing Act to provide for the cessation of diesel fuel subsidies with effect from 1 July 2000. These state diesel fuel subsidies became necessary as a result of the High Court's ruling that state franchise fees are invalid and unconstitutional. This will result in the abolition of the temporary safety net arrangements implemented as a result of that High Court decision. However, the replacement of state diesel fuel subsidies with goods and services tax regime rebates will not leave everyone in the same position that they were in previously. There will be winners and losers in the changes to the diesel fuel subsidies. The Australian Labor Party has been advised that the big losers in the transition from the state-based scheme will be organisations which use diesel for power generation; for example, Western Power will suffer increased costs. Other losers under the new diesel scheme will be people who use diesel in manufacturing and road construction and people who use boats or four wheel drive vehicles for recreational, off-road purposes. In fact, on the advice that we have been given, those people will be the biggest losers in the changed arrangements for diesel subsidies.

Part 4 of the Bill seeks to amend the Pay-roll Tax Assessment Act so that the payroll tax base would not include the goods and services tax. Most of the payroll tax base would not include the goods and services tax anyway because the GST is not

levied on salaries and wages. However, some people have entered into arrangements in which they describe themselves as contractors even though they are offering mostly labour in their contracts. These contracting arrangements, which involve a high proportion of labour, have been treated as though the labour component were wages for the purposes of payroll tax in order to avoid any suggestion of payroll tax evasion. These arrangements must be continued so that companies do not evade payroll tax obligations by reclassifying employees as contractors. However, when a contractor is offering services, as opposed to an employee receiving a wage, the GST would apply to the money paid out for the contract services. There could then be a tax on a tax - payroll tax in addition to the GST for the labour component of those contract services. This Bill proposes to exclude the GST component for labour services to ensure that the payroll tax base includes only the money paid for the labour and not the money paid for the goods and services tax. If that sounds complicated, it is complicated; and that is the type of arrangement with which businesses will have to deal. It will obviously create compliance difficulties for particular businesses. They will have to deal with this arrangement in a way in which they have not had to previously. It is six of one and half a dozen of the other. I suppose we should be grateful that there will not be a tax on a tax; on the other hand, compliance difficulties will arise when trying to avoid a tax on a tax. There is a tax on a tax in the next part of the Bill. Explicitly under this legislation, stamp duty will apply to GST-inclusive prices.

Mr Court: Isn't that currently the case?

Mr RIPPER: The Treasurer can answer that when he replies. There will be a tax on a tax. There will be a double effect on some classes of consumers and some types of transactions. Under the GST regime some types of goods in particular will fall in price while other goods will rise in price. Most services, of course, will rise in price because they are not subject to the wholesale sales tax regime.

One type of transaction which will be more costly under the new tax regime will be the purchase of housing and housing insurance policies. The GST does not apply to established houses; however, it will apply to building construction. The price of new houses will rise as a result of the GST, which rise will flow on to established houses. The price of houses will therefore rise and replacement costs for houses will naturally rise, which will result in a rise in claim payouts by insurance companies which insure homes. Naturally, that will require a rise in premiums for home insurance in addition to a GST on those premiums - a double whammy for those purchasing and insuring homes.

A further reason for the rise in costs for home insurers is that there will be a GST on all repair services. If a house burns down completely, the replacement cost will be higher. If there is some damage to the house which requires tradesmen to work on it, the GST will be placed on the repair costs, thus increasing claim payouts. If the claims payout goes up, the premium goes up too, and on top of that is the goods and services tax. That will be of particular disadvantage for those people.

It is interesting to look at what will happen with home contents insurance. I understand that the Government believes that home contents insurance premiums will fall because certain goods, in particular white goods, found in houses will be cheaper under the new tax regime. If that is the case, claims payouts for theft or damage to those white goods would be lower. Consequently, one would expect that home insurance premiums might fall. I do not know whether that argument is correct. Although white good prices will fall, prices for many other things commonly found in homes will increase; for example, clothes prices. That might counteract the fall in the price of white goods. If one takes into account all of those aspects, it is quite likely that home contents insurance premiums may remain stable and so will the stamp duty obtained by the State Government on those premiums.

The Government also expects that stamp duty on motor vehicle insurance premiums will fall for the reason that motor vehicles are expected to be cheaper under the GST regime. Consequently, the claims costs for the replacement of motor vehicles will also fall. It is not necessarily the case that it will occur. Motor vehicle insurance covers not only the replacement of vehicles but also repairs costs. Of course, the GST will be applied to repairs to motor vehicles. Repair costs will therefore rise, which may counterbalance the effect on premiums of the reduction in the replacement costs for motor vehicles.

I want to look at the question of workers compensation insurance. I am advised by people in the industry that claims costs for personal injury insurers are likely to rise as a result of the GST regime. I understand that insurance companies, when they make payouts for those who have won personal injury claims, make them net of the expected tax that would arise on those payouts. They do not actually forward the tax to the Commonwealth Government but retain the tax equivalent payments. That mechanism reduces their claims costs. In this package we see a reduction in the tax rate applying on income tax. That means that there will be a reduction in the notional tax taken off insurance company payouts for personal injury. Consequently, insurance companies will be paying out larger net amounts for any given award to compensate someone for personal injury. Those larger net payouts by insurance companies will therefore be reflected in higher premiums. Therefore, the impact of the GST on people's insurance costs is complex. However, it would appear to me that in most cases people will be paying increased insurance premiums or, at the very least, stable insurance premiums. On top of those increased insurance premiums where they apply, they will be paying increased stamp duty.

The position of insurance with regard to the GST is complicated and relatively unclear. Even the Treasurer and his public servants appear to have disagreed on whether compulsory third party motor vehicle insurance premiums will be subject to the GST. When I questioned the Treasurer about this in the Parliament, he said that he did not want the third party motor vehicle insurance premiums to be subject to the 10 per cent GST and that he was lobbying the Commonwealth to that end. However, that was not backed up by the actions of the State Treasury, if an article printed in *The West Australian* of 1 September 1999 can be believed. The article states that Western Australians can expect to pay the 10 per cent goods and services tax on their compulsory third party insurance but on few other state government fees and charges, according to

Western Australian Treasury officials. The next paragraph states that despite calls by Premier Richard Court for third party insurance to be exempted from the new tax in Western Australia, State Treasury has submitted to the Federal Government that it should not.

Mr Court: Can I comment on that?

Mr RIPPER: I would be delighted if the Treasurer commented on it. There seems to be an argument between him and his officials.

Mr Court: It is not an argument; the Federal Treasury has said it will not waiver on that point. In some States compulsory third party insurance is handled in the private sector.

Dr Gallop: We know who is running the show; it is the Commonwealth. You know it and this proves it.

Mr Court: There is only one answer to your argument on the centralisation of power. Centralisation happened quickly when the Labor Government was in power. At least with this regime we will be given access to all of a major growth tax. That is a step in the right direction. The only way you can go further successfully is secession.

Mr RIPPER: What a straw man! We must either accept the goods and services tax or secession. The Treasurer has given up on his historic battle with Canberra. He says that we will be given access to a growth tax. Let me put that more precisely: We will be given access to a share, to be determined by the Commonwealth, of that taxation revenue. That share might change from time to time depending on whether the Commonwealth thinks that Victoria or New South Wales needs a bit more.

Mr Court: Are you saying that the Commonwealth Grants Commission should change?

Mr RIPPER: I am saying that the Treasurer has signed up to an arrangement which makes a very large portion of our revenue hostage to a commonwealth government authority's determination. Its determination might not be helpful to this State.

Mr Court: A High Court took from us all of those taxes from fuel, liquor and so on. We now have a situation in which the Federal Government has agreed that all of the GST revenues can come to the States. Is that not a better situation than that which we had under the Labor Government, whereby all of those revenues were taken away and a lesser percentage came back? Is it not better to have access to a growth tax?

Mr RIPPER: The flaw in the Treasurer's argument is that we have surrendered to the Commonwealth Government because we have a coalition Government in Canberra and one temporarily in Perth. The two Governments have put party political solidarity ahead of the interests of the State. The Premier might say that we have access to revenue from a growth tax, but it is a commonwealth tax administered by the Commonwealth, although we pay for its administration. The Commonwealth will ultimately determine the rates and the total proceeds of the tax and its allocation.

Mr Court: You conveniently ignore that the States have lost their ability to collect the taxes on fuel, etc, which were so important to us.

Mr Kobelke: You jump out of the frying pan and into the fire.

Mr RIPPER: Exactly! The member for Nollamara has it in one. The Premier has pointed to a problem, and his solution to the problem will make Western Australia's independence and position in financial matters more vulnerable.

Mr Court: You do not agree with the solution I have put?

Mr RIPPER: I certainly do not agree with a GST as a solution. The Opposition does not agree with a GST, which is unfair, regressive and centralist.

Mr Court: What is your solution?

Mr RIPPER: It is a very difficult situation when the Commonwealth Parliament will impose a goods and services tax on this country. Our vulnerability is revealed. We cannot dispute at a state level the application of the GST. The Opposition opposes the application of a goods and services tax. The time for fighting it was, unfortunately, some time ago, when the Premier was absent in the fight.

Mr Kobelke: He fought, but on the wrong side.

Mr RIPPER: Indeed, the Premier supported the application of a GST, and we must live with the consequences, some of which will be felt by people paying third party insurance premiums in Western Australia. A \$22 a year increase in insurance premiums will result from the application of the goods and services tax. When I made that statement some months ago, the response was a one or two-sentence statement from Treasury that premiums would not increase because of concessions for insurance arrangements under the overall tax reform package. I checked that point with leaders of the insurance industry, and I found that input tax credits will apply for insurance companies; however, those credits will apply to any commercial organisation except banks under the GST tax regime. Leaders of the insurance industry deny that the GST package contains anything to ameliorate the impact of the 10 per cent GST on premium costs. In fact, leaders of the insurance industry advise me that because of the impact of a tax payment on personal injury payouts, it is quite likely that third party insurance premiums will rise by even more than the amount I stated. Treasury, acting as a proxy for the Premier on that matter, was unable to present a convincing argument. An increase in third party insurance premiums will occur partly because of the GST and partly because of the impact of other elements of the tax package on the net payouts made by insurance companies when someone suffers a personal injury.

I commented earlier about compliance costs, and the fact that small businesses would become tax collectors for the Commonwealth. Compliance costs are a major problem with the GST, particularly for small businesses. One million more tax collectors in small businesses across Australia will operate under the GST. It is apparent that many small businesses are unprepared for the workload which will come their way. That point was revealed in a number of articles in the media. The Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants surveyed Perth businesses to determine their readiness for the introduction of the GST, and that survey indicated Perth businesses are seriously under-prepared. I quote from *The West Australian* as follows -

A survey by the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants released today shows half of all Perth businesses feel they are GST ready, but they had spent less than a fifth of the national average preparing for the new tax . . .

The society's WA President, Ron Metcalf, said yesterday that people needed to be much more proactive in preparing for the new tax.

His comment was confirmed by the Executive Officer of the WA Retailers' Association, Nick Catania, who stated -

"I think WA is dragging its feet, not only in not preparing for it, but in not inquiring about it," . . .

A real compliance burden will be placed on small business. Evidence suggests that small business is not fully aware of the compliance obligation it will face, and is not preparing in the way required. Some people might say that small business should carry that responsibility, but I do not agree with that view, and nor does the leadership of small business in Australia. The federal President of the Australian Small Business Association said -

Any lack of GST preparedness in small business was due to a paucity of information . . .

Much of what I have said today reveals considerable uncertainty about the impact of the GST on Western Australia and on Western Australians. Necessarily, some of the arguments that I have advanced have had to be speculative. Necessarily, we are all in the position of trying to foretell how complex arrangements might operate in the future. A body in this State has the expertise to offer us independent advice on how the GST might affect the State and its people; namely, Western Australian Treasury. When the initial GST package was said to be viable, the Western Australian Treasury prepared an analysis of its effect in Western Australia which was released to the public by the Premier. However, when the new GST package was arrived at after negotiations between the Australian Democrats and the Prime Minister, the new package required a new analysis by the Western Australian Treasury. Despite numerous opposition requests, the Premier has failed to make the WA Treasury's analysis of the revised GST package available to the public. I am appalled by that behaviour. We must debate significant changes to our taxation arrangements. People across the State must make changes to their arrangements to accommodate these commonwealth tax changes. The people of Western Australia pay for the expertise residing with the WA Treasury, so why can the public and the Parliament of Western Australia not have the benefit of the Treasury analysis of the impact of the tax reform on Western Australia?

Mr Court: I have given you that information.

Mr RIPPER: The Premier has not given us the WA Treasury analysis of the revised GST package. We have asked him for that time and time again.

Mr Court: I have tabled all the information which says that it is the same as the initial analysis that was done, except for the changes in certain areas, and we have listed those changes and we have listed the financial impacts.

Mr RIPPER: The Premier has a WA Treasury analysis of the impact of the revised GST package on Western Australia, which he has explicitly refused to make public. The Premier's refusal to do that shows a lack of accountability and a lack of preparedness to engage in public debate on these issues. If this Parliament is to debate this legislation properly, it should have the advantage of access to that WA Treasury analysis. Consequently, although I do not oppose the second reading of this Bill, I will move an amendment to the effect that the Bill should not be read a second time until the Premier has provided that information to the House. We are entitled to that information, and the public is entitled to that information, because it is the public that pays for the expertise of the WA Treasury, and it is the WA Treasury which is best placed to advise us on how the revised goods and services tax package will affect Western Australian finances. I hope the Premier will change his tune and make available that information to the House and the public. If the Premier fails to make that information available to the House and the public, the conclusion we must all draw is that the impact of the revised goods and services tax package on Western Australia is more negative than either he or his Liberal colleagues has so far been prepared to admit.

Amendment to Motion

Mr RIPPER: I move -

That the motion be amended by deleting the word "now" and adding the following -

after the Premier and Treasurer tables in the House the Treasury analysis of the impact on state government finances of the new federal tax system including the goods and services tax.

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Leader of the Opposition) [1.22 pm]: There is no doubt that the goods and services tax and the intergovernmental financial arrangements that will flow from the GST are a major issue for Western Australians, because it will impact upon them as taxpayers and as users of government services. One could say that this is the most important financial and economic issue facing Western Australians today. I will summarise briefly the three things that all Western Australians need to know about this tax and its impact upon them. The first is that it will be levied on a range of goods and

services which were previously untaxed. We want to know what those goods and services are and what will be the impact on Western Australian citizens. Secondly, the GST and the associated intergovernmental arrangements will affect the stream and type of revenue that the Western Australian Government will receive in the future, and that will have a big impact on government budgets into the future. Thirdly, the GST will impact on our wider economy and will indirectly affect a number of industries in Western Australia, particularly those that were untaxed previously. There has been some debate about the impact of the GST on the housing, tourism and wine industries, and on regional Western Australia generally. These are important matters, and all Western Australians should have the full details available to them when considering legislation like this.

Despite the significance of the changes that will be introduced by the GST, the Premier has consistently refused to table the full analysis by the WA Treasury on the impact of the GST on Western Australia. It is interesting that the three areas that I mentioned - the range of government services in Western Australia that will be affected, the impact on revenue and the impact on the economy of Western Australia - were outlined in the Treasury analysis of the original GST package, which was tabled in the Parliament. However, the WA Treasury analysis of the revised GST package, which is controversial because the Government of Western Australia merely accepted that package without playing any role in its creation, has never been tabled in this Parliament. What does the Premier have to hide about this matter? If the GST will be such a good deal for the people of Western Australia, why will he not produce the evidence to the people of Western Australia, through the Parliament of Western Australia?

The GST will be levied on a range of goods and services which were previously untaxed. This includes a range of goods and services provided by state and local governments. All Governments provide a range of goods and services to the community, including essential services, and some of those are provided in a commercial or semi-commercial way; therefore, they will incur a GST. When we pressed the Government on this point, it told us that a range of the activities of local governments would incur a GST. We asked the Premier on a number of occasions to provide a list of the state government taxes and charges that would incur a GST. However, the Premier refused to provide that list, and instead he provided a list of taxes and charges which would not incur a GST.

This issue is important for all Western Australians, because it will affect their financial planning for the future. It is also important for small business. The Premier's continual refusal to release this list creates uncertainty in the community. For example - and the member for Belmont mentioned this issue - only last month a lot of confusion arose about the impact of the GST on third party insurance. The Premier said that he did not believe that third party insurance should incur a GST. However, his department said it should incur a GST. It is interesting that this matter, and other matters in respect of the GST, will ultimately always be resolved by the Commonwealth Government, because it is a commonwealth tax; and, in our view, over time the Commonwealth will claw back the revenue it is giving to the States because the tax is under its control and legislation.

Another issue is that the Department of Transport is at this very time trying to work out the impact of the GST on public transport fares. We came into this Parliament before the federal election and pushed the government ministers on whether they had done an analysis of the impact of the GST in their service areas. It is interesting to note that it is only now that the Department of Transport has engaged consultants to look into that matter. We know that work is being done on that matter within government. We know that the WA Treasury has put together a lot of that work. That work should be tabled in this Parliament, particularly now when we are finalising the details of the GST in Western Australia. In our view, we do not yet have the full detail about what state government services in Western Australia will be subject to a GST. We deserve that information, and we also deserve the WA Treasury analysis of the impact of the GST on the prices of the services to the people who use them.

The second issue is the impact of the GST on the Government of Western Australia. The new arrangements will mean that the State Government will give up financial assistance grants, some state taxes and franchise fees in return for a share of the GST revenue. That share will be determined by the Commonwealth Grants Commission, which currently allocates financial assistance grants to the States. These new arrangements reflect a massive centralisation of financial power to the Commonwealth. The States are effectively handing over some of their tax base to the Commonwealth, in return for a share of the GST. The Treasurer has continued to whinge about the financial muscle of the Commonwealth, but effectively has handed it more financial bulk in the packages agreed upon. No more was this demonstrated than at the time of the negotiations between John Howard and Meg Lees on the revised GST package. Despite the negotiations having a direct and significant impact on state finances, the States were not invited to participate in the discussions. The Treasurer had no influence whatever on the outcome of the negotiations between Howard and Lees, because he was not invited to participate in the discussion. This is a commonwealth tax; it is collected, administered and distributed by the Commonwealth. The new arrangements make Western Australia even more vulnerable to the machinations of the Commonwealth Grants Commission. The very body the Treasurer has consistently criticised over the past seven years will have an even more dominant role in our state finances. This body has consistently cut Western Australia's share of the pool of financial assistance grants over recent years and this same body, using the same methodology, will determine the State's share of GST revenue in the future. Western Australia will be more exposed and vulnerable.

Given that situation and given that the Howard-Lees agreement is obviously different from the agreement originally entered into by the States and the Commonwealth, this Parliament deserves to get a copy of the full Treasury analysis of the impact on state finances. What assumptions are in that Treasury analysis? What does the analysis indicate? What is the basis upon which the Government has reached its conclusions in that analysis? We know the GST arrangement will have a significant impact on the state budget. Western Australia will be asked to forgo a number of streams of revenue, and in their place will get a share of the GST. It is vitally important that Western Australia receive at least the same amount it would have received under the existing arrangement to ensure that the budget is not worse off. The Government must forecast what it would have

received in revenue had the existing arrangement continued. For example, it must determine now what it would have received from the financial assistance grants, financial institutions duty, marketable securities duty and the safety net revenue. It must also estimate what revenue and expenses it will incur under the new arrangement. If there is a difference between what Western Australia would have received and what it expects to receive, the State must seek compensation from the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth has said that no state budget will be worse off under the new arrangement and that is part of its repeated rhetoric. It has said it will compensate the States for any shortfall in revenue under the new arrangements and the revenue forgone under the old arrangement. It is therefore important that the State Government not underestimate the anticipated revenue under the existing arrangement because, if it does, compensation provided by the Commonwealth in future may well be inadequate. The Government's forecasts of revenue forgone have been underestimated and, therefore, compensation offered by the Commonwealth will leave a budget shortfall. The Opposition has maintained this argument since the analysis of the original GST package was released in September last year. At that time the State Government released an analysis claiming that Western Australia would be \$2b better off over 10 years. The analysis had a number of interesting assumptions, which the Opposition raised at the time; for example, the analysis claimed in respect of revenue forgone that stamp duty revenue would not increase at all in the next 12 years. The Treasurer defended that assumption by claiming in this House on 9 September -

The estimate of no growth in stamp duties reflects the state of the markets concerned; for example, the share market is currently at a cyclical high and reductions in revenues are more likely than increases.

He made a number of assumptions at that time which the Opposition questioned; for example, the estimates of the level of franchise fee revenue forgone, other state taxes forgone and the growth dividend assumption built into the federal analysis. The Treasurer tried to justify his analysis, but in so many ways it was found wanting. As a result of the new GST package, there have been significant changes to the intergovernmental agreement. Under the new package the State will retain 7.5 of the nine state taxes that were to be abolished. The revised agreement resulted in funding for local government switching back from the State to the Federal Government. It has many other implications for both the economy and the impact on the state budget.

Although the Opposition has not been able to obtain the full Treasury analysis, it has been able to obtain part of such an analysis through questions in the Legislative Council. In response to a question, the Minister for Finance released the anticipated impact of the GST arrangements on the Western Australian budget from 2000-01 to 2003-04. The State Opposition compared these figures with those originally released under the first GST package. It is interesting that it reveals that the criticisms made by the Opposition at the time were valid. The comparisons make interesting reading and highlight the failure of the State Government to properly investigate the real impact of the GST on state finances. As highlighted previously, the Treasurer justified a number of questionable assumptions used in the first GST analysis. For example, it was claimed in the original analysis that there would be no increase in stamp duty revenue over 10 years. The information provided in the Legislative Council by the Minister for Finance now indicates there will be an increase in stamp duty revenue of 22.6 per cent over that three-year period. In fact, the Government's new figures are more similar to the Opposition's original figures.

In its first analysis the Government also claimed that the State would forgo franchise fee revenue of only \$665.7m in the first year of the GST and \$680.7m in the second year. The Opposition claimed the revenue forgone would be \$768m in the first year and \$786.9m in the second year. In the new figures the Government has revised its figures upwards to be within \$60m of the Opposition's figure for the first year and within \$700 000 for the second year. These examples clearly demonstrate that the Government has never seriously taken on board its responsibility for analysis of the impact of the GST on Western Australia. The first analysis, released in the middle of an election campaign, has been shown to be wrong and the Opposition's criticisms at the time were right. However, it was on this analysis that the Government based its support for the GST. The time has come for the Government to provide the full analysis of the impact of the GST on state finances. I refer to the revised Howard-Lees package, which has been signed by the Treasurer without any consultation from the Federal Government. The time has come for that full analysis to be tabled in this Parliament.

The Opposition has revisited its own analysis in light of the Howard-Lees deal and, on the basis of our estimates, we believe that the state budget will be \$470m short in the first year.

Mr Court: Short of what?

Dr GALLOP: Of the amount needed to fill the gap between the revenue that would be received if the current system continued into the future and the amount that will be received under the new arrangement.

Mr Court: If you are right, the Federal Government has guaranteed to make sure we are not worse off under the new arrangement.

Dr GALLOP: Let us consider that guarantee. The compensation guaranteed by the Commonwealth Government falls well short of what is required, and that is why the Treasurer's assumptions must be placed on the Table. This issue is about the assumptions made about the revenue forgone and the revenue that will be gained. If those assumptions are wrong, the guarantees from the Commonwealth Government are not worth the paper they are written on. The Government's view of what is needed to fill the gap is seriously deficient. From what we know of the Commonwealth's offer, it is severely deficient and, therefore, the taxpayers of Western Australia will be affected.

The Government keeps repeating the mantra of the Prime Minister - the Treasurer has just done it again - that no state budget will be worse off. However, he will not produce to the Parliament the evidence, documents, assumptions and the analysis

which will prove that to be true. He has an obligation to do that. In this debate we ask the Government for the full analysis of the GST, its impact on state government taxes and charges, its impact on revenue to the people of Western Australia and, what is more, Treasury officers' assessment of its impact on the Western Australian economy. There are no reasons, not even the illegitimate political reasons that the Treasurer might have had last year when we were talking about a federal election, to keep this information from the public of Western Australia. The goods and services tax is coming, and the people of Western Australia deserve an open and accountable Government when it comes to the implications of the GST for them, for the Government of Western Australia and for the people who use government services in Western Australia, particularly the many small businesses that are so obviously and immediately affected by any increase in the taxes they must pay.

However, what have we got from the Government? We have got secrecy and obfuscation. It is now time for the Government to come clean on the GST. We know that businesses have been told by other commentators throughout the community that they are concerned about the Howard-Lees package and its impact on Western Australian Government finances. The member for Belmont has already indicated that that concern exists in the wider business community. The Government should come clean on what John Howard has in mind for the Western Australian Government, its taxpayers, its businesses and its people. If we are to have yet another example of secretive government, it will show clearly to the people that there is something to hide in this matter. Merely repeating statements by the Prime Minister that no State will be worse off is meaningless. We should know what the assumptions in the analysis are, what the analysis shows and what commitments have been given by the Commonwealth regarding revenue to the States. The Commonwealth has already built these things into its forward estimates. If it is wrong, there will be a shortfall for the people of Western Australia. On the basis of what we have been able to ascertain, the Commonwealth is short and we will suffer in a negative way in terms of the revenue that is available to the people of Western Australia.

I support the motion moved by the member for Belmont. It is now time for the Government to come clean and put all the material on the table of this Parliament so that everyone who will be affected will know how they will be affected by taxes and charges. Therefore, the people of Western Australia will know what the impact on the budget will be and what they can expect in the next two or three budgets in Western Australia. This is a secretive Government that will not come clean on the biggest issue that will affect the Western Australian people, their Government and small business in the next two or three years.

MR COURT (Nedlands - Treasurer) [1.42 pm]: The Government will not support this amendment. I will comment on the amendment only, not on the second reading debate thus far.

Dr Gallop: Of course.

Mr COURT: The Leader of the Opposition has shown a naivety.

Dr Gallop: We were right last time. You said that last time and we were right.

Mr COURT: No, the Leader of the Opposition has shown a naivety. On the guarantee, he asks how do we know that the shortfall will be met.

Dr Gallop: What is the Treasury telling you about that?

Mr COURT: The Treasuries of all of the States these days, my friend, unlike the year-to-year crisis management under the Labor Government, have four-year rolling budgets. Labor States, such as Queensland and New South Wales, have no difficulty in accepting that the Federal Government knows exactly what our position will be. We have accurate estimates.

Dr Gallop: Why don't you tell us what it is?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Baker): Order, members!

Mr COURT: The estimates are made, and if there is a shortfall, that is met. As soon as the High Court of Australia made the decision on the fuel taxes, et cetera, all the States had to meet with the federal Treasury and agree on the forward estimates on those matters.

Dr Gallop: Have you agreed upon those forward estimates?

The ACTING SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Mr COURT: We had no option but to agree to them, because those negotiations were carried out nearly two years ago.

Dr Gallop: Is there a shortfall?

Mr COURT: I will deal with the papers tabled and outline what the Government has done. First, on 6 September 1998, I put out a press release entitled "The Commonwealth Government's Tax Reform Package: Implications for Western Australian Government Finances". Attached to that was a detailed analysis that was provided at the time. Next, I tabled the "ALP's Tax Package - Treasury Summary and Assessment".

Dr Gallop: You are talking about the original tax package.

Mr COURT: Yes, I am. I am telling the Opposition everything so that it knows everything that has been tabled.

Dr Gallop: We know that.

Mr COURT: Then the submission to the Ralph review was tabled. I made a statement on the "Intergovernmental Agreement on the Reform of Commonwealth-State Financial Relations" and tabled the original agreement. That was on 5 May this year.

I made a statement on the taxation reform package on 1 June this year, and I tabled the "Tax Reform: Preliminary Assessment - Impact of Latest Changes" on 3 June. On 1 July a statement was made on the "Intergovernmental Agreement on the Reform of Commonwealth-State Financial Relations", and that was tabled.

Dr Gallop: Are you saying you have tabled all the information?

Mr COURT: I am telling the Leader of the Opposition what has been tabled. All of this happened in Parliament so it is on the record. That document was tabled. I made a statement on 7 September 1999 entitled "Goods and Services Tax, State-Based Legislative Changes", and some documents were tabled. I also tabled the list of Western Australia's state and local government charges proposed to be GST-free and the GST implementation guide. In the statement to the Parliament, I said -

The Treasury has reviewed its preliminary assessment of the revised intergovernmental agreement, which I tabled on 3 June 1999. This review confirms that the preliminary assessment remains substantially valid. The only revision is that latest estimates of the benefit to the Western Australian budget are between \$700m and \$1.5b over 10 years, depending on when the State's business stamp duties are abolished.

The only thing that the Opposition does not have, according to that information -

Mr Kobelke: You are a joke, Premier. Keep on with the jokes.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr COURT: I am pointing out that all of that has been tabled. The only thing the Opposition does not have is the chart.

Mr Kobelke: The facts.

Mr COURT: No, the chart in relation to the \$700m and \$1.5b. That is the only thing the Opposition does not have.

Dr Gallop: Will you table that today?

Mr COURT: Yes. That is what I said in that statement. That is the information I have already given.

Dr Gallop: I do not know why you did not table that when we asked you.

Mr COURT: That is the information I have already given to the Opposition.

Dr Gallop: No, you have not given us the full table.

Mr COURT: Does the Opposition want it broken up between one and 10 years?

Dr Gallop: Of course we do. That is very important.

Mr COURT: Okay. I will provide that. Does the Opposition want me to retable all this information?

Dr Gallop: No. We have all of that, except that last item. We are keen to be provided with that last one.

Mr COURT: On 7 September in Parliament I said -

The only revision is that latest estimates of the benefit to the Western Australian budget are between \$700m and \$1.5b over 10 years, depending on when the State's business stamp duties are abolished.

Dr Gallop: Are all the assumptions behind the figures there?

Mr COURT: Yes.

[See paper No 212.]

Mr COURT: The Opposition has misread what I said. I said -

... reviewed its preliminary assessment of the revised intergovernmental agreement, which I tabled on 3 June 1999. The review confirms that the preliminary assessment remains substantially valid.

Therefore, this is the same as the preliminary assessment.

Dr Gallop: What about the taxes and charges and their impact?

Mr COURT: What does the Leader of the Opposition mean when he refers to the taxes and charges?

Dr Gallop: You have a lot of government services that charge people, and they will be subject to a GST.

Mr COURT: I said here that we have tabled those -

Dr Gallop: You said the ones that were not subject to the GST.

Mr COURT: I have tabled all the ones that will not be subject to the GST, so one does not have to be too smart to work out which are the other ones. Does the Leader of the Opposition want me to do that for him?

Dr Gallop: Of course. People deserve to know that. It is not for me; it is for the people and businesses in the community.

Mr COURT: The Leader of the Opposition is saying we have told him which ones are not affected, and he cannot make the assumption about the others. I cannot believe it.

MR KOBELKE (Nollamara) [1.49 pm]: I support the amendment. We have just seen from the Treasurer his normal style of dealing with these matters, which is to read out a long list of all the papers he has tabled in this place or made available and to suggest that somehow that provided the information that the Opposition wanted. Time and again the Treasurer says that the information on these bits of paper is somehow of value, regardless of what is contained on them, that there is some magic about throwing bits of paper around. The press releases of the Treasurer are largely propaganda. They mislead more than they provide factual information. I remind him of his press release when Bold Park was established, a very good move, in which he said that the value of land being taken off the Town of Cambridge, by way of endowment lands, was worth \$6m. When I pursued him, after six months, I found that \$6m was a figure that someone on his staff thought up. There was no valuation, but he was happy to use the figure of \$6m as a valuation of a piece of land, when one had not been done.

Mr Court: How can you go on talking about the issue?

Mr Kobelke: Time after time the Treasurer lays on the Table of this House bits of paper about which he makes claims that are totally false. He has suggested with a long list of press releases and tabled papers that he has provided a Treasury analysis of the impact of the goods and services tax. He has done no such thing. He has provided partial bits of information that have been dragged out of him and that do not provide sufficient information on which anyone can make a thorough and proper assessment of the impact of the goods and services tax on the State's finances, the businesses of Western Australia and the ordinary taxpayers who will have to pay more for electricity, gas, entry to national parks, etc. The Treasurer is not willing to provide the thorough analysis on which people can understand what might be the impact.

Mr Court: The information was provided weeks ago. Just get your facts straight.

Mr KOBELKE: This is where the Treasurer continually misleads the Parliament. He either does not understand the role of a Treasurer or is deliberately misleading the Parliament. He has not provided the information which will enable people to look at the finances of the State, at the impact of the tax on businesses or on other residents in Western Australia. He has failed to do so. For him to suggest otherwise is totally false. It is a totally false statement made by the Treasurer. Unfortunately, the Treasurer has fallen into the habit of operating in this way. He thinks that waving around a piece of paper and making claims with it suddenly gives validity to a totally false statement, and we have seen it here again.

Mr Court: I think I should have tabled all of those papers because obviously the member was not listening.

Mr KOBELKE: The Treasurer may have tabled lots of papers, but he has not tabled the full Treasury analysis of all -

Mr Court: I have just read out all the Treasury analyses that have been tabled; just listen.

Mr KOBELKE: Is the Treasurer saying there are no other Treasury analyses which he has not tabled?

Mr Court: No; no other.

Mr KOBELKE: Does that mean that all analyses that are available to Treasury of the impact of this tax on the State's finances have been tabled by the Treasurer?

Mr Court: I sat over there for 10 years and didn't get one bit of information from Treasury. I have just given that.

Mr KOBELKE: I will put this question to the Treasurer so his response is on the record: Is he telling the House that no analyses are available to Treasury indicating the impact on state finances and state utility costs of the GST under the new tax arrangement which have not been made available to this House?

Mr Court: That is right. I have just read out all of the information Treasury has given to me, and which I have given to this House. It has all been put in this Parliament.

Mr KOBELKE: That is not the question.

Mr Court: I have been given no more information.

Mr KOBELKE: Does that mean that the Treasurer has tabled every bit of information given to him about this?

Mr Court: Yes.

Mr KOBELKE: Has the Treasurer inquired whether Treasury has a more detailed analysis which it has not provided to him yet?

Mr Court: Treasury has given to me the assessments of the changes, and I have given that to the member. What else does the member want me to do?

Mr KOBELKE: Let us take the example of yesterday.

Mr Court: Stop playing stupid games.

Mr KOBELKE: He waved around something he said was actuarial advice in relation to -

Mr Court: And you said it was not.

Mr KOBELKE: - the Matrix Finance Group contracts for the small vehicle fleet. It was a very flimsy letter relating to one little aspect.

Mr Court: Which you said was credible.

Mr KOBELKE: It was advice in that very narrow sense. That is what the Premier is doing again now: He is providing part of the information and using the semantics of saying, "This is all they will let me have. Treasury won't give me the real stuff, but it has given me this and I have given it all to you, and that's all I know." Treasury will not trust the Treasurer with the detail that people could pick over and establish the real state of the finances. He is not allowed to have that. The Treasury has to protect him. That suggests that if he had to work with the hard data, the details of how the GST and the tax arrangements will impact on Western Australian finances, he would get it wrong; he would stuff it up totally. Treasury cannot let him have the real data; he must have the stuff that has been massaged, that has been work over, and used selectively to put the right complexion on the picture. That is all he can get his hands on. He is only the Treasurer. Treasury could not let him have the real data, because he might come in here and let something slip, or let out of the bag what will be the impact of the GST. While I was laughing, the Treasurer asked me a question. It should be clear that the Treasurer is a joke. He cannot come in here and put on the Table details that have been manipulated and massaged to give a false picture, and discuss them. He waves around bits of paper, which are, in part, press releases, and tries to get us to accept those press releases as the basis of a proper analysis of the financial position of the State!

The Treasurer even got to the ludicrous situation in the commonwealth-state financial relationship of saying that the only options were either to take the pig in the poke and accept the goods and services tax, or Western Australia had to secede. That is the level of the Treasurer's ability to analyse our financial position. Today he said these were the only two choices. He thinks we should give in, cop the goods and services tax, and try to cover up its impact. He thinks that we should wait until after the next election when ordinary people start to feel the pain and suffering from this tax, to see the impact from a GST. The only other alternative is for Western Australia to secede. That is the approach the Treasurer has adopted in this debate. It will not wash. He no longer has any credibility as Treasurer. People accept that when he says something, it is not right.

He goes on with this fantasy that there is no \$638m deficit in the budget. He tries to deny it. Everybody on his side of politics who wants some decent financial management is saying that there is a \$640m hole in the budget and still the Treasurer will not acknowledge it. He is in denial mode. He wants to live in fantasy land. He thinks that if he keeps pushing his fantasy, everyone will accept that his fantasy on finances is a reality.

This amendment suggests that the debate should not continue until the Treasurer provides the fullest possible Treasury analysis so that we have all the figures to make an assessment of the impact of the new tax arrangements. It is not adequate for the Treasurer to provide press releases and parts of documents from a Treasury analysis and expect us to use them as a basis for enacting legislation.

The second reading speech of the State Entities (Payments) Bill states -

For many state entities, GST input credits are likely to exceed any GST and GST voluntarily payments they make, resulting in a refund to the entities.

Has any analysis been done of that? Do we know the state entities which are likely to have a credit and which will make a net payment? We do not know. This is in the Premier's speech.

Mr Court: I have already answered your concerns.

Mr KOBELKE: We have the lines which the Premier's minders have given him, and he rabbits them. The only thing we do not know is whose hand is up the Premier's shirt moving his lips. Whose hand is up the Premier's back telling him what to say? It is an absolute nonsense to suggest that he has answered the questions I asked him. In case the Premier was not listening, the question I asked him was taken from his second reading speech on the State Entities (Payments) Bill 1999. No figures were provided in the memorandum to back up that statement, to flesh it out and to give some meaning to which entities will be better or worse off.

[Questions without notice taken.]

Mr KOBELKE: The amendment before the House requests the Treasurer to table the full Treasury analysis prior to his proceeding to the second reading of these Bills which we are dealing with cognately. The Treasurer has again in question time clearly demonstrated the issues that I took up before we adjourned for question time. The Treasurer waves around bits of paper giving them an aura of authenticity which does not relate to the actual documents. The Treasurer tabled some documents today which give a summary, with some explanatory notes, of the impact of tax reform on Western Australia's finances.

Mr Speaker, you, I and most members who have had the benefit of looking at Treasury analyses from time to time know that the Treasurer tabled part of the Treasury analysis, not the Treasury analysis. The Opposition is asking the Treasurer to present the full Treasury analysis so that we have before us the whole range of assumptions that have been made and the way in which the analysis has been structured so that we can more fully understand the final figures that have been arrived at in the spreadsheets. Without knowing that, we will not be in a position to know the full import of the figures given in the document provided by the Treasurer, a document which I clearly said is part of a Treasury analysis, not the Treasury analysis. That is something that brushes over the top of this Treasurer; it is not an issue into which he wishes to buy. He thinks that he can hoodwink people by saying one thing and doing something else. In fact, he did it in question time, which gives us a clear example of what he is up to. The Treasurer stood up and claimed that he established such a level of inquiry into the Gilleece affair that everyone should have absolute confidence in it. The Treasurer did not tell us in respect of the probity audit that the last sentence of introductory paragraph 1 reads -

The probity audit however, does not include checking the content of the Inquirer's Report or the effectiveness of the results of the inquiry.

Clearly, the Treasurer implied in question time that this probity report meant that everyone should have absolute confidence in it. It is not appropriate now, but an opportunity may arise later, to go to parts of other reports which show that they contain very different information from the statements of the Treasurer, who is trying to hold up these reports as being much more than they are. That is exactly what we have with the GST and the Treasury analysis of the implications of the new tax arrangements.

The Treasurer has said that he has provided the information. He has provided some of the information, but he has refused steadfastly to provide a full Treasury analysis, which we assume has been done, of the impact on the State's finances and entities, whether instrumentalities or government departments, and on taxpayers who will have to pay the charges and fees for a range of government services. However, what we do not know is why the Treasurer will not come clean. Why is the Treasurer hiding the real data which would lay out in the open the full implications of the new tax arrangements? We can only guess that perhaps it is because he has made false claims about the GST. He has made a whole range of claims in this House and on the public record about what would be the net benefit of the GST package. Because the Treasury analysis has probably shown it to be something different, the Treasurer is probably too embarrassed to release the full Treasury analysis. It may be that the impact on state finances is so severe that the Treasurer, in the run-up to an election, simply wants to hide it.

Mr Court: It may be you have it and you cannot read.

Mr KOBELKE: The Treasurer has made that statement time and time again. He simply makes a personal accusation against me instead of addressing the issue.

Mr Court: You have the information. If you don't understand it, that is your problem.

Mr KOBELKE: What we have today in addition to the other document are two spreadsheets, another three pages headed "Explanatory Notes" and a third spreadsheet with some coloured printing on it.

Mr Court: Add it to the other documents. That is all the information.

Mr KOBELKE: The Treasurer through his interjection is clearly implying that is the full, up-to-date Treasury analysis. Is that what the Treasurer is saying?

Mr Court: I said that if you add it to the other documents, you have all the information.

Mr KOBELKE: All the press releases and prior bits and pieces of Treasury analysis?

Mr Court: No.

Mr KOBELKE: That is all the Treasurer has given us in the past. We managed to get a bit more out of him today, and we are thankful for that, but he is saying that is the full Treasury analysis.

Mr Court: I have said that. I do not know what you were doing before lunch, but I said that is all the information given to me.

Mr KOBELKE: That is all the information given to the Treasurer.

Mr Court: I have given you all of the information right back to 6 September 1998.

Mr KOBELKE: What the Treasurer has not said is that the documents represent the full analysis of the Treasury because he knows that is not true. The documents he has put on the Table and provided to the Opposition are clearly not - I repeat not - the full Treasury analysis.

Mr Court: I said that it is all of the analysis that the Treasury has given me.

Mr KOBELKE: Exactly. The Treasurer with a hand up his back moved by his minders has his very tricky little phrase, which he has repeated again, that he has tabled all of the Treasury analysis made available to him - I repeat "made available to him". The Treasurer has not tabled the full Treasury analysis because he is too scared to do it. We are left to guess why.

Mr Court: What if that is the full Treasury analysis?

Mr KOBELKE: If it is, the Treasurer had better go down to the Treasury and tell the people there to do the job again, if that is all they have done. Some things may have been done by the Commonwealth. I am not saying that was all done in-house, but the range of analyses available to the Treasury over the whole range of tax changes, which we are generally calling the GST, would clearly have involved far more than the Treasurer has currently provided publicly to the Opposition. Is the Treasurer suggesting that is all there is?

Mr Court: I will not bother.

Mr KOBELKE: The Treasurer has gone quiet because we have got him cold. He has been found out today to be using a tricky set of words, as he does all the time, so that he has not actually lied to the House. He has used the tricky set of words that he has tabled in this House all of the Treasury analysis made available to him, but of course his out is that the Treasury did not give him the real documents; the people there did not let him near a comprehensive Treasury analysis, and therefore he does not need to table it. We are still left guessing as to what is the best analysis of the total impact of the GST.

The debate on this amendment has clearly shown why we need that Treasury analysis before we proceed with the full debate on these Bills. The Treasurer is being too tricky by half. He is not willing to lay before the Parliament the data which would allow us and all members of the public to be in a much better position to judge the full impact of the legislation before the House. The legislation is incredibly important for the finances of this State and so deserves the release of a full Treasury analysis.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (16)

Mr Brown	Mr Graham	Mr Marlborough	Mr Ripper
Mr Carpenter	Mr Grill	Mr McGinty	Mrs Roberts
Dr Edwards	Mr Kobelke	Mr McGowan	Ms Warnock
Dr Gallop	Ms MacTiernan	Ms McHale	Mr Cunningham (<i>Teller</i>)

Noes (28)

Mr Ainsworth	Mrs Edwardes	Mr Masters	Mr Shave
Mr Baker	Dr Hames	Mr McNee	Mr Sweetman
Mr Board	Mrs Hodson-Thomas	Mr Minson	Mr Trenorden
Mr Bradshaw	Mrs Holmes	Mr Nicholls	Mr Tubby
Mr Court	Mr House	Mr Omodei	Dr Turnbull
Mr Cowan	Mr Kierath	Mr Pandal	Mrs van de Klashorst
Mr Day	Mr Marshall	Mr Prince	Mr Osborne (<i>Teller</i>)

Pairs

Mr Thomas	Mr Barnett
Ms Anwyl	Mr Bloffwitch
Mr Riebeling	Mr Johnson
Mr Bridge	Dr Constable

Amendment thus negatived.

Debate (on second reading) Resumed

MR GRAHAM (Pilbara) [2.50 pm]: The goods and services tax to be introduced into Australia is a disgraceful tax for a range of reasons, and history will judge it to be a disgraceful tax.

Mr Pandal interjected.

Mr GRAHAM: I say to the member for South Perth with a great deal of pride that the Australian Labor Party has never in its history had as its policy a goods and services tax.

Mr Pandal: Keating pushed for it.

Mr GRAHAM: When some people in the Labor Party at the 1995 Tax Summit, and during its lead up, proposed a goods and services tax, the infinite wisdom of the rank and file members of the Labor Party won out. Members will recall that a GST was not an outcome of the Tax Summit. It died in the Australian Labor Party after that singular attempt by some prominent people to introduce that terrible tax. Those people learnt the lesson, as did Dr John Hewson. Unfortunately, John Howard and the Australian Democrats did not learn that lesson. It is a terrible tax, which is introduced for all the wrong reasons to hit the wrong people.

In a short speech I will give two crystal clear examples of how the GST hits the wrong people for the wrong reasons. The area I represent has a predominantly higher incidence of four-wheel drive use than found anywhere else in the State, and this is for very good reason: One needs such vehicles to drive around the areas I represent. That is an indisputable logic which the Government accepts. However, having accepted that logic, the Government set out on two courses to significantly increase every kind of tax in the budget which applies to four-wheel drive vehicles. As an incidental issue to the GST, the Government has increased tax on diesel fuel used for four-wheel drives. When people sit about in Canberra to deliberate on that issue, it no doubt makes some sense to its proponents. Nevertheless, the significant effect in the bush is that it hits people who have less ability to pay than those elsewhere in the State.

Mr Court: Did you support the Labor Party's four-wheel drive tax at the last federal election?

Mr GRAHAM: I am happy to tell the Premier what I do not support: I do not support the GST increasing the cost of diesel fuel.

Mr Court: You supported a hefty hike.

Mr GRAHAM: I do not support the Premier's change to vehicle registration; that is, that it be increased on the "basis of weight" - using the Premier's words - because of some nonsensical view that the heavier the vehicle, the more its use of the road infrastructure. What codswallop! If someone has a bigger car and lives in the outback, does that person drive it more often? Der! Think about that for a while.

Moving from a glaring and obvious problem with the goods and services tax in remote and rural areas of Western Australia,

I turn to a consequential effect of the GST with which this Bill is supposed to deal. Our community contains a range of not-for-profit, non-government organisations which deliver a range of services, and are funded by government to deliver those services. A key role these days for such bodies is employment services. It matters not whether one agrees or disagrees with this policy, the Federal Government has changed employment service delivery in this State; that is, those services are predominantly delivered by the private sector or non-government organisations. Those non-profit organisations will be subject to the GST. That is a major change for these voluntary organisations in operating their businesses.

The Australian Taxation Office has a responsibility for training industry on the implementation of the GST. I am reliably informed that the Australian Taxation Office has forgotten in its planning to include the not-for-profit sector in Western Australia; I do not know the situation elsewhere in Australia. The Australian Taxation Office has overlooked this very important not-for-profit sector in its training plan. I am further advised that the ATO is late in delivering its training and has missed its crucial training and reporting dates for most industries. Is the Premier aware of that situation?

Mr Court: Yes. I am not aware of where the ATO is at in its timetable, but I am very concerned about its preparedness, not only within business but also in government itself. We must make all government operations compliant.

Mr GRAHAM: The Premier might like to listen to my comments, although I do not suggest that he listen to all my speeches.

Mr Court: I made an interjection, which you ignored, so I thought it best that I shut up.

Mr GRAHAM: The Premier might like to listen as I suspect that he could fix this problem with a phone call if he wished. The non-government, not-for-profit sector has been forgotten by the ATO; that is, it was overlooked. In error, that sector was not included in the training plan. Also, the ATO is behind in its training delivery program. I am told that state government departments have been advised that the Australian Taxation Office can provide no resources for training for the not-for-profit sector. These are voluntary organisations which deliver services on behalf of government, yet the ATO cannot find resources to train them. It seems on my advice that the cost of training those organisations has shifted from the Commonwealth to the State Government. Is that true, Premier?

Mr Court: For the private sector?

Mr GRAHAM: I refer to non-government, not-for-profit organisations.

Mr Court: Is that charitable organisations?

Mr GRAHAM: No. I refer to bodies like the regional employment development organisations which operate around the State.

Mr Court: You said non-government operations, and regional development is government.

Mr GRAHAM: I refer to REDOs - regional employment development organisations - which are not for profit. They are community based organisations which are government funded and which sell services on behalf of government.

Mr Court: I cannot tell the member what the training costs are, but if the member wants to ask me a specific question, I will answer it for him.

Mr GRAHAM: I will tell the Premier, because I have the answer. I am told that the Australian Taxation Office has advised the Department of Employment and Training that it does not have funds to do that training, and the Department of Employment and Training is now being asked to pick up that training, or those organisations will not know what they need to do to comply with the GST. That is of great concern to me, firstly, because it represents a shift of costs from the Federal Government to the States; and, secondly, because these organisations that are operating in goodwill in the community do not know what they need to do to comply with the taxation laws of the nation. This Bill is supposed to be about the transitional arrangements, financial agreements and consequential provisions that relate to the introduction of the GST. The Premier has people who go through *Hansard*, and he has said to me that he will listen to my speech but he has some papers to go through, so I put it to him that he have this matter investigated and that he find out from the Minister for Employment and Training whether my information is correct - I am reliably assured that it is - and that he give me an answer at a later stage in this debate, because it is a very important question.

MR BROWN (Bassendean) [3.01 pm]: I wish to make a few observations about the Financial Relations Agreement (Consequential Provisions) Bill. The second reading speech states, under the heading "National tax reform and the intergovernmental agreement", that -

The tax reform package also includes substantial income tax cuts, compensation for those adversely affected by the GST, simplification of the tax payment and reporting system, and a reduction in fuel costs for business, including farmers.

I quote that paragraph because it is important in the context of the ongoing debate about the GST to understand the way in which the language is changing and what the coalition Government is seeking to achieve by that change of language. In this paragraph, the Government is talking about compensation for those adversely affected by the GST. That is different from what was said by the Prime Minister and the coalition in the lead-up to the 1998 federal election. The Prime Minister gave an undertaking at that time that no Australian who currently pays the appropriate taxes will be worse off. However, a subtle change has been made to the language. On one interpretation of the words that compensation will be made for those who are adversely affected by the GST, the compensation package will be for every person who has a lower income as a result of the GST. However, on another interpretation of those words, the compensation package will be only for those persons who are affected in a major way, and nothing more. It is interesting that the second reading speech does not refer to compensation to ensure that people are not worse off.

If I am being a little over-sensitive about those changes, it is because of the subtleties that we have seen in the language about other federal government policies. I instance the unequivocal commitment that was given by the now Prime Minister in the lead-up to the 1996 federal election. John Howard went into that federal election promoting an industrial relations policy, and he gave a rock solid, cast-iron guarantee to the working people of Australia that not one employee would be worse off under that industrial relations policy. Of course, after the 1996 federal election when the coalition Government came into office, major changes were made to the industrial relations laws of this country, and that ushered in the opportunity to lower the wages and employment conditions of thousands of employees, notwithstanding the rock solid guarantee that was given by John Howard in the lead-up to the 1996 federal election that no Australian worker would be worse off under those changes. The Prime Minister's word - the word of "Honest John" - cannot be believed. He did not tell the truth, and history records that he did not tell the truth. He sought to fudge the truth by carefully crafting different words and by trying to change the principles upon which that legislation had been drafted and promoted.

My concern is that the same thing is happening in this debate about the GST. The coalition forces are seeking to move away from the commitment that was given prior to the 1998 federal election that no Australian will be worse off. I wrote to the Prime Minister about this matter, and I was told this was to be interpreted as meaning that no Australian paying the taxes that are due under the relevant state and federal Acts will be worse off under the tax changes that are proposed by the coalition. It was not meant to be interpreted as meaning that a person who is a tax avoider will not be worse off. We now see in the use of these carefully crafted words an attempt, ever so imperceptibly, to shift the principle. It is an attempt to say the compensation is only for those adversely affected by the goods and services tax. I note the Treasurer is engrossed in reading something, but I invite him to interject and indicate whether that is his understanding of the undertakings given by the Prime Minister and the coalition in the lead-up to the 1998 federal election. Did the coalition say, through the Prime Minister, federal ministers, state ministers and state representatives, that no Australians paying the taxes they had to pay would be worse off under the GST?

Mr Court: Are you saying the Prime Minister said that prior to the election?

Mr BROWN: Yes.

Mr Court: Where and in what context?

Mr BROWN: I do not have his words. If the Treasurer is saying that it was never the indication, that illustrates the point. The impression given to the electorate was that tax cheats might be worse off, but everybody else would be better off. The pensioners would be better off; self-funded retirees would be better off; people on Newstart benefits would be better off; low, middle and high income earners would be better off; people who rely on wages and salaries would be better off; and those who derive their income from stocks and shares would be better off. All these groups were told they would be better off under this system and that it did not simply mean cutting existing revenues to provide a tax cut. They were told it was a tax neutral system and everyone would be better off. I take the Treasurer's hesitancy to reply that that was his understanding of the commitment, as a stepping-away from that commitment. There is a very clear stepping-away from it at the federal level, because that was never the intention.

Those of us who have looked at the tax system over the years, and I had the opportunity to participate in the Tax Summit in 1985, knew there would be winners and losers in the system. Under this system there will be winners and losers. Where is the equity in the proposed system? I make that as my first point because it is a fundamental point in what is now being promoted by both the state coalition and the federal coalition as a great new tax system. The words being used on the multimillion dollar advertising campaign refer not to "a new tax", but to "a new tax system". We are being brainwashed day and night with television advertisements and through publications delivered to our homes.

It is interesting that a publication was produced by the Australian Government and delivered to all homes a while ago, purporting to provide information on the new tax system. It was a glossy brochure of 12 to 16 pages. I picked that up and thought it would provide some details that people do not yet have on the new system. Of course, it was just a promotional document. It had many glossy pages and weasel words indicating who would be better off and, importantly, went on to indicate where the new GST would not apply. The pamphlet was produced by the Federal Government and on page after page the Government explained where the new GST would not apply. It seems to me there is not much heart in trying to promote this new tax.

I shall take up two matters raised in the second reading speech on the Financial Relations Agreement (Consequential Provisions) Bill. Reference is made to the commonwealth-state agreement and the contents of the agreement, and the second dot point is -

the States facilitating the monitoring by the Commonwealth of price exploitation in areas outside the Commonwealth's constitutional jurisdiction;

Another Bill, which is not before the House at the moment but is on the Notice Paper, proposes to implement that by giving the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission powers to intervene where the price for supply is unreasonably high. This matter is of great concern to some of my constituents who have complained already that prices are going up in anticipation of the implementation of the GST. I ask the Treasurer to indicate in his reply the mechanisms the ACCC will use to determine whether prices are unreasonably high. I am at a loss to understand the arrangements for that. How will the ACCC exercise its discretion in determining whether prices have been increased to an unreasonable level as a result of the GST?

Mr Court: We have other legislation to introduce in relation to price control. That will come through Fair Trading.

Mr BROWN: I note the Financial Relations Agreement (Consequential Provisions) Bill seeks to apply ACCC powers in the State. I also note from the second reading speech that price monitoring legislation will be introduced. Is the Treasurer referring to the price monitoring legislation?

Mr Court: Yes.

Mr BROWN: I suggest that unless the price monitoring legislation is introduced fairly soon, it will be a joke. My constituents are saying that prices are already moving. They have been amazed by the speed with which prices have moved, particularly food prices. Whatever mechanisms will be established by the price monitoring legislation, I am not sure whether they will retrospectively assess the prices for goods and services and monitor them from that point. I suggest that if the price monitoring arrangements start next March or April, it will be too late. Some of my constituents say that it is already too late because people have increased their prices in anticipation of these changes to ensure they cannot be picked up by monitoring arrangements or any involvement of the ACCC. They have already made allowances for that. I do not know whether that information has reached the Government or whether, through the Ministry of Fair Trading, it has looked at that matter. In the suburbs the consumers have looked at it, and they are worried about it. They come to me and ask me what has happened and why these prices are increasing at such a significant rate. Their analysis is that it is in anticipation of the goods and services tax and the arrangements surrounding it. Maybe the Treasurer can give us an indication of when that price monitoring legislation will be introduced, because if it is delayed it will be of little value.

The next point I raise concerns the first home owners assistance scheme that will be introduced with the changes to the tax arrangements. The principles surrounding the first home owners scheme are set out in the Bill at schedule 1, appendix D. This scheme provides for eligible applicants to be entitled to \$7 000 assistance on eligible homes to be made available under the first home owners scheme. There is no indication in the principles of what the definition of "eligible home" is. Presumably an eligible home will mean a home of a specified value or less; that is, presumably it will not apply to high-value homes. I will be interested to hear the detail of that from the Treasurer. It is not much good having a first home owners scheme if one cannot purchase a medium-priced home.

Mr Court: The New Tax System Price Exploitation Code (Taxing) Bill should be second read in the Parliament tomorrow. It is the Order of the Day No 5 today.

Mr BROWN: That Bill has been introduced, and I have it. However, as I read it, it does not deal with price monitoring. It deals with the ability of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to intervene when prices have moved unreasonably. Perhaps in his reply to the second reading debate the Treasurer could indicate where the monitoring is contained in that Bill. I will not say that I have closely read the Bill, so perhaps I have missed it. However, I could not see it in the Bill, in the explanatory notes or in the second reading speech. If the monitoring is somewhere in that Bill, maybe the Premier can point that out.

Mr Court: I am sorry, I had to obtain that advice from the officers. The ACCC is already doing the monitoring where it has commonwealth jurisdiction. This legislation allows it to extend that monitoring into the state jurisdiction.

Mr BROWN: Is it doing the monitoring now of those state matters?

Mr Court: No, it is doing the monitoring of commonwealth matters, and when this Bill goes through it will be able to do it in relation to state matters.

Mr BROWN: I thank the Premier for that. I do not profess to know where the cut-off point is between state and federal matters, but if a number of retail prices have not already started to increase, to some extent they have missed the boat, according to my constituents.

As I said, another matter that I raise relates to the first home owners scheme and the fact that \$7 000 assistance will be made available to people who purchase a new home for the first time. First, that \$7 000 will be made available for homes which are classed as eligible homes. However, the legislation does not tell us what an eligible home is. That raises the question of whether an eligible home will be one that costs, for example, \$150 000 or less, \$85 000 or less, or whatever the figure might be. Obviously, the number of people who can access the first home owners scheme will be dependent upon the cut-off figure.

Secondly, I note that the first home owners scheme will apply only to people who are purchasing a house for the first time. There are many people who have been in relationships and the first house they owned has been sold. If these people seek to purchase another house, they will not be eligible for assistance under this scheme. Similarly, if one partner in a marriage has never participated in, nor sought the assistance of, the first home owners scheme but the other partner has at some earlier time - for example, when people marry for a second or third time or whatever - the new couple will be ineligible to access the first home owners scheme. Members should understand that this will impact on many men and women who find themselves in that situation; it will have a negative impact on them. These sorts of schemes, which are one-off payments in restricted circumstances, will not compensate for the increase in house prices that is about to take place. Those people who do not own real estate today and who will not own real estate before 30 June next year will get quite a shock as a result of this. That matter has not been properly taken into account. It is a matter that will have negative consequences for the building industry in this State and for the people employed in it.

In the second reading speech, it was stated -

The benefits of the reforms to the Western Australian budget have been estimated at between \$700m and \$1.5b over the first 10 years, depending on the extent to which the State abolishes business stamp duties in the future.

Elsewhere in the second reading speech it is indicated that the GST will not apply to exports and that that will be of major benefit to exporters in this State. What do those two things, taken together, mean? They mean this: Under the current tax system, the argument is that when we export, the cost of the export includes a tax component; that is, when we export certain goods and services, included in the price of those exports is a tax component. It is argued by the coalition that by exempting the GST from exports, that component of tax will be removed and therefore the price of exports will drop, thereby making them more competitive on the world market.

What is the reverse of that argument? It is that countries to which we export are meeting tax payments in Australia; that is, when we export so many widgets, if there is a small component, 2 per cent of the price relates to tax imposts on the costs; in other words, the purchasers of the widgets in country X are contributing to the tax revenue in Australia. We will no longer do that. That means that we will now collect the tax here, from Australian residents. Automatically that must mean that the tax to be imposed upon Australian residents must be higher, if this package is to be neutral in terms of total tax revenue. One cannot escape the logic of that.

If, as the Australian Government says, there will be a reduction of \$4b in taxes paid by our exporters and if the level of tax to be collected will be the same, the Australians - the mums and the dads, the pensioners and self-funded retirees - must pay more tax. It is an inescapable conclusion. Nobody seems to recognise that fact. This is a transfer of tax liabilities. I will be interested to see how much this change will affect exporters. One thing that affects exporters in the gold industry is the price of gold. The changes in the tax might produce some small advantages, but they will not be worth as much as the effect on exports if the gold price goes from \$255 to \$320 an ounce. The issues that affect the export of iron ore and gas are the costs, the economies of the other countries and their capacity to bear it. I will be very interested to see some economic analysis that indicates the benefits to exports in some years' time.

MR MCGOWAN (Rockingham) [3.32 pm]: I will say a few words about my view of the goods and services tax package which will be imposed on Western Australians as of 1 July next year. At the outset, I regard the taxation package and the history of these events over the past couple of years as being a very sad and sorry tale, and also something which demonstrates a complete arrogance on the part of the Prime Minister and his Government. I recall a number of things, the first being that on at least half a dozen occasions when the Prime Minister was the Leader of the Opposition, he made sincere commitments to the people of Australia that he would not ever introduce a goods and services tax. On 2 May 1995, John Howard said, "No, there's no way a GST will ever be part of our policy; never ever. It's dead. It was killed by the voters at the last election". Later that day he said, "A GST or anything resembling it is no longer coalition policy, nor will it be policy at any time in the future. It is completely off the political agenda in Australia". On the following day he said, "No, there's no way a GST will ever be part of our policy". On a later occasion, while Leader of the Opposition, he said, "The last election killed the GST. It's not part of our policy and it won't be part of our policy at any time in the future."

From that, I can only assume John Howard was not committed to putting in place a GST. Before the last federal election, the Prime Minister spent \$18m of taxpayers' funds on a campaign on this tax package. Not only was he putting in place political advertising to suit his purposes, but also the whole campaign never mentioned - not once - a goods and services tax. It reminds me of the monarchists' campaign which, again, is using public funds, which I suppose is justified in the context of a referendum. Never once do they mention the queen, crown prince, queen's consort or any of those people. It strikes me that the monarchists are a little embarrassed about the central trust of their campaign.

I return to the goods and services tax. As I was saying, in the lead-up to the last federal election, \$18m of public funds was spent on a political advertising campaign by the Prime Minister about this tax package which never once mentioned its central feature - the \$30b goods and services tax. A snow job was done on the people of Australia by the Prime Minister using public funds, pointing out the benefits of the package, but never once giving the detriments of it. That was supported by this State Government, and it has been supported ever since, which is why we are debating these Bills today. In the federal election on 3 October last year, the Howard Government had the biggest, or it might have been the second biggest, swing against it in a single term of virtually any postwar Government, to such a degree that, on a two-party preferred basis, fewer than 49 per cent of the electors voted for the Howard Government and this tax package. A majority was opposed to it. The tax package was the central issue of the campaign. In a lot of ways the campaign became a referendum on the tax package. On a false premise, an illegitimate government was re-elected. Then using its numbers, it put the package through the Parliament which received only 48.8 percent of the vote of Australians. One hundred thousand more people voted against the goods and services tax package than voted for it; yet with supreme arrogance the Howard Government rammed it through the Federal Parliament, with the complicity of the Government opposite. That is a sad and sorry affair. In time to come when the inflationary pressures start, when small businesses realise the impact it will have on them in administration and other costs, when the so-called compensation is taken away from those who can least afford it, Australians will begin to understand what this Federal Government, with this compliant State Government, has done to them. I have always been opposed to a goods and services tax for that very reason.

It is often argued by the Government that we will lose the wholesale sales tax. I am not sure of the exact figures; however, my understanding is that it brings in about \$10b or \$11b a year. The goods and services tax will bring in over \$30b for the commonwealth coffers. The wholesale sales tax is applied by between 56 000 and 77 000 business across Australia, although a lot of those are big businesses; but some are small. Slightly less than one-twentieth of the businesses across Australia must apply a wholesale sales tax. The goods and services tax will be applied to 1.7 million small businesses across Australia. A lot of those small businesses which, out of habit, would have voted for the Howard Government and some which were deceived by an \$18m public advertising campaign that never once mentioned a goods and services tax package will have to apply that tax at their own expense. The figures quoted by the Australian Taxpayers' Association indicate that it will cost those businesses about \$7 000 a year, \$5 000 in initial set-up costs and about 228 hours of extra administration each year. That is what this will cost the average small business. The average person who invests money and goes into

business works pretty hard. That person has it all on the line - normally his house. If times go bad, the business will go down. That person will have to put this amount of effort and money into this tax.

Mr Court: And sell their business and pay your capital gains tax.

Mr McGOWAN: I seem to recall a promise during the 1984 federal election campaign that it would be completely abolished by a future coalition Government. Has the Government abolished it?

Mr Court: It is getting closer. In the example you just gave, that person will not have to pay any capital gains tax on that little business, so the answer depends on whether you allow the legislation to pass through the Federal Parliament.

Mr McGOWAN: These people will not have to pay any capital gains tax; capital gains tax is being halved. The Premier has misunderstood it.

Mr Court: There is no tax up to certain levels.

Mr McGOWAN: The Premier must also realise that the changes in capital gains tax have removed indexation and the cost of purchase. Did the Premier know that? When a person buys a small business, that person puts a lot of money into stamp duty and the other costs of purchase. Inflation is then added on, and it will go up under this package. The cost base of the purchase cannot be indexed. The Prime Minister's changes will be worse for some small businesses, particularly if inflation picks up. In the package the Premier mentioned swings and roundabouts. I do not have a great deal of difficulty with it, but the Premier should check his facts before he says that it will not apply.

A \$30b monster is being put on the back of every small business in Australia. In my electorate a small business has started up which sells peanuts at fares and fetes. The owners were unemployed and they put that business in practice and they make a reasonable living. They took a punt and they spend their weekends doing it. For every peanut they sell, 10 per cent will be added. For every bag of chocolate-coated peanuts, 10 per cent will be added, and then administration costs, a computer system to administer it and the initial cost of set up must be added. That is what this Government has been compliant in doing to them. The federal cyclical budget surplus is about \$7b a year. The Government is spending that surplus in order to put in place a taxation system voted against by a majority of the Australian population. What has happened is almost comical.

When these tax packages were put in place overseas, we found that, firstly, they were inflationary; secondly, large numbers of small businesses went out of business when they were introduced; and, thirdly, the compensation measures that were put in place were removed over time. Before the Howard Government has even put the compensation package into place for people on pensions, people on disability pensions and people who are unable to get a job, the Prime Minister is authorising the Minister for Family and Community Services, Hon Jocelyn Newman, to put in place a package to cut down the benefits for those people. He hoodwinked the Australian Democrats as well by saying, "Let us get the package through the Senate; we have compensation for all these people." Now, the Federal Government will introduce a package to cut the benefits to those people. It did not even mention that. The sorts of antics that have been carried out by what is, in reality, an illegitimate Federal Government - one which is not supported by a majority of Australians are quite breathtaking. It will probably be quite good for people on income the same as ours. A \$5 000 tax cut for people who earn what a minister or a backbencher earns is quite good.

Mr Baker: It depends on how many children you have.

Mr McGOWAN: Is the member saying that it is not a good package?

Mr Baker: No. Why are you in love with wholesale sales tax? What is your infatuation with it?

Mr McGOWAN: I am saying that wholesale sales tax takes in only one-third of what is taken in by a goods and services tax, and it is paid by only one-twentieth of those who will pay a GST. I think I have mentioned that already.

Another issue relating to this matter is the impact this package will have upon sporting bodies and voluntary groups across Australia. Most sporting bodies and voluntary groups do not recognise the impact this will have upon their turnovers, fundings, grants and sponsorships. As members know, when the goods and services tax is put in place, one-eleventh of the consideration which is received in the purchase of a good or a service will be remitted to the Australian Taxation Office, provided that it is not an exempt category of food, education, health and so on. The input credits will then be calculated and the resulting figure will be remitted either to the Australian Taxation Office or by the Australian Taxation Office in the form of a refund. That system will be imposed upon sporting bodies, voluntary groups and any groups with turnovers which are involved in goods and services. They must all go through that process. It is not widely recognised by sporting bodies, which is one of my portfolio areas, heritage groups and groups with a turnover that when sponsorship is received by those groups, one-eleventh of any sponsorship income received by those groups must then be remitted to the Australian Taxation Office.

Mr Baker: Does that include sporting groups which are also registered charities under the Charitable Collections Act?

Mr McGOWAN: My information is that it includes all sporting groups which deal in goods and services. The member for Joondalup is always talking about sporting groups; he is always talking about the Joondalup rugby club. If he received \$11 000 from the Joondalup shopping centre for the Joondalup rugby club, \$1 000 of that would be remitted to the Australian Taxation Office. That will apply to every sporting and community group. That is what happens with sponsorship. If the Deputy Premier obtained sponsorship for one of his sporting groups in Merredin - I think he was a football player in his time - one-eleventh of that sponsorship would be remitted to the Australian Taxation Office. That is a harsh thing to impose upon sporting and community groups. It is something of which they are not yet aware.

I attempt to obtain sponsorships for a range of groups in my electorate from various industries in the area. In the future, I will be giving one-eleventh of that to the Australian Taxation Office. That will hit those groups hard. If a sporting body or community group receives a grant or government funding for the supply of services, one-eleventh of that grant will be remitted to the Australian Taxation Office. This will occur if a grant is made to a sporting club to provide a service, such as a coaching clinic, on behalf of the Ministry of Sport and Recreation or when the Government goes out and pork-barrels its own seats - as it seems to do - and provides the electorates of favoured sons or daughters with great resources. One-eleventh of each grant to those community groups will be remitted to the Australian Taxation Office. That provision is in the package the Government has supported and it will impact heavily on such groups throughout the community. I do not think those groups are totally aware of the position, but I will do my best to make sure they understand what will occur.

Local government is the other group that has been left out of this process. It is another of my portfolio areas. An agreement was entered into between the States and the Commonwealth about which local government services and goods would be taxed. The rule of thumb is that if services or goods are provided by local government in a business sense, such as swimming pools, football facilities or hundreds of other things, goods and services tax will apply. However, very little effort, such as the provision of an assistance package, has been expended to help local government deal with this. Recently I was in a rural shire, and an officer told me the shire would have to employ someone to deal with this issue, but it could not get anybody. People who have expertise on the package are not available in the smaller shires that will have to deal with this matter. Local governments around the State are nervous about this package. They are afraid, because the tax will apply to a range of the business activities they provide. Local governments are receiving no, or very little, assistance to deal with this package and they will have to employ more staff. A council with an annual budget of \$15m or more will have to employ another staff member to deal with the process. Some councils have budgeted to spend \$40 000 to employ a staff member to deal with this matter, but they have found such a figure is not enough to enable them to obtain someone with the relevant expertise, qualifications and ability.

The goods and services tax package is causing a great deal of dismay among local governments throughout the State and it will cause a great deal of dismay and disbelief among sporting and community groups. This package will be introduced on 1 July next year. The Court Government must go to an election after that. It has embraced this package. It has said the package will be wonderful for the people of Western Australia. This is the Holy Grail according to -

Mr Cowan: I do not think we said it would be wonderful; we said it would be better.

Mr McGOWAN: Is the Deputy Premier saying the package will not be very flash?

Mr Cowan: I did not say that either. The member for Rockingham has poor listening skills. It will be better.

Mr McGOWAN: Does the Deputy Premier believe it will be better, in light of all the things I have said about the impact on small businesses? What about the impact on small businesses in his home town? Does he think it will be better despite the impact on time constraints and the process required to remit this money? The Deputy Premier knows many of these people are not good at these things. These people have run their businesses for long periods.

Mr Cowan: They have to do those things now with wholesale sales tax.

Mr McGOWAN: That applies to only one-twentieth of businesses. The corner store in Narembeen does not pay wholesale sales tax.

Mr Cowan: All corner stores do, because they carry a comprehensive range of goods and they inevitably deal with the sales tax issue. To make matters even more complicated, they must ask people, if they do not already know, whether they have tax exemption status because they are primary producers. It is a nightmare for those people.

Mr McGOWAN: Does the Deputy Premier believe that applying this system, which will apply to 20 times more businesses, is a better solution?

Mr Cowan: I would not say that 20 times is the correct figure.

Mr McGOWAN: About 70 000 small businesses pay wholesale sales tax.

Mr Cowan: It will certainly cut across the board and have an impact on a greater range of goods and services. The member for Rockingham makes those particular assumptions. He should acknowledge that they are only assumptions and that he is not taking into account the fact that businesses invariably deal with wholesale sales tax rates at different levels and also with customers who have exemptions. That, in itself, is a complication. The member cannot pretend that difficulties do not exist now.

Mr McGOWAN: Is the Deputy Premier saying that the Australian Taxpayers' Association is incorrect in its assessment of these matters?

Mr Cowan: I said what I said. I wish the member for Rockingham would not keep making assumptions. He is as bad as the member for Armadale. They make statements and then make assumptions based on them.

Mr McGOWAN: Am I as bad or as good as the member for Armadale? She has it all over the Deputy Premier.

Mr Cowan: I doubt it.

Mr McGOWAN: I disagree with what the Deputy Premier has said, but I put a challenge to him. This package comes into operation on 1 July next year. The Government should go to an election shortly after and see what the people of this State think.

Mr Cowan: We will be going to an election. We are obliged to.

Mr McGOWAN: No, the Government does not have to go to an election until the following May.

Mr Cowan: The Government is obliged to go to an election in either the fourth quarter of 2000 or the first quarter of 2001. That is shortly after the introduction of the tax package in my book.

Mr McGOWAN: The Government does not have to go to an election until a bit later than the first quarter of 2001. I think it can wait until May 2001. However, I challenge the Government, in light of this, to put its credibility on the line.

Mr Cowan: The member should go back and look at the Electoral Act. He is wrong.

Mr McGOWAN: Every political scientist in Western Australia is also wrong. The Government should put its money where its mouth is and go to an election straight after the goods and services tax is introduced. It should see what the people of Western Australia think of that taxation system. Alternatively, as I suspect will be the case, the Government might try to avoid this issue and go to an election before the goods and services tax is introduced. Will the Deputy Premier rule that out?

Mr Court: The member should check the Constitution.

Mr Cowan: I suggest the member read the Electoral Act.

Mr McGOWAN: Does the Deputy Premier say that he will definitely not go to an election at that time?

Mr Cowan: The member should find out for himself.

Dr Gallop: Has the Deputy Premier checked the Electoral Act?

Mr Cowan: Yes.

Dr Gallop: Why would he do that?

Mr Cowan: I like to know about those things.

Mr Kobelke: What is the earliest the Government can go to an election?

Mr Cowan: The member should go and find out.

Mr McGOWAN: In other words, the Deputy Premier does not know.

Mr Court: The Government will go to an election as soon as the Labor Party gets all its preselections done.

Mr McGOWAN: It is interesting the Premier should say that because, while he was in London, I saw Noel Crichton-Browne sitting in the courtyard. Everyone was marching up to him, tugging the forelock to Noel. It must be preselection time for the Liberal Party.

Mr Cowan: Did I miss something?

Mr McGOWAN: The Deputy Premier must have missed it. I did not see him out there. He was one of the few members - although of course he is in the wrong party - who was not out there tugging the forelock to Noel, asking whether the preselection was right and whether they were okay. In his party the Deputy Premier is the equivalent of Noel Crichton-Browne in the Liberal Party, so I suppose he does not have to do that. There are a lot of similarities between Noel Crichton-Browne and the Deputy Premier, such as their looks and age.

Mr Ainsworth: The member for Rockingham's imagination is running wild now.

Mr McGOWAN: I have seen the member for Roe sneak up to the Deputy Premier and have a conversation similar to that which the Liberal Party members were having with Noel. The Government should not talk to us about preselections. Needless to say, the GST package will be a very bad thing for Western Australia.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Kobelke.

NUCLEAR WASTE STORAGE FACILITY (PROHIBITION) BILL 1999

Second Reading

Resumed from 8 September.

MR COURT (Nedlands - Premier) [4.00 pm]: I intend to make some initial comments on the Opposition's legislation and then the Minister for the Environment will make some more specific comments on what the processes would be for any company that wanted to import nuclear waste into the country and the different licensing requirements for such material.

A month or so ago this House passed a motion on bipartisan lines which made it very clear that we did not support the importation and storage of nuclear waste in this State. That sent a strong message about the position of the Government and the Opposition. With this Bill, the Leader of the Opposition is proposing to put on the statute books legislation that prohibits the importation and storage of nuclear waste. The Government cannot support the Bill as it stands because it will not achieve the goal that has been set: To stop the importation and storage of nuclear waste. It is the Government's intention to amend the legislation to close the loopholes. The Government has prepared a series of amendments, and it may be better that the amendments be provided to the Opposition before there is further debate, so the Opposition has time to read them. The

matter can be debated again next week. Although it may look as though there are a lot of amendments, many are consequential on the changes taking place.

Mr Kobelke: Could we have them now?

Mr COURT: I have only a draft at the moment.

Mr Kobelke: Will it be possible to have them made available as an early draft?

Mr COURT: I have not been able to leave the Chamber today, but when I complete my speech I will check to see whether they are the final draft. The Government does not have a difficulty with making the legislation as watertight as possible, but as I have said previously in the House a future Government could establish a nuclear waste dump in 20 years' time if it can get the legislation through the Parliament. The major loophole is that the Radiation Safety Act 1975 will override the proposed legislation. The Radiation Safety Act is designed to try to control nuclear applications in medicine and the like. The advice received by the Government is that by allowing the Radiation Safety Act to override the proposed Act, and provided all federal and state approvals and licences had been obtained, it would be possible to import nuclear waste and store it and for the approvals process to never go near Parliament. It could all be done under the Radiation Safety Act. One of the proposed amendments is to cover the possibility of an applicant passing through all stages of the licensing process. We want to include a provision that it require the approval of both Houses of Parliament. It would provide a further obstacle in the way of that process.

Dr Gallop: The Opposition would be happy with that. Our advice was that if any Government tried to do that it would be going beyond the powers of the Radiation Safety Act.

Mr COURT: The other problem is that the Bill seeks to prohibit the establishment of a nuclear waste storage facility in Western Australia. Our advice is that there might be no need initially to establish one. A disused minesite may be judged suitable for the purpose. The Government will move to amend the long title of the Bill to close this loophole. Currently the long title reads -

A Bill for An Act to prohibit the establishment of a nuclear waste storage facility in Western Australia . . .

We would prefer it to read, "to prohibit the storage and disposal in Western Australia of radioactive materials". The Bill seeks to prohibit the construction of a waste facility, but if the requirements of the Radiation Safety Act are met there may be no need to actually construct a facility. The Bill does not address the licences that may be sought under the Radiation Safety Act by a person wanting to store foreign nuclear waste in Western Australia. The problem is created by the existence of that specific provision, which could be overridden.

Under the Radiation Safety Act the Radiological Council is responsible for authorising the use, storage, disposal or other dealing with radioactive substances, including high level waste. Any such authorisation is generally subject to the council being satisfied that the proposal has a net positive benefit and is justified. Health concerns are required to be considered, although practically it is very unlikely that a high level nuclear waste storage facility would be licensed or registered by the council under the Act. However the loophole is there, and that is why it is important for it to be closed. The Bill deals with the establishment or construction of an installation when there may already be an existing facility that is considered suitable. The amendments should satisfactorily cover the problem.

We also propose to amend the Bill's definition of nuclear waste because as it currently stands it would create difficulties when dealing with different nuclear applications, whether in medicine or otherwise. The Government has been advised to look at the definition of nuclear waste.

Dr Gallop: What is wrong with the definition?

Mr COURT: My advice is that the Bill's definition of nuclear waste would capture matter that is useful and is not nuclear waste as the term is understood by the industry. What the industry calls useful is a matter for our legal advisers to address.

In broad terms, the legislation contains loopholes and the Government's amendments will address them.

A few weeks ago while I was in the United Kingdom with the Minister for Mines, Hon Norman Moore, we had the opportunity to meet the senior executives of British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. We had a meeting at their head office near Manchester. I received a letter in reply which does not progress matters very far. It reads as follows -

Dear Mr Court

I thank you for your letter advising BNFL of the motion passed in the Western Australian Parliament about Pangea.

We are naturally disappointed that your government found it necessary to pass such a motion. We take serious note of the views expressed and respect the feeling behind them.

BNFL have supported the Pangea studies as part of a wider feasibility study into ways of solving pressing world problems; the safe disposal of used fuel and waste from the generation of electricity in nuclear power stations and the reduction of proliferation risks by facilitating the use of surplus weapons material in nuclear generation. These are problems that have profound implications for environmental protection, global security and the satisfying of future world energy demands. As such we felt, and still feel, that the solution of these problems merits study and a wide informed debate.

A solution will be found and it will have many components with existing electricity suppliers, national nuclear

programmes and states with excess weapons material all playing their part. The UK government, for example, is strongly committed to finding a UK solution for UK waste and we are supporting them in this aim. There is increasing recognition however that, globally, there will need to be regional or international co-operation as well.

We recognise that no community can be forced against its will to play a part in providing a solution, and we respect the position of your Western Australian government. Those views will weigh heavily in our wider studies. At the same time we trust that you will respect our position in continuing to study and to increase understanding of the wider issues. The challenge is so great it demands a fully informed international debate.

We were in no way ready to make any proposals to you for a repository in WA. In response to your letter, I can say that we will not seek to make any proposals to your government. We will, however, continue to honour commitments to provide information to those requesting it and to support legitimate academic research.

I table the letter.

[See paper No 213.]

Mr COURT: We have freedom of speech in this country and in a democracy the company can continue to put forward its views. However, because the letter said that the company will not seek to make any proposals to our Government, perhaps we did not get across the message strongly enough as it implied that it may have more success with a future Government.

Dr Gallop: What do you think it is being advised of by your consultants in Western Australia, one of whom is your former chief adviser?

Mr COURT: I cannot not tell the Leader of the Opposition that.

Dr Gallop: Did you ask them?

Mr COURT: I dealt directly with the senior executives.

Dr Gallop: I understand that but did you ask them what Mr Fletcher and others are telling them?

Mr COURT: No, I did not. However, the Minister for Mines will confirm that we gave them a pretty blunt message.

Dr Edwards: You weren't very persuasive though, given the nature of the letter.

Mr COURT: We told them bluntly that they were wasting their money and their time. The point I make - and the Minister for the Environment will spell out all the different licensing requirements - is that this Government will not support a proposal. We made that clear in the motion we put to the Parliament. If legislation is seen as an added hurdle, it must be effective legislation. This legislation is ineffective and we will do what we can to make it effective. I will attempt to give those amendments to the Leader of the Opposition as soon as I can.

Dr Gallop: So you are supporting the second reading of the Bill?

Mr COURT: Yes, we will definitely support the second reading of the Bill. As I said, if the amendments were finished we could go into the consideration in detail stage today. However, I want an assurance from the Leader of the Opposition that he will bring on the matter again next week.

MRS EDWARDES (Kingsley - Minister for the Environment) [4.14 pm]: I will reaffirm the Government's very strong position. We will continue to oppose the bringing into and dumping of any international nuclear waste in Western Australia. By moving the motion a month ago, this Government has already clearly placed on the public record its very strong opposition to any proposal for the bringing into Western Australia of international nuclear waste in any form. The Government has not only endorsed this position but the Premier has also stated that fact on numerous occasions publicly and in this place time and again, even to the point of taking the time to visit the British Nuclear Fuels Ltd personnel while he was overseas recently. He very firmly put onto the record that the proposal would not be supported by this Government and referred to the motion that this Government passed unanimously. The motion stated that we did not support international nuclear waste being dumped in Western Australia. There is no way this Government will accept such a proposal. I said in the debate on the motion on that occasion that successive Australian Governments, including the present Federal Government, had also agreed that Australia would not accept radioactive waste from other countries. It has been clearly spelt out by the Western Australian community that no-one is prepared to support it and we strongly support the community stance that has been taken.

The community believes that the legislation will send a simple message that the dumping of international nuclear waste in Western Australia will be illegal and therefore will never happen. In order for it to be made legal, the proposal would have to be brought back into both Houses of Parliament. The Premier highlighted a few of the flaws in the legislation proposed by members opposite and I will highlight a few more. I will also highlight the federal and state processes through which any such proposal would have to go. It is particularly difficult dealing with both federal and state legislation when established councils and ministers can make decisions without reference to the Parliament. That is the reason for strengthening the legislation in parts of its definitional clauses so that this Parliament makes it clear that any such proposal cannot occur on behalf of any Government, minister or independent council without coming back to both Houses of Parliament. It will therefore be a transparent process. I believe this Government is not only committed to the legislation but also no future Government would undertake or even contemplate such a proposal. However, there is concern in the public arena being generated by the publicity campaign by Pangea that such a proposal is possible. Again that is one of the flaws.

Clause 7(2) of the Bill refers to a person who contravenes subclause (1) which refers to a person not constructing or operating a nuclear waste storage facility otherwise that person will be guilty of an offence and punishable by a fine not exceeding \$500 000. A penalty for an offence becomes irrelevant when we consider the amount of money that a company such as Pangea is outlaying for the public education campaign that it is involved in currently. It is absolutely irrelevant. Therefore, an offence provision or monetary penalty is not needed.

Dr Gallop: You're not going to take it out of the Bill, are you?

Mrs EDWARDES: Not at all, but it will not stop anyone.

Dr Gallop: Why nitpick? You support the Bill.

Mrs EDWARDES: Absolutely. The Government supports any measure to bring any such proposal back to Parliament. That is essential. However, the Opposition's Bill does not provide the necessary safeguards the public would require, and that is why the Government will strengthen the Opposition's Bill.

I now outline some of the relevant existing commonwealth and Western Australian law. I refer to the Customs Act 1901 and the Customs (Prohibition Imports) Regulations, regulation 4R of which prohibits the importation of radioactive waste into Western Australia unless permission in writing to import the substance has been granted by the Minister for Health and Aged Care or by an authorised officer, and unless that permission is produced to a collector. If an authorised officer has granted permission, the commonwealth minister may revoke the permission. The commonwealth Nuclear Non-Proliferation (Safeguards) Act 1987 authorises the commonwealth minister to grant a permit to possess nuclear material or associated items. The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Act 1988, and associated regulations, establishes a system for regulating and controlling the storage of nuclear waste generated or used by commonwealth entities, contractors and persons in a prescribed commonwealth place; that is, such persons need to obtain a licence to prepare, construct or control a nuclear waste facility.

Western Australia's Environmental Protection Act, Radiation Safety Act and Mining Act all have the capacity to prohibit the development of proposals for the storage of international nuclear waste. However, no absolute prohibition as such applies. The legislation enables permits and approvals to be obtained when the relevant conditions and/or criteria are satisfied. The Western Australian Nuclear Activities Regulation Act 1978 enables the Governor to promulgate regulations to prohibit absolutely the storage of nuclear waste; however, a couple of problems have been identified in that area. For example, the making of those regulations depends upon specified criteria being established, and the scope of the regulations must be within the scope of the enabling statutory provisions which may not be wide enough to cover the storage and disposal of nuclear waste. Such regulations can be disallowed by either House of Parliament, or be revoked or repealed by the Governor upon the advice of the Government.

When the Government looked at the legislation available, both commonwealth and state, it considered that any legislation that had potential loopholes or weaknesses could be exploited by lawyers acting for companies wanting to develop such storage facilities in Western Australia. As such, the Government believes that its motion is a very straightforward and clear statement supported by both political parties. If the Government can amend the Opposition's legislation and not only strengthen the definition provision, but also, importantly, ensure that nothing can be approved without the support of both Houses of Parliament, a strong, open and transparent process will be implemented. Despite all the other legislation I outlined, this process could then not be avoided. The community would support this intent: The legislation will make such storage of such waste illegal, meaning that it will never happen. It will never happen as one would need the support of both Houses of Parliament for such a proposal to proceed.

The other reason for legislating is that the existing Western Australian-commonwealth legislation does not definitely prohibit or preclude the development of plans for the construction of a nuclear waste storage facility. The absence of such a prohibition invites or encourages international companies to continue to develop such plans and promulgate proposals for the storage in Western Australia of nuclear waste, and Western Australia would be left exposed. Therefore, the Government wants to strengthen the legislation.

The possibility nearly always exists that the Commonwealth could legislate to override Western Australian law. I reiterate that the previous and current Federal Governments have made it clear on the public record that they do not support the importation of nuclear waste into Australia.

Another flaw in the Bill before the Chamber, as the Premier identified, is the definition in clause 3 of "installation". That does not preclude the storage of nuclear waste in Western Australia. In the legislative context, installation may not cover all possibilities. The Premier referred to underground mines in which canisters of nuclear waste could be placed. Other examples could easily get around the definition. Also, the phrase "construct or operate a nuclear waste storage facility" may not include, for example, the assessment of sites, feasibility studies or the development of plans. Accordingly, the assessment and development of plans could proceed. Clause 9 prevents the use of only government or public funds, not private moneys, to develop such plans. The Bill could allow proposals to proceed and be assessed. The strengthened legislation as proposed will carry expressed and total opposition to any such proposal.

The difficulty is always drafting legislation which does not provide a loophole which could be exploited. The Government found it difficult when looking at the federal and state legislation to encompass all the "what ifs". Therefore the Government's amendments are simple and clear. Any proposition must be approved by both Houses of Parliament. Although we have made our positions clear, it will be up to any future Parliament to determine matters in a very open and transparent process.

The Government will support the second reading of this Bill, but will move amendments in the consideration in detail stage. The Premier has been involved in debate until private members' time, and has not had the opportunity to go through the final draft of the amendments. We will make the amendments available as soon as the Premier has had the opportunity to clarify the proposals.

Dr Gallop: Did that go through the Cabinet?

Mrs EDWARDES: We have discussed it in Cabinet.

Dr Gallop: Did the amendments go to Cabinet?

Mrs EDWARDES: Not the amendments, but the intent and extent of what we wanted to achieve was discussed not only in Cabinet but also in the party room.

Dr Gallop: We applaud your change of mind, but what are the reasons for moving from not accepting the legislation to accepting it?

Mrs EDWARDES: Obviously the issue was whether the Government could produce legislation, bearing in mind the complexity of federal and state legislation, which would do more than could be done by amending the Opposition's legislation and putting it to the public very quickly. The Government is not prepared to muck around on this issue and it does not want to hold up the legislation. The Government is absolutely and firmly opposed to the dumping of international nuclear waste in Western Australia, and that message needs to be given to the community. That is the reason the Government thinks that the best way to do this is to strengthen the Opposition's legislation and get it through both Houses of Parliament as quickly as possible. I am sure the Opposition will support that approach.

Again, I reiterate and place on the public record that this Government is totally opposed to any dumping of international nuclear waste in Western Australia. The Government firmly believes that by making sure that any future Parliament has a say in matters of this type, we shall protect the rights of all Western Australians and ensure nothing will be imposed upon them that they do not want with regard to the dumping of international nuclear waste.

DR EDWARDS (Maylands) [4.32 pm]: It is always the aspiration and dream of Oppositions that their legislation will not only be accepted by the Government but, in the minister's words, also strengthened. I thank the Premier and the Minister for the Environment for the comments made this afternoon supporting the Bill introduced by the Leader of the Opposition.

It is clear that most Western Australians support this Bill. The Western Australian community has said loudly and strongly that it does not want Pangea Resources Australia Pty Ltd and its proposal in its backyard. It does not want, for short-term gain, to have nuclear waste in the outback for tens of thousands, and perhaps hundreds of thousands, of years. It says something about the Western Australian community, that people are not fooled by the short-term economic gains proposed, but are thinking about the future they want, how that future can be sustained, and how the proposal fits in with a sustainable future. The response to the proposal is a resounding no. A short time ago I had the opportunity to see the video that Pangea made a year or so ago which outlines its proposal. A number of things struck me about that video, and I will quickly go through them.

The first one, which appealed to my sense of humour, was the comment in the video that 100 000 years is a short time in the life span of a rock. That is probably true, but that is not what we are dealing with. We are dealing with our future and the future we want for our children, their children's children, and generations thereafter. Although 100 000 years may be a short time in the life span of a rock, many generations will flow through this State during that period. It is no comfort to me to read on the Pangea web site that the nuclear waste becomes harmless after 200 000 years. I certainly will not be around then!

Mrs Edwards: Very reassuring!

Dr EDWARDS: Yes, it is. I will tell my children's children's children to write that down somewhere and pass it on. This illustrates the type of issue with which we are dealing.

I now comment on the economic benefits that have been put forward. I preface my comments by saying it petrifies me that some Government at some stage in the future, starved of funds and wanting to build large capital projects, may think the economic benefits are worthwhile. It is stated at Pangea's web site that the benefit to Australia from 2004 to 2015 would be \$9b, with a further \$4.5b replacement investment over the 40 year life span of the facility. The community is being asked to consider a 40-year project, starting in five or so years' time, that would bring a big economic benefit to the State but also leave a legacy, conservatively for 10 000 years, but, in Pangea's own words, it would not be harmless until 200 000 years had passed. That is obviously unacceptable.

In addition, the detail of the proposal refers to a dedicated shipyard and foundry, the waste vessels, the transport, shipping terminal, railway lines and the facility itself. People have in their minds, particularly after 30 September when the nuclear accident occurred in Tokaimura, that things can go wrong at any stage of the process. Those considerations are very real. We all have in our minds the dreadful television footage showing children in Japan having Geiger counters run over them to measure their levels of radiation. It was ominous that the Geiger counters were placed at the children's thyroids for a long time, because acute exposure to radioactive substances can lead to damage to the thyroid and, ultimately, thyroid cancer. People have real concern about nuclear accidents. This accident on 30 September involved a uranium reconversion facility, and it is easy to understand that a similar thing could happen in Western Australia were we to accept this nuclear waste. Who would have thought such an accident would happen in Japan? It is a very regulated country, industry sticks to the regulations and things run well.

Mrs Edwardes: It is the whole issue of human error. You can put checks and balances in place to prevent human error and say these things should never happen, but they do. The train accident in the United Kingdom should never have happened but it did, and this is where those concerns are very real.

Dr EDWARDS: Part of the issue goes further; certainly the initial reports from Japan - I have not seen any advances on this information on the Internet today - were that it was not so much human error that caused the accident, but humans being careless and not abiding by the regulations and the restrictions under which they are supposed to work. As a result of the Tokaimura accident, three people are seriously ill with acute radiation poisoning, and one is still in intensive care. The web sites do not give much information about the outcome for those people, but 50 houses were evacuated. Also, the response to the accident was not adequate and that raises grave concerns in people's minds. I remember lying in bed early that morning and listening to the radio reports from the six o'clock news onwards. I heard that the Japanese company involved did not have the right equipment to deal with the accident. It was not controlling the situation because it could not safely enter the plant. The company called on the US Army which has a base nearby but it was not prepared for that sort of contingency. Why would it be? It assumed, as would we, that a company running a uranium reconversion plant would have all its safety rules and regulations and contingencies sorted out and backed up. These fears are in people's minds. Not only are they valid fears, but also, bearing in mind what happened in Japan, it is valid to perceive them as risks. The risks may be small, but that is no consolation to the victims of any such accidents.

Much has been made in the Pangea proposal about the need to use Australia because it has the right geology and isolation and it has a stable democracy. Why then did the Swiss utility, which is part of the Pangea proposal, try to send its waste to Russia? The whole argument about stable democracies falls flat on that basis.

In England in 1966 the United Kingdom environment minister prevented an underground repository being built at Sellafield because the Government was not convinced about its safety and that it was the right place to put it. Similarly, a Canadian Shield proposal to deposit nuclear waste in the mountains in Canada was rejected by that Government. The best that can be said about the Yucca mountains proposal is that it continues to be over budget and a long way behind schedule. Whether that will ever get up remains to be seen. There are problems everywhere, not just in Western Australia. The problem is broader than just being in our backyard.

I turn to the Bill. The purpose of putting forward the Bill is to build on the motion that was put through Parliament some weeks ago. We all oppose the Pangea Resources Australia Pty Ltd proposal. The motion was a good first step; however, we believe it should be enshrined in law so that, at least, both Houses of Parliament have had their say - and they have said a very strong no to this proposal. A future Parliament could change its mind, but if this proposal is enshrined in legislation, it makes it difficult for it to do that. We obtained a lot of advice about what the Premier calls loopholes. We thought we had those covered. We are aware of the Radiation Safety Act and the operations in Mt Walton. We support the use of medical isotopes and other things nuclear. If the Government is saying that its legal advice - obviously it will be better than ours - is that the Bill can be amended to be better, we will welcome those amendments and look forward to seeing the detail of them.

In conclusion, the Pangea proposal is not wanted in Western Australia. As I said, the motion was a start and it was very satisfactory that the Parliament agreed on that. The letter which the Premier has tabled from British Nuclear Fuels Ltd shows that we must maintain our vigilance. As the letter says, this organisation may be back with an approach to a different Government. This Bill provides another measure of greater security, and I urge the House to support it.

MR PENDAL (South Perth) [4.41 pm]: I also support the Bill in the strongest way I can. First, I think the Government's decision to support the Bill as amended will in one fell swoop remove a very dangerous monkey from its back. There is no doubt whatsoever that of all the issues confronting Australia and probably the world today, none would be more important than the misuse of nuclear products. I am on the record as saying that I have no difficulty with uranium mining because in this State and in hospitals a mere stone's throw from us refined technology for diagnostic and treatment purposes is used. The difficulty, of course, is to know how to limit the use of nuclear products for non-peaceful purposes.

Secondly, Western Australia already has its own nuclear dump, as it were. Currently we have a facility to deal with our own waste in the eastern goldfields. That is not the issue before the Parliament, nor the issue Pangea Resources Australia Pty Ltd has been pursuing. It has sought to take the argument a quantum leap by inviting the world to see Western Australia as a dump for other people's nuclear waste. Thus this Bill sponsored by the Leader of the Opposition is very timely.

There is another reason we must act in the way we are: I agree with the member for Maylands that we in Western Australia will need to be extraordinarily vigilant for no better reasons than those set out in the contents of the letter tabled by the Premier from British Nuclear Fuels. In two parts it gives no reassurances at all. The bottom paragraph on the first page states -

At the same time we trust that you will respect our position in continuing to study and to increase understanding of the wider issues.

That is a very ominous remark. It means that it does not care what is the attitude of the Premier or this Parliament, and that it will keep nibbling away in the hope that one day, it can achieve its end. On page 2, the writer, D.R. Bonser, expresses similar ominous remarks; therefore, we must stiffen the resolve of the Parliament several weeks ago by formalising our opposition to this proposal, institutionalising it and putting it into the form of legislation.

There is an additional reason for passing this Bill. The economic advantages of this project are mind-boggling. People who have read the draft report of Access Economics dated November 1998, as I have - although I admit I have not seen a final report, if there is one - will gather from it immediately that Western Australia could pick up \$310m annually from increased

payroll tax and royalties. That is a massive injection into the Western Australian economy. The Access Economics report states that there would be an additional \$36b in gross state product in Western Australia from now to 2049. It gilds the lily further by saying that the employment boost to Western Australia would run to about 12 700 jobs a year for the life of the project. The benefits - the economic temptation - are massive.

If passed, the Bill as amended will remove the possibility for a future Government to be tempted, even mildly, to change the present view of this proposal in five, 10 or 15 years. Who knows? A Government in five or 10 years may be cash poor, or cash stricken sufficient to induce that Government to decide that the economic benefits would outweigh the political negatives and, therefore, to invite this company to build the facility. Any Government seeking to repeal this legislation would run a huge risk. That disincentive alone, as it will be in five or 10 years or in perpetuity if this Bill is passed, would be very worthy. It is a way of sending to Pangea Resources Australia, British Nuclear Fuels and other people a clear, unambiguous, non-political, bipartisan message that Western Australia is civic minded enough to look after its own disposal safety at Mt Walton and that British Fuels will have to find its own nuclear waste facility.

A Bill passed, presumably with the assistance of 91 members of the entire Parliament, would be a resounding message that would go back to Pangea Resources Australia Pty Ltd. It would be a resounding message in the wake of that somewhat contemptuous response we heard from Mr Bonser that in effect says, "Okay, you, Mr Premier and Western Australia are entitled to do what you want to do, but we will continue to niggle away." Pangea's history of the past 12 months has been to move into local authorities, that incidentally have no control over the issue, knocking them off one by one. Pangea is waging a war of attrition against local authorities to build up a veil of respectability for its case.

For once in its life the Parliament can say in an unambiguous, bipartisan way that the Bill has the support of everyone. It will send a message to not only Britain but also other places in the world that see us as a receptacle for the waste that has fouled their nests, but which Western Australia and its people will not stand for. I therefore strongly and enthusiastically support the Bill.

MR BAKER (Joondalup) [4.51 pm]: This Bill has been generally described as the so-called anti-Pangea Bill. As I have said before in this Chamber, I support the gist and thrust of the Bill. However, this is not the Bill to achieve what we want to achieve. The Premier has provided several reasons for that, as has the Minister for the Environment. In due course we will debate amendments that will give it fundamental legal integrity.

In any event, I am sure all members in this Chamber agree that any informed debate must start at the beginning with a proper analysis of the legal entity driving the Pangea proposal. I speak here of the company incorporated in Australia under corporations law, known as Pangea Resources Australia Pty Ltd. It is fair to say this analysis is important because it will enable every member of this Chamber and, I hope with the aid of the media, every member of the community to understand the precise nature of the beast with which we are dealing and to be better informed about who is driving this proposal.

As with many proposals it is not simply a matter of looking at the person we appear to be dealing with on a face to face basis. We must look behind the person. In that regard it is interesting to take the time - there is a bit of work involved - to conduct a thorough company search of Pangea Resources to determine which companies have shares in it and to investigate further and further back.

We know that Pangea Resources is a company incorporated in Australia under corporations law. We also know that, at least on the face of it, it is a private, corporate entity or a company limited by shares. The shareholdings in this company can be divided into three separate categories. The first category, which I will call the Swiss category, consists of some 20 per cent of Pangea shareholdings. Approximately 20 per cent are owned and controlled by a Swiss consortium of companies. We should bear in mind that in the overwhelming majority of cases, the ownership of shares equates to the control of shares and perhaps the control of the company or entity, depending on the extent of a particular shareholding.

A further 10 per cent of the shares are owned by various United States corporate interests. However, the remaining shares - a massive 70 per cent - are owned by British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. We can see immediately that by far and away substantial ownership of the company, hence the control of this company, is vested with an entity called British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. The obvious question that must be asked is: Who owns or controls British Nuclear Fuels Ltd? Is it controlled by other entities, other companies or a political entity of some description? Of course, as many members are aware, it is a trading entity owned by the British Labour Government which in turn is led by Tony Blair.

Given the ostensible opposition to the Pangea proposal by the Leader of the Opposition, I ask the obvious question: What steps has the Leader of the Opposition taken to communicate this Parliament's abhorrence of this proposal to Tony Blair?

Mr Kobelke: I think you are trying to cut down another banana tree.

Mr BAKER: Not at all. That is a good point; I will deal with definitions shortly. We will see whether the member for Nollamara should tighten up on his definitions. I will concede that point, but raise it again in relation to this Bill. However, to be frank, I think he will end up with his foot in his mouth. As we all know, the Leader of the Opposition is best of mates with Tony Blair; he has a longstanding friendship with him. I ask the sincere question: To what extent has the Leader of the Opposition taken any steps to approach Mr Blair to pull the financial rug out from under British Nuclear Fuels and, in turn, this Pangea proposal, or at least to give it some sort of direction that it should butt out of our affairs and take its proposal elsewhere?

Mr Kobelke: Is this the Gilleece method of doing business?

Mr BAKER: Not at all. The answer, as the Leader of the Opposition will concede, is that he has not made any approach to Mr Blair or to British Nuclear Fuels.

Dr Gallop: Your question is beneath contempt.

Mr BAKER: As long as the proposal appears to be alive in the minds of Western Australian voters, there is a tremendous prospect of a fear campaign being mounted to somehow sway votes to the Labor Party and for that matter, the Greens at the next state election. I am sure that is at the heart of the matter.

Mr Kobelke: Do you think it is just a fear campaign?

Mr BAKER: I think the Opposition will acknowledge in due course that its Bill will not do what it purports to do. It must be amended, but I will deal with that shortly.

The Premier has been questioned time and again in this Chamber about what he can do to kill off, etc this proposal. He has answered clearly. A motion was debated in this Chamber a month or so ago which was passed unanimously without the amendments moved by the Opposition. Beyond that, during the Premier's recent trip to the United Kingdom, he took the trouble to visit British Nuclear Fuels to which he made representations and made it clear that it is Western Australian government policy that this proposal should not proceed under any circumstances whatsoever. Pangea wrote back with a bland, blase letter.

The point I am making is simple. The Premier has done as much as he can do. In due course, some amendments to the Bill will be moved. What has the Leader of the Opposition done? He has done nothing; zilch.

Mr Kobelke: You are debating his Bill. Go and find more banana trees.

Mr BAKER: We can debate Bills in this Chamber and amend the Opposition's defective legislation, or the Leader of the Opposition can simply contact the person who is in effect the de facto managing director of British Nuclear Fuels, Tony Blair and say, "Tony, do me a favour. Can this proposal."

Dr Gallop: Is that the way you do business?

Mr BAKER: The Leader of the Opposition should go to the very source of control of this proposal - the ultimate source - lift the corporate veils, and say, "You are calling the shots; you have the power; you have the control." If he were sincere he would have done that. He has not approached Mr Blair.

Dr Gallop: You do not know what I have done. Your question is beneath contempt.

Mr BAKER: Not at all. The actions of the Leader of the Opposition are on the record. I think he has spoken to a couple of officials from British Nuclear Fuels.

Dr Gallop: So I have done something, have I?

Mr BAKER: That is what *The West Australian* says anyway.

I accept that the Bill is primarily targeted at the Pangea Resources proposal. However, we should be targeting a proposal whereby Western Australia could be used as an international waste dump. We should also be stemming the likelihood of any proposal whereby this State could be used as a domestic or national nuclear waste dump for the other States and Territories in the Commonwealth of Australia. In that regard, it is interesting to note that clause 4 of the Bill purports to be about protecting the environment in which the people of Western Australia dwell by prohibiting the establishment of a nuclear waste storage facility in the State. From the outside that object seems to be broad enough to cover any nuclear waste facility in Western Australia. However, when one reads the definition of "nuclear waste" it is riddled with several loopholes, the first of which is the exemption for nuclear waste generated elsewhere in Australia. Most members of the Western Australian community could not care where the waste comes from; they do not want it in Western Australia - except for nuclear waste that is generated in this State.

Some other difficulties with the Bill will be dealt with when the Government moves its amendments. Another difficulty with the definition of nuclear waste is the reference to industrial waste that is generated under licence issued under the Radiation Safety Act 1975. The Bill does not define the word industrial, and anything could be deemed to be industrial waste. It is broad enough to include waste generated from nuclear testing in Australia or Western Australia. We need tight and specific definitions in this Bill. The amendments that the Government will move to the Bill will try to strengthen definitions, add further definitions or include certain exemptions or cross-referencing with other existing Acts of Parliament which will have the effect of further strengthening the legal integrity of the Bill.

At the end of the day, when it is all said and done, when we conduct a thorough analysis of the entity with which we are dealing, we can see that it is controlled and driven by the British Government. In many respects the Bill is flawed and the Government, once again, as it has done before in this Chamber, will come to the aid of the Opposition and sort out the mess, give the Bill some legal integrity and hence give the people of Western Australia some piece of mind.

All members of the WA community are opposed to any notion that WA will be used as a nuclear waste dump for international waste, or domestic or national waste. While this Bill does not include domestic waste, at least it purports to take a step in the right direction. As indicated earlier, government amendments will ensure that the loopholes in the Bill are narrowed. I support the thrust of the Bill. I will not support the Bill unless it is amended in accordance with the Government's amendments.

MR DAY (Darling Range - Minister for Health) [5.02 pm]: As the Premier, the Minister for the Environment and others have indicated, the Government supports the general aims of the Bill which has been introduced by the Leader of the Opposition and will therefore support the second reading of the Bill. However, the Government has concerns about the

effectiveness of the Bill; in particular, that it does not necessarily achieve what we believe the Opposition is seeking to achieve and what the overwhelming majority of the public of Western Australia want Parliament to achieve, which is to eliminate the possibility of overseas-sourced nuclear waste being stored in Western Australia without the approval of Parliament. In particular, the Government is concerned about the effect of clause 5(2) which indicates that once the Act comes into effect it will not derogate from the Radiation Safety Act 1975. In other words, that Act would override the Act which the Leader of the Opposition would like put in place. The Radiological Council in Western Australia, which is established under the authority of the Radiation Safety Act, has the responsibility for approving the use of radioactive material in Western Australia and also for licensing such use. It is extremely unlikely that the Radiological Council would give approval for the storage of such waste in Western Australia, as has been discussed in the public arena in recent times. On the other hand, it is not absolutely impossible that such approval could be given by the Radiological Council in the future depending on the circumstances. It is also important to note that the Commonwealth Government has the responsibility of approving the importation of any nuclear material into Australia and it is extremely unlikely that such approval would be given by the Commonwealth Government, certainly in the foreseeable future, for such material to be imported. Nevertheless, under the existing legislation, and that which is envisaged through the Bill that we are debating, it is not absolutely impossible for such approval to be given in the future.

To summarise, the main defect with the Bill is that it does not restrict the licensing approval process of the Radiological Council. Therefore, in the consideration in detail stage the Government will move a number of amendments. However, the main amendment will seek to provide that radioactive material which has been sourced from overseas cannot be stored in Western Australia without the approval of both Houses of Parliament. Given that, as Minister for Health, I have responsibility for the Radiation Safety Act, I intend to move such an amendment and a number of other amendments which will tighten up the Bill to the extent sought by the public of Western Australia.

The other main amendment will amend the definition to make clear what is nuclear waste. The definition in the Bill introduced by the Leader of the Opposition does not make clear when nuclear material ceases to be useful. The Government supports the second reading of the Bill. However, it will move a number of amendments to improve the Bill.

MRS van de KLASHORST (Swan Hills - Parliamentary Secretary) [5.07 pm]: I also strongly support the action being taken by the Opposition and the Government on this Bill. I have read the Bill extensively, and I agree with the objects of the Bill including those which will protect the health, welfare and safety of the people of Western Australia and the environment in which they dwell by prohibiting the establishment of a nuclear waste storage facility in this State. That is what this Bill is all about: We need to ensure the safety of people in Western Australia.

I have a concern about the actions of Pangea Resources Australia Pty Ltd. As pointed out by a previous speaker, Pangea has its origins in England. There must be a strong nimby attitude in England because it seems to be, "We're all right and we'll pass on our problems to the people in Western Australia." The United Kingdom has no practical plan for the disposal of its nuclear waste. The attitude of the people of that country is that they should not have to worry about it because it will be sent to Australia. That is horrifying and appalling. As long as the people of Britain and the northern hemisphere are safe, and the people of Australia and Western Australia accept all the risks, everything is okay! On 29 April, the Senate noted a statement made by the Minister for Industry, Science and Resources, Senator Nick Minchin on the ABC program *Four Corners* that Australia was not interested in being a nuclear power or the world's nuclear waste dump. He said that Australia will not accept nuclear waste. He congratulated the Federal Government on its decision not to allow an international nuclear waste dump in Australia like the one proposed by Pangea. The British Government and Pangea must heed not only this Parliament but also the Senate of the Australian Parliament.

We have many concerns about the proposal to bring nuclear waste into this State. There are a number of scientific arguments against British radioactive waste being stored in Western Australia. One view is that the world has a large amount of nuclear waste to deal with and geographical disposal is the only safe, long term solution. Because waste has long-lived radioactivity, it must be isolated from the biosphere for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. The right geology is a stable place with no significant earthquake activity. The ground should be flat and low-lying, and the geology simple. It is suggested that old sedimentary basins are the best areas. The area should not have been glaciated in the recent past or likely to be in the near future, nor should it be subject to a major increase in rainfall. It is necessary to have political and economic stability in the host country. Different countries around the world were considered. Britain, other northern European countries and Canada are self-exempted because of their glacial past; Australia is not. Australia therefore drew the short straw and got the attention of the people behind Pangea Resources Australia Pty Ltd. However, the argument could be turned back on those people in the northern hemisphere. A kilometre of ice above a deep repository would immobilise ground water and therefore there would be no chance for replenishment. It is up to Australia to decide whether to seek the economic benefits, as this proposal is being put in front of us like a carrot on a string. As the member for South Perth said, the benefits seem immense; however, the risk is even more immense. It is important that we as a Parliament lead the way; we know the problems are more important than the cost supposed financial benefit.

Members should think about this: It is almost an impossibility for 250 000 tonnes of waste to be dumped over a period of approximately 10 000 years without an error. When engineers build bridges or tunnels they do not risk their jobs by saying that they will last for 100 years; they say they may last that long. Therefore, how can it be said that nothing will happen and it will be perfectly stable and safe to put 250 000 tonnes of waste in the ground for 10 000 years? What about earthquakes? Earthquakes do not occur in the area under consideration. However, the world as we know it - I learned this in a geography class back in England when I was about 12 years of age - is sitting on plates which continually move and as they move the world is slowly changing. The plates often move and cause earthquakes. Areas that are not in an earthquake zone at this time could well be in a major earthquake zone in 10 000 years, or even 1 000 years, because of the continual movement of these continental plates underneath the earth.

Mr Pandal interjected.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: That is right and we had one just a while ago. There is no guarantee in this world that things will and can remain stable. The risk therefore is huge. There may be no risk now but there may be a risk for future generations. I have grandchildren, and I hope one day to have great-grandchildren, and I do not want to leave that legacy to them. There are no earthquakes now in the Great Victoria Desert but there may well be in the future. Another thing to consider is the movement of ground water. Shells have been found in the centre of Australia, which means that at one time part of this continent was covered by sea. We do not know how long ago that occurred; perhaps scientists can guess at that. However, how can we be sure that in 10 000 years' time, or even before, the sea will not cover Australia again? How can we be sure that our rainfall will not change? We have been keeping records of rainfall for only several hundred years. We cannot look back at data over eons to predict changes. It is possible that in years to come the Great Sandy Desert will become a wetland; we do not know. We cannot predict what will occur in 10 000 years.

If all the nuclear waste from around the world were concentrated in one place, that would not only add to our problems but also produce another problem; that is, out of sight out of mind. People may think they can use nuclear waste, dump it in Australia and forget about it. Of course, we cannot allow that to happen. One of the things we must remember is that if people must dispose of or store their own waste, they will take care to produce the minimum amount of waste. Edward de Bono talked about polluting rivers and seas and handling rubbish. When people know they have responsibility for disposing of their waste, they take care to ensure it is at a minimum. They will also take care if it means they will pollute or destroy their own backyards. However, if people can pass off their waste to another country, dump it somewhere else, close their eyes and say that it is someone else's problem, they are likely to use more of it and not be concerned at all about dumping it.

It is important to be aware of all these problems and the fact that nuclear waste will not disappear overnight; it will be around in our country for 100 000 years. The British Government must realise that; Pangea must realise that. Other members with greater knowledge than I have indicated the Bill needs improvement by amendment. I have read through the Bill, I have heard some of the arguments and I will support the arguments that the Bill must be strengthened so that it does what it sets out to do to ensure that Western Australia does not become the world's nuclear waste dump. This will be positive not only for Western Australia but also for Australia. Like the member for Maylands, I have done a great deal of searching on the Internet for this information, and the more I read about it, the more I know about it and the more I recognise the danger of allowing anyone to dump their nuclear waste in Western Australia. It is important that we as a Parliament say, "Absolutely no, no, no." The Bill, when it is amended, will give Pangea and the British Government a message that we are dinkum; that people in this Parliament are strong in their opposition; and that they say no to nuclear waste. As I said at the beginning of my contribution to this second reading debate, I commend the idea of the Bill and I will support it in its amended form.

MR TRENORDEN (Avon) [5.17 pm]: Like other members, I have been doing a bit of reading on the Internet and have found a few very interesting things there. In 1957, when this issue was in its early days, the National Academy of Sciences recommended putting nuclear waste into large areas of salt. Salt grabs hold of itself, builds around articles and therefore becomes a receptacle that protects waste; that is a very interesting concept.

Mr Graham interjected.

Mr TRENORDEN: That could be too. Of course that is 1957 information. Back in those days there was also talk about the criteria for sites, and obviously those criteria have not changed. As has already been stated, the site requires a low earthquake area, away from any sort of water which is a major problem. It must also be an area with no history of resource extraction. A minor worry, compared with what I will raise later, is that much of the proposed area is not active in minerals. Because the area Pangea is looking at has not been -

Mr Graham interjected.

Mr TRENORDEN: It is not hugely active out there. I agree that it has all been surveyed but it is not active.

Mr Graham interjected.

Mr TRENORDEN: I heard what the member for Pilbara said. I also understand he is the Labor Party's agricultural spokesperson, but I am not sure whether he understands what those animals are! The member for Pilbara visited my electorate the other day.

Mr Graham interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Sweetman): Member for Pilbara, it is highly disorderly to interject when not sitting in your seat.

Mr TRENORDEN: I was very concerned, Mr Acting Speaker, because the member for Pilbara saw a number of people in my electorate and several of them reported back to me that he is a really nice bloke.

Mr Osborne: Who said that?

Mr TRENORDEN: Several leading people in my electorate.

Mr Osborne: You would have to doubt them.

Mr TRENORDEN: I was very concerned.

Mrs Edwardes: Have you given him a National Party membership form yet?

Mr TRENORDEN: I thought about extracting a National Party membership fee from people who made that comment. Nevertheless, it was good to see the member for Pilbara in my electorate. He was the first Labor Party person to walk through the door of the Wheatbelt Development Commission for some time, and they were delighted to see him. It was good that he was up there, and I will not argue about his electorate.

If one considers the arguments about hydrology and land care, one finds not a huge amount is known about how, why and where water moves. We might quickly solve salinity problems in the wheatbelt if we knew those answers. Debate rages about what causes water to move around. Placing nuclear waste in the ground will not be a great solution if one does not know what will happen to it once it is in the ground, especially as it remains active for 10 000 years or longer.

My point, which I believe no-one else has raised, relates to human health and the environment in a different context. If members have been reading newspapers recently, they will be aware of the enormous argument raging, particularly in Europe, about genetically modified food. It is a growing argument. Even though evidence here is limited, it is clear that European companies are prepared to pay a premium for products which are not genetically modified and not subject to some of the perceived problems associated with such treated food. Again, it is a debate and I say "perceived" as I am not an expert. Nevertheless, large groups of people are looking for places like Australia, and Western Australia in particular, to be the source of pure food under their definition. That is a very important point. Some sales are currently being made at a premium, and one suspects that sales and the premiums offered for such products will grow.

Sorghum is causing serious concern because of the perception that chemicals are used in its production, the capacity to genetically alter that plant, and its ability to absorb chemicals and kill pests. People assume that if it kills butterflies and aphids, it will kill people as well. That is the how the emotion is expressed. Research over 30 or 40 years has been trying to encourage human consumption of sweet lupins. There is definitely light at the end of the tunnel regarding turning lupins into a human consumable product. The price and production of sorghum was a key reason for lupins having no place in the market as a human consumable product. Nothing is wrong with lupins, but it has been unacceptable to eat them, except for some isolated examples around the Mediterranean, as a staple food. We may have an opportunity with lupins now that sorghum is in trouble.

Whatever benefits may accrue from putting someone else's waste in the ground in Western Australia will be well and truly lost when one accounts for the loss of potential sales from agriculture and fish products this could cause. No matter what we do, it will be harmful if people of the world knew pollutants were in our ground. People will not know there is 2 000 kilometres between the home of the member for Pilbara and my home. It will not be a saleable process. It is very important to keep our image clean and green. I know that phrase is used repeatedly. However, "clean and green" sells, and it is important when offering our products to the world.

Mr Ainsworth: And for our tourism.

Mr TRENORDEN: Yes. People come to Western Australia because they know that the oceans and general nature is pristine. I love visiting the Murchison, as nowhere is prettier in the world than the Murchison in August, September and October. It is fantastic.

Mr Osborne: Which part of Rockingham is that?

Mr TRENORDEN: I will spell Murchison out for the member for Bunbury! The Acting Speaker (Mr Sweetman) knows exactly where it is. It is beautiful country and a joy to visit. Many people visit because it is clean and open and represents a slice of overseas people's perception of Australia.

We had a major problem in Toodyay a couple of years ago with a proposal to introduce a class 4 tip site. It was not remotely like the waste under discussion today, but it was serious enough. Near the proposed tip site were sheep milk dairies and goat milk dairies; that is, people were doing different things and wanted to promote themselves as operating in a clean and green environment. They did not want noxious activities close by. Those proposals are not acceptable, and are mutually exclusive to such agricultural production. If we want to push ourselves for 20 or 30 years as a clean and green State, with produce made available to the premium and quality end of the market, we cannot afford to have that image polluted. It must not happen. To repeat myself, the value of that agriculture, which is a sustainable product, is worth far more than whatever one is paid to dig a hole to bury highly contaminated waste somewhere in the heart of Western Australia.

I support the Bill. The member for South Perth already mentioned this aspect, so I will not say too much: I believe strongly that the Bill should be amended so any such proposal must pass through both Houses of Parliament. It might sound hollow as Bills pass through both Houses anyway. However, such provisions are included in many measures. For example, agreement Acts, member for Pilbara, contain a requirement for the measure to pass both Houses. The same argument applies with the republic referendum. The clear inference is that if a measure passes through both Houses of Parliament, it receives the support of the majority of members and the process will be as apolitical as the political process can be.

This is an important issue. I find it bewildering as I go around my electorate that people attack me on this issue, as though I and other members of this House want this nuclear waste disposal proposal to be implemented. I have never said I want it to occur. On every occasion I have been asked, I have told people that I am definitely opposed to this waste facility. A feeling is evident in the community that the 57 people in this room cannot be trusted, which is unfortunate for a range of reasons. That perception exists because we put it there. We, and a number of other people of our ilk, have put that perception out among people and we must live with it.

Mr Osborne interjected.

Mr TRENORDEN: Someone has done it. Perhaps I have been here for longer than the member for Bunbury; maybe I have

done it. Nevertheless, it is there. It is important that people have some confidence that any Government, current or future, cannot just make decisions, as can be done under many Acts of this State, on nuclear waste proposals without bringing the matter to Parliament.

As well as saying that I support the Bill, I got involved in the debate to put forward the agricultural view. The Acting Speaker and others in this House will agree with the arguments I put forward. Agriculture is of far greater economic value, if the main argument is the economic value. I personally think it is a secondary argument. The primary argument for not wanting the dump is the moral one. However, the member for South Perth said a future Government may want to look at the dollars. I suggest the agricultural dollars are far more prominent than anything we would get from Pangea Resources Australia. I support both the Bill and the proposed amendment.

MR MARSHALL (Dawesville - Parliamentary Secretary) [5.30 pm]: When the proposal to have a nuclear waste dump in Western Australia was originally mooted, I believed the Government's word that it would not happen should be enough because everyone agreed that nuclear waste should not be dumped in Western Australia. I asked why time needed to be wasted on legislation for that purpose because the Government's word is honourable and legislative change could be made by an incoming Government. With the benefit of hindsight, I compliment the Opposition for presenting this legislation. It gives overseas companies the message that Western Australia does not agree to nuclear waste being dumped in this State. The Bill needs to be refined, as does any legislation. There is debate in both Houses every time legislation is introduced. Amendments to finetune the legislation are always proposed. We are here to get it right. Although I compliment the Opposition, I believe we must look at it more closely. Some refinements are needed to get it right.

However, the main thrust is that both sides of the House can combine and contribute to this legislation to ensure that international companies such as Pangea Resources Australia cannot develop a proposal to dump nuclear waste in Western Australia. Not one person I have spoken to wants nuclear waste dropped in our State. In the past four weeks none of the people I have spoken to in my electorate or region, the metropolitan area, or even anyone interstate or overseas wants nuclear waste dumped in Western Australia. We all agree on that. We want to get the legislation right so that it will stand the test of time for future Governments, and so we do not let down all the people who do not want it. Our State is promoted throughout the world as a truly clean State with clean air, blue skies, clear water and, most importantly, space. We do not want that to change. Many National Party members in the House grew up with space. If you are up Mt Walker or in Narembeen you are truly out in space! National Party members understand what blue skies and freedom are all about. We do not want that changed. I now know why the coalition and Opposition are truly united. We are debating a very important piece of legislation and experiencing unity today.

Mr Pandal interjected.

Mr MARSHALL: I forgot the Independents! The Independents are also here today. Their contribution is also important. We do not want anything changed in Western Australia and we do not want any chance of radioactivity in our State for our children, grandchildren and the people who follow them. The Premier opened the Western Australian food and wine week at Selfridges in London and Manchester two weeks ago. This promotion displayed our export produce. It was promoted as clean, contaminant-free and environmentally friendly food. I am told that one and a half tonnes of rock lobster were sold during the week. Too often we talk about dumping nuclear waste and do not think about what the Indian Ocean has to offer, not only in employment and as an export industry, but also for recreation.

I swam off the Gold Coast some years ago and we visited the Great Barrier Reef. Everyone thought it was a magnificent, protected reef. The water was so clear and beautiful. People were earning a living by showing it. Two days later I flew out of Dampier to Rosemary Island on a two-week fishing trip.

Mr Cowan: Surely this was before you were a member of Parliament!

Mr MARSHALL: It was. Rosemary Island is the kind of island where people take their supply of damper and hope they have enough. They plan their food for two weeks and fish for the fortnight. As I was swimming around the island, it intrigued me that I had been on the Gold Coast two days earlier experiencing a world phenomenon and Western Australia has one in Rosemary Island. It is not being promoted. It is there for everyone at no charge. It is nature and eco-tourism at its best. Those things are in Western Australia and they are still undiscovered. They are part of our coastline and our north west. That is why Elle Macpherson did the advertising. It was a tremendous innovation by the Minister for Tourism. Elle Macpherson's promotion of Western Australia brought volumes of dollars into the State because she showed what Western Australia has to offer; that is, clean air, blue skies, clear water and, most importantly, the thing we all cherish, space. The food and wine week was extremely successful because people were aware of Western Australia's clean environment.

Mr Kobelke: Is Rosemary Island close to the Monte Bellos Islands?

Mr MARSHALL: What does the member call close?

Mr Kobelke: Was it in the vicinity of Monte Bellos Islands?

Mr MARSHALL: What is in the vicinity? I am talking about space in Western Australia. The member has never been to the island I am talking about. He has never fished or seen it. That is why I am advertising it, to give the member a break in life. It is worth a visit.

Mr Kobelke: Is the member aware of the history of the Monte Bellos Islands?

Mr MARSHALL: Yes, I am. Recently Senator Nick Minchin, the federal Minister for Industry, Science and Resources was quoted as saying -

Regardless of Pangea's views as to the suitability of Australia to host an international nuclear waste repository, the Government has no intention of considering Pangea's proposal for such a project.

I repeat that "the Government has no intention". He went on to say that successive Australian Governments have agreed that radioactive waste from other countries should not be accepted. In the Senate on 1 December, 1998, he said that Australia would not accept the radioactive waste of other countries. It is pleasing that the Federal Government supports the State's position so adamantly.

In 1993 the French company Rhone-Poulenc Rouer Australia Pty Ltd proposed to refine monazite from mineral sands in the south west to provide a rare earth oxide. It was to be produced at a factory between Pinjarra and Dwellingup. At the time Dwellingup was in the Murray electorate, which I was involved in. The project received tremendous opposition from the community when it was discovered that the resultant waste would be radioactive. The community was worried. Many of them were scared for their youngsters and about what would happen as the waste was trucked past their properties. Dwellingup has developed into one of the finest Western Australian tourist destinations outside Perth. The community was worried about the forest and whether people would come to see the fire museum, fine wood project and war museum, and go to the outdoor activities and camps. All the work that had been put in was suddenly on hold because of radioactive waste. The community concern was tremendous, as was the concern around Pinjarra. Pinjarra has one of the safest beef industries in Western Australia because of the consistent rainfall and the good feed. The proposal caused considerable concern. Luckily the overseas price of the monazite dropped and so the French did not go through with the project. Everything settled back as though it had never occurred. The factory is still there. If the world prices go up, the project could be a consideration. This legislation is also important in a minor way for things like that in the Murray electorate.

In closing, I reiterate the message from my constituents by confirming that no-one - I repeat "no-one" with a great big exclamation mark - wants nuclear waste dumped in Western Australia. This legislation is a move in the right direction, and with the necessary amendments to be moved by the Premier tomorrow, it will be a Bill that everyone in this House can unanimously support. It is a pleasure to work with members opposite in this manner.

MR MASTERS (Vasse) [5.41 pm]: In the mid-1980s, the Conservation Council of Western Australia, which quite rightly holds the position of peak body for conservation groups in this State, but is not well known for its democratic behaviour, had a round table discussion of all members who were interested in setting priorities for environmental issues and actions that needed to be taken over the ensuing years. I attended that meeting, primarily because, on behalf of the Busselton Naturalists Club, I had been a delegate to the Conservation Council for some time. It was very interesting that after about four hours discussion, nuclear issues had not even cracked a mention. They were not listed among the hundred items as an issue of any concern whatsoever to the conservation or environmental movements in Western Australia. Therefore, I must conclude that the issue of Pangea Resources coming to Western Australia and stirring up a hornets' nest of interest over the possibility of a nuclear waste repository is primarily an opportunity for the Labor Party, the green groups and others to play politics and raise issues that in the broader community are not that important.

Mr Pendal: Are you saying Pangea is not making overtures?

Mr MASTERS: I am not pretending that overtures are not being made, but it is creating an ideal opportunity for political stirring, intrigue and discussion. I think most people realise there is no likelihood of a nuclear waste repository being established in Western Australia. I will be happy to support the Government's amendments when they are presented and, therefore, I will support the amended Bill. However, I take the opportunity to raise a number of issues and perhaps educate various people around the place.

It is understandable that some countries, England included, would like nuclear waste deposited outside their borders. There is little doubt that the nuclear industry - that is, the industry which uses nuclear fission to produce electricity - has a legitimate place in our global society. Countries, such as Japan, which are small geographically, and have no fossil fuel resources, minimal opportunities for renewable energy use and high populations - 70 million in the case of Japan - have a definite need for nuclear power plants. However, some problems arise from their nuclear waste once the power has been generated. Japan has poor geological stability, and it is fanciful to suggest that a nuclear waste repository in that country would have any geological protection from earthquake, landslide or other unstable processes. France is geologically stable but, again, it has a high population density and limited fossil fuel resources. Even the United Kingdom has a justifiable need to generate electricity using nuclear energy.

The one country that should not be included in the list of countries that have the potential to justify a nuclear energy program is the United States. It is interesting that the USA is not involved in the Pangea Resources proposals. The USA is a large country and, although it has a large population base, its population density is low. It has geological stability in some places which is almost equal to that in certain parts of Western Australia, and it also has very significant fossil fuel resources. In particular, it has natural gas and petroleum. Basically, the United States has used its nuclear energy program to produce material for nuclear warheads. Not many people would support that action these days. Secondly, the United States, quite unashamedly, is using the fossil fuels and consumable resources of other countries to conserve its own limited supplies. It must be remembered that all fossil fuel supplies or resources are limited. Eventually, the United States is looking to the long term when no fossil fuels will come from the Arabian peninsula and no gas from the North West Shelf. The USA will then have the best of the remaining resources.

France, the United Kingdom, Japan and a number of other countries that are heavily dependent on nuclear energy have a legitimate need for that generating capacity, and a genuine need to find somewhere outside their national borders to dispose of their waste.

I remind members that some years ago it was very fashionable - it probably still is - to use the phrase "Reduce, recycle and re-use" in regard to waste or natural materials. Clearly, the term was designed to motivate people to think about how to reduce the amount of material they used. For example, if they reduced the amount of electricity they consumed, less fossil fuel or nuclear generated electricity would be consumed. If they recycled resources - for example, waste heat - that would reduce the need for heat produced by electricity and, therefore, diminish the overall amount of fossil fuels and nuclear generated electricity used. Finally, people were asked to re-use. I put an interesting proposition to this place and suggest that rather than the Pangea proposal being considered as a proposal for a nuclear waste dump, a contrary point of view is to consider it as nothing more than a temporary storage facility. In thousands of years from now, when there are no fossil fuels left on the earth, it may be extremely valuable economically to re-use these resources. Pangea is not pushing that concept and I certainly am not, because it is another debate entirely. However, I put it forward to members in the hope that they may think about a few issues.

I refer to an article which appeared in the *New Scientist* magazine on 7 August this year entitled "Richer and Cleaner". Its subtitle was "Emissions are falling as global economy surges ahead". The thrust of the article is that even though most of the economies in the world are increasing - in China, the economy grew by 7.2 per cent in 1998 - nonetheless, most developed countries reduced their carbon dioxide emissions in 1998. In spite of the 7.2 per cent growth in China's economy, it reduced its carbon dioxide emissions by 3.7 per cent. Another very good example is Poland; its economy grew by 6 per cent but it cut its carbon dioxide emissions by 9.7 per cent. Because it is not politically correct to do, I think this article has deliberately chosen to ignore the contribution that nuclear energy has made to the reduction in carbon dioxide emissions around the globe. If nuclear power plants were to be closed, as some people are suggesting, the increase in fossil fuel usage would be so extreme that it would make a mockery of the Kyoto agreement which Australia and most other countries entered into in 1996 or 1997. The news in terms of global carbon dioxide emissions is significantly better than it was even 12 months ago. One reason is the contribution made by the nuclear plants that generate electricity without contributing sufficiently to carbon dioxide emissions. I refer to an article in *The West Australian* - I do not have a date for it - headed "Workers ate uranium dust with lunch". It talks about workers in a plant in Kentucky in the United States who inhaled, ingested and otherwise came in contact with uranium and other nuclear-related materials. The article, in part, states -

At lunchtime, workers brushed black powder or green uranium dust off their food.

"They told us you could eat this stuff and it wouldn't hurt you," retired shop steward Al Puckett said.

Some supervisors salted their bread with green uranium dust to dramatise the point.

This is the sort of article which, mainly for political purposes, is creating the opportunity to scare people into thinking that anything to do with radioactivity is totally unacceptable, highly dangerous and, therefore, something to be avoided. I will give two examples. First, most people will remember a nuclear incident only last month at a fuel reprocessing plant in Japan. As a result of it, two or three workers were put in hospital, another 40 or 50 people were exposed to higher than normal levels of radiation, and 300 000 people were asked to stay indoors to ensure there was no threat to their health from the radiation that was emitted.

I cannot lay my hands on it, but a letter was written to the editor of the *New Scientist* last week by someone who knew what he was talking about. This person said that the amount of radioactivity emitted to the wider environment as a result of that nuclear accident was not much different from the natural radioactivity present in the human bodies of those who were involved in that industry; in other words, the reporting of this incident was used by those who are opposed to nuclear power to scare the living daylight out of us, to be honest, without any good reason for that nervousness.

A second example relates to plutonium. I return to the article entitled "Workers ate uranium dust with lunch" in which an inference is made in a couple of places in the article about the poisonous nature of plutonium. I spent a bit of time on the Internet this afternoon and searched for the word "plutonium" under the Toxic Substances Control Act inventory in the United States. Plutonium was not listed. According to that Government, plutonium is not a toxic or poisonous substance. I then went to an article headed "Occupational Health and Safety Administration" on the web site of the United States Department of Labor. The Internet searched 17 959 documents on occupational health and safety held by that department, and I found that plutonium is not listed as a poisonous substance. I then searched the broader topic of plutonium and I came up with an article published by the Uranium Information Centre Ltd in Melbourne. Some might say it is a little biased. However, I would be grateful to be given some response to the following statement which can be found on page 4 of the result of my search, entitled "Plutonium: Nuclear Issues Briefing Paper 18", which reads -

Despite being toxic both chemically and because of its ionising radiation, plutonium is far from being 'the most toxic substance on earth' or so hazardous that 'a speck can kill'. On both counts there are substances in daily use that, per unit of mass, have equal or greater chemical toxicity (arsenic, cyanide, caffeine) -

Many members here will be interested to know that is included in this list -

- and radiotoxicity (smoke detectors).

The Government is asking all people in Western Australia to put smoke detectors in their homes. The issue of plutonium and its poisonous nature is based more in myth than in truth and, therefore, it is important that someone try to bring a little sanity into this debate.

In the few minutes that I have left within which to speak in this debate I will discuss one aspect of this Bill and will make a few comments about the second reading speech by the Leader of the Opposition. Clause 4 of the Bill lists the objects of the Act which are to protect the health, welfare and safety of the people of Western Australia and to protect the environment

in which they dwell by prohibiting the establishment of a nuclear waste storage facility in this State. I suggest that maybe the Australian Labor Party and the Leader of the Opposition should get their legislation drafted by a better person than the one who drafted this piece. If I were employed by Pangea Resources Australia Pty Ltd and read that the objects of this Bill included the protection of the health, welfare and safety of the people of Western Australia, I would accept that as a challenge and accept that if I can show the people of Western Australia how I can put in a nuclear waste repository that protects their health, welfare and safety, this Bill allows me to do so. Maybe a few better chosen words in that clause might have helped those opposite.

A few comments must be made about the second reading speech. The comment was made that Pangea's proposal allows the acceptance of the world's nuclear waste for 40 years. That proposal is totally unsatisfactory because these radioactive substances have a half-life measured in thousands of years. I would be interested in getting Pangea's response to a request for it to provide details of a proposal for a nuclear waste repository for which it will be responsible for, say, 1 000 years. If it were prepared to address the issues associated with a one-thousand-year responsibility for a nuclear waste facility, it might be interesting to see, first, whether Pangea would proceed with the proposal and, secondly, if it did, what the reaction of people in Western Australia would be.

I have done some back-of-the envelope calculations. The Pangea proposal is for 75 000 tonnes of spent fuel and high level waste to be deposited in its facility in a volume of rock which I calculate at 12.5 billion cubic metres. If that tonnage of spent fuel and high level waste were diluted among 12.5 billion cubic metres it would equate to 5 milligrams per cubic metre. Five milligrams is so small as to be almost unmeasurable. It is interesting that so many people are getting very hot under the collar over a number as small as that.

The Leader of the Opposition referred in his second reading speech to natural disasters and terrorist attacks. I look forward to supporting the Government's amendments to the Bill.

MR AINSWORTH (Roe) [6.00 pm]: When this subject arose at the earliest opportunity after the resumption of Parliament, following the parliamentary break, I was pleased to be able to support the Government's motion that clearly put the views of not only the Government but also this House about our distinct lack of support for any suggestion by Pangea Resources Australia Pty Ltd, or anyone else, to establish an international nuclear waste facility in this State. Today is the first opportunity we have had as a Parliament to debate legislation on the subject. I am happy to support the legislation and will be supporting the Government's amendments. It is most important that a subject such as the proposal to establish an international nuclear waste dump in this State be clearly addressed by the Parliament and that bipartisan opposition to that proposal be clear to the world.

The fact that we as a State and a country mine uranium from which nuclear fuel is derived is seen by some people as a reason to "do the right thing and take some of it back in the form of spent fuel". That is a nonsense because countries that seek to buy this fuel and to use it have a responsibility to deal with the waste product they produce from the use of that fuel. They gain a benefit from the nuclear power plant or whatever the material is used for; therefore they should be responsible for dealing with the waste product that is part of the process.

I think I touched on this matter in my previous speech during debate on the Government motion. However, I will reiterate it because it is important. If we were foolish and shortsighted enough to accept Pangea's proposal to deposit overseas nuclear waste in Western Australia, we would be diminishing considerably any incentive that the companies and countries involved in the production of that waste had to spend money to find safer ways of dealing with the waste on their own territory. For that reason alone, apart from the other detriments we would suffer as a result of bringing in that spent waste, we should say no.

My colleague, the member for Avon, has touched on many of the issues relating to maintaining our pristine environment, from the agricultural production side to the tourism side, so I will not dwell on those, except to say that a place such as Esperance, that has huge assets in its pristine waters, national parks and generally clean environment, would have much to lose as a region if this proposal were to proceed. The whole State would share that loss.

When the iron ore to be exported through the port of Esperance was first proposed to be stored on the wharf in uncovered stockpiles awaiting shipment overseas, as you would be used to in the north west, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Sweetman), the biggest public meeting was held that I have ever seen in my time in Esperance, since 1960. I am referring to a benign, non-toxic export that would have done nothing to the health of the residents or visitors. That stockpiling now follows world's best practice and is totally covered. Had it not been dealt with in that way, although I do not want to diminish its effects, it would have caused only a small amount of pollution in the form of dust on some of the houses and discouraged some tourists because of the perception that Esperance is an industrial port.

The whole town was banging on the door of my office insisting that we should not have a bar of this otherwise there would be dreadful ramifications. In the light of that members can imagine what would be the public response if we proposed to import nuclear waste through the port of Esperance. I would stand alongside those people because I would share their concerns. Their concern about the export of iron ore through the port would pale into insignificance. It would not be 0.1 of 1 per cent as great as the damage that could be caused if nuclear waste were brought through our ports.

Mr McGowan: Are you saying you do not want iron ore going through the port of Esperance?

Mr AINSWORTH: No, I am not saying that. Iron ore is exported through Esperance and that is very successful. The only reason it is successful is that the public said they did not want open stockpiles and dust blowing through the town. They wanted to take it on their terms, which was in enclosed sheds with the highest level of housekeeping on the wharf. That is the situation today.

Mr McGowan: Is it there already? How far is it from Esperance?

Mr AINSWORTH: It is there now, and has been for years. No-one even knows it is there when they visit the town. I am saying that something as benign as the export of iron ore was strenuously opposed by the community; therefore, although one or two radicals might say do it, I am certain that 99.9 per cent of the population of my town would reject the Pangea proposal under any circumstances, and I will continue to back them 100 per cent.

I agree with my colleague's comments that the short-term economic benefit we might gain from accepting the import of nuclear waste would pale into insignificance compared with the ongoing losses tourism and primary production would suffer. The proposal would have a severe impact on the export of those products and a range of other things, and potentially on the health of our entire State. That would far outweigh any short-term financial benefit to be gained from storing nuclear waste. Once it is here, we will be stuck with it.

The half life of some of these nuclear materials is thousands of years. As members will know, "half life" does not mean only 50 per cent of the time the material stays around. It is half of the radiation dispersed over a certain period. That same half life extends to mean that half of the radiation that is left disappears in the same number of thousands of years and so forth. It is there for tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of years. Once we have it on our land we cannot readily do anything about it because we will be stuck with it forever.

I stand by my comments made earlier in this place when the Government's motion was moved and make exactly the same point regarding this Bill: I applaud the fact that as a House we will give bipartisan support to legislation that clearly demonstrates to the world our total opposition to the importation of nuclear waste. I will be pleased to support the Bill at the appropriate time.

MR OSBORNE (Bunbury) [6.10 pm]: I spoke on the motion some weeks ago and referred to the tourist industry. I will repeat those remarks in part to be on the record as saying once again that, as the member of Parliament representing a south-west community and also having had an involvement in the tourism industry, I consider any proposal to store nuclear waste in this State to be absolutely inimical to the interests of the communities that I represent.

The remarks I will now make are similar to those made by the member for Avon. In fact, I made some preliminary notes about the fine-food and wine industries in the south west and the danger that the Pangea proposal presents to those industries, which are very important to the region. I amplify the member's remarks only to the extent of saying that his reference was to the production of bulk agricultural commodities and the damage that this proposal would have on our image as a source of products such as wheat. The member also mentioned sorghum and other bulk commodities such as beef.

Like the metropolitan area of Western Australia, the south west has a burgeoning fine-food and fine-wine industry. More than any other industry, these would be negatively affected by the Pangea proposal. By their very nature they rely on a perception that the product is of unimpeachable quality.

Mr McGowan: It is the south-west tapestry.

Mr OSBORNE: Yes. The basis of that tourism strategy and the strategy for the entire south west is the quality of the product. We are successfully presenting food products such as cheeses, cured meats and wines into world markets. We have no hope of defending the reputation of those products if we have a nuclear waste storage facility anywhere in this country.

The member for Murray-Wellington remarked earlier that he was recently in Britain and Europe. He pointed out that, throughout Britain, restaurants make a huge effort to assure their customers that the food offered is not genetically modified. Obviously, the public of Britain is very aware of the importance of purity and cleanliness of food for human consumption. I strongly support the member for Swan Hills' comment that this makes it doubly ironic that the people of Europe would like the nuclear waste to be out of sight and out of mind in Australia. They are not prepared to store it in their own countries - they self-exempted themselves, as the member put it. They must be aware that, in their own countries, pure, clean, fine food is held in very high regard by the consuming public.

I know that you, Madam Acting Speaker (Mrs Holmes), were recently at the Selfridges promotion in London, which was also attended by other members of the State Government, including the member for Murray-Wellington. When I saw the television coverage, it appeared that 20 to 25 per cent of the members of this Chamber were jammed into the venue. It appears everyone but I managed to get to that event.

Mr McGowan: Why was I not there?

Mr OSBORNE: I was not there either, so do not talk to me about it.

The purpose of the promotion was to present Western Australian food to the British market, and to that important retailing chain. Through that chain, our fine food will be presented to the consuming public of Great Britain. The promotion presents Western Australia as the source of the finest food products. Nothing would be more damaging to the thrust of that promotion than to accept nuclear waste storage in this country. I wholeheartedly support the proposal that this Parliament send not only a strong message but also a legislative message that it will not put up with the storage of overseas nuclear waste material in this country.

I had intended to make some remarks about food production but, broadly speaking, the member for Avon said what I had planned to say. Food production is extremely important to the south west. I was born and have lived and worked there all my life, and I will not stand for anything that adversely affects the people and the economy of the region.

I will refer briefly again to the tourism industry. The remarks I have made about the fine-food industry can be repeated in

respect of the tourism industry. The tourism industry is very important to the south west, not because of the size of its contribution to the economy but because of its potential. No other industry is growing as strongly and encapsulates the whole idea of the south west more accurately than the tourism industry. The industry is young, vital and growing strongly. It is making a contribution to the social and economic life of the State and the south west. Everything about the industry is characteristic of the region itself. As a long-time supporter of the industry, I will not stand by and allow anything to happen that has the potential to damage its contribution to the economy and the region.

The tourism industry relies explicitly on the image that it projects. Of course, it relies on infrastructure such as roads, tourism attractions, channels of distribution for product and promotion. However, more than anything, it relies on the successful projection of a tourism image. The Tourism Commission, tourist bureaus and the South West Regional Travel Association have all come to the same conclusion; that is, the south-west tourism industry wants to project an image of youthfulness, vitality and health. If anything damages that, it stands to reason that the basis of the promotion of the tourism industry will be irretrievably damaged.

The other important issue in respect of the tourism industry is that major growth elements in the industry relate very specifically to the environment. In the past the industry was probably based more on man-made attractions. However, increasingly, the industry is becoming more and more reliant on natural attractions, adventure tourism and ecotourism. The people attracted to ecotourism and adventure tourism are a special segment of the market. They tend to be younger and fewer and they are very discerning in their consumption of the tourism product. Typical backpackers or ecotourists might not look wealthy - they might have a backpack and hitchhike - but they will be very discerning. If the adventure or ecotourism product they want is available, they will spend large amounts of money to enjoy themselves. While they might be very few, they are high-yield customers and therefore are a very important market.

The tourism industry of Western Australia, and the south west in particular, is reliant on a clean, natural environment. We need a guarantee that the attractions, water, food and facilities that the tourists are coming to see will not be threatened in any way. As I said, and as I have implied several times this afternoon, the future of the tourism industry would be irretrievably damaged if a proposal such as this were to succeed. I support the legislation in the spirit mentioned by the member for Dawesville. I support the initiative of the Leader of the Opposition in bringing the legislation to the Parliament. I am pleased that the entire Parliament is of a mind to support the legislation. I am also pleased that the Government intends to strengthen the legislation by making critical amendments. These will amplify the message the Parliament wants to send that not only do we intend to take a moral stand on this issue, but also that we intend to support that moral stand with legislation that is as foolproof as we can possibly make it to guarantee that this proposal will never see the light of day in Western Australia.

DR TURNBULL (Collie) [6.20 pm]: I support the proposed legislation and the amendments which will be moved by the Government. As the National Party member for Collie I have been asked by many of my constituents and members of the National Party to ensure that no nuclear waste is imported into Western Australia for storage. I have received letters from people who live around the ports of Geraldton and Esperance, which have been suggested as entry points for nuclear waste. Members will understand their great concern and their request to all members of Parliament to resist any approaches by any companies wanting to store nuclear waste in Western Australia.

I have had many requests from the residents of my electorate in the towns of Boddington, Boyup Brook, Balingup, Donnybrook, Waterloo, Burekup, Boyanup and Dardanup. They have asked me to speak strongly and vote against any proposals that nuclear waste be imported into Western Australia. I have already voted in the debate on a motion that was moved by the Government a few weeks ago. That vote expressed strongly and clearly the Government's position that it will not accept the Pangea proposal or any other proposal. Tonight there has been an explanation of the reasons that National Party members are so strongly opposed to the storage of nuclear waste in Western Australia. The member for Avon has described this quite well in relation to those products that come out of the wheatbelt and the central agricultural area, and I will list the potential effects in my electorate.

Producing clean, green, healthy, environmentally sustainable food products is the only way in which our agriculturalists and horticulturalists producers can market our products around the world for a premium price. As we know, Western Australia can produce any products that it wants to. However, because it is so far from the major markets, it must target the highest paying niche markets. There is absolutely no point in Western Australia producing an export product which is not of the highest quality and which does not attract the highest prices. The beautiful flowers, fruits and dairy products which come from the electorate of Collie can bring a return to the farmers of the area only if they are directed to markets outside Western Australia. We could produce enough Pink Lady apples in the south west of Western Australia to supply the whole of the world. That is how prolific the production of Pink Lady apples could be. However, we must be able to market them. I can assure members that Pink Lady and Gala apples are among the best in the world. In order to get the high prices, we must assure our markets that our products are clean, green and of the highest quality.

Tonight I want to reinforce the fact that no-one in Western Australia wants to accept nuclear waste which would produce a perception around the world that we were the refuse centre of the world's nuclear industry. That perception would taint us. It would be only a perception, because we know there are thousands of kilometres between the proposed repository sites and the south west. However, we cannot allow anything to affect our marketing capacity. Those are the main reasons, along with those detailed by the member for Bunbury a few minutes ago about ecotourism and the attraction of the unspoiled wilderness and wide open spaces of the forest and national park areas of the south west, that we must protect our image and it is why we must work so hard to stop the rumours flying about at the moment. Those rumours are being stirred up by the Opposition, which has previously tried to portray this Government as supporting the nuclear waste repository proposal. We cannot allow them to promote these innuendos or perceptions in Western Australia, let alone in the whole world.

We have already debated this proposal. We have already voted not to accept it. However, we can see that part of the reason for the Leader of the Opposition putting forward this legislation is to ensure that our current decision is adhered to in future. That is why the Government supports the legislation and why we will strengthen it further with amendments in the two Houses of Parliament. On behalf of my constituents, I fully endorse the Government's position and will vote for the legislation.

MR BRADSHAW (Murray-Wellington - Parliamentary Secretary) [6.27 pm]: I also support this legislation. It is important that the people of Western Australia have the opportunity to realise that the Government and the Parliament do not support nuclear waste being deposited or stored in Western Australia. It is not about reality, but about perceptions. A public relations exercise by Pangea Resources Australia Pty Ltd, or whoever else wants to store nuclear waste in Western Australia, will not remove the perception that nuclear waste is dangerous to people's health and that perception could affect the markets for our food and also ecotourism. People do not comprehend Australia's size and the fact that the proposed site is many thousands of kilometres away from populated areas. It does not matter how safe the proposed repository is, the perception will be that it is bad for Western Australia.

As the member for Bunbury pointed out, I have recently been to England. I noticed signs in shop windows and restaurants saying that their food was not genetically modified. The public have a huge fear of genetically modified food.

Dr Gallop: How many members opposite went to the food fair?

Mr BRADSHAW: I did not go over for the food fair; it happened to be on while I was there. I do not think there were as many members there as the Leader of the Opposition thinks. The only people I saw there were the Premier and the Minister for Tourism. If there were others there, good on them; but I did not go to England for the food fair, it happened to be on at the same time. The food fair was a huge success. A trade fair was also held at the same time. I am not certain of the benefits of those fairs at this stage, but I am sure that information will be released in due course. It is one thing to put on a promotion at Selfridges, but unless we keep selling the products to the United Kingdom, the food fair is probably not as beneficial as it could be. It was important to have the back-up trade fair inviting importers to try to sell those products. Certainly, from what I saw, the food fair at Selfridges was very successful. It was important that the image being projected was the clean, green image of Western Australia. The food looked very good, it was well presented and was selling well. We must maintain that image in the world because people are becoming more aware of these things and they do not want food which is genetically modified or which has the perception of being affected by nuclear waste in this State. The perception is very real and it does not matter how much promotion one does, it will always be there as a worry to people in the food business.

Another problem I see in Western Australia is the huge feeling throughout the community that this could become a reality. I was in a supermarket yesterday and noticed a sign on the notice board advertising a public meeting about stopping nuclear waste being deposited in Western Australia. I am also beginning to receive letters from people around Western Australia. It is important to stop this belief that we will have a nuclear waste dump in the State. It does not help the feelings of people who are concerned and worried about these things.

In 1989, Rhone Poulenc wanted to set up in Pinjarra and make deep injections of nuclear waste. The local people were extremely concerned about what would be their future and that of their children if that plan went ahead. The company said there would not be any problems, but grave fears were held by those people. They were not fears which would pass in five minutes but deeply felt, strong fears. It is important that we remove this fear of having a nuclear waste dump in Western Australia. This legislation is important and I support it. As the member for Bunbury said, it is also important from a tourism point of view because many people come to Western Australia to experience our nature tourism. They go to see the whale sharks, the dolphins and the trees in the south west, and that is important. That image will be tainted if we talk about having nuclear waste in this State. People will shy away from Western Australia in fear of being contaminated by that nuclear waste. Whether that fear is real is not important; I am talking about the perception. It is important that members support this legislation and send the message that we do not want this nuclear waste in Western Australia.

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Leader of the Opposition) [6.33 pm]: I thank the members of the Parliament - both those on the government side and the Independents - for expressing their support for this Labor legislation. The Australian Labor Party in Western Australia has two very important policies in its platform. The first is that we would prohibit the mining and transport of uranium from Western Australia and the second is that we would prohibit the importation of radioactive waste into the State. Both policies are related to the issue of locating a nuclear waste storage facility in Western Australia. We have backed up the policy commitment in our party platform by supporting people throughout Western Australia who are moving to oppose a nuclear waste storage facility being established in the State. In those efforts we have gained the overwhelming support of the Western Australian people. Only some conservative members of Parliament, both here in Western Australia and in Canberra, have expressed support either for the proposal or for consideration of it.

The second thing the Labor Party has done is to ensure that legislation came to this Parliament so that if any future Government wishes to establish such a facility, it will have to pass legislation through both Houses of Parliament. That is the important thing about what we are doing tonight. It is crucial that the Parliament send a message through law so that any future Government must change that law. Our bicameral parliamentary system will place a check on any future Government which might want to change this situation.

We take great heart from the fact that only two or three weeks ago, the Government expressed its opposition to this proposal and is now supporting it. We have not had time to look at the amendments the Government has foreshadowed, but our mood is to work with the Government to ensure the Parliament passes this legislation. We need to send a clear, unambiguous message from Parliament to those who might want to establish such a facility. Hopefully, we can facilitate the consideration

in detail stage of this legislation, which will enable us to send the Bill to the Legislative Council. I thank members for supporting the second reading of this Bill. The Opposition looks forward to its passage through this Chamber and the other House, which will make it absolutely clear that any future Government will have to go through both Houses should it wish to establish such a nuclear waste facility.

This is a great win for many people in the Labor Party who have advocated this issue. However, more importantly, it is a great win for the many people in our community who said it was not enough to say we were opposed to this, and it was not enough to pass motions in the Parliament; we needed to pass legislation. I congratulate my colleague, the member for Pilbara, for bringing this proposal to the state Labor Party to ensure we got this legislation onto the agenda of the Parliament.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE PERTH MARKET ACT 1926

Establishment - Motion

MR BROWN (Bassendean) [6.37 pm]: I move -

- (1) That a Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly be established to investigate and make recommendations on a range of concerns raised by growers in relation to the marketing arrangements provided under the Perth Market Act 1926, including to -
 - (a) determine whether the Perth Market Act 1926 is being adequately enforced;
 - (b) specifically examine the degree to which sections 27 and 28 of the Perth Market by-laws 1990 are enforced and the degree to which those provisions are able to be subverted by "terms of trade" contracts;
 - (c) examine the implementation of trust fund arrangements, under which funds derived from the sale of produce and which is due to growers can be held in trust until paid and, further, whether the Perth Market Authority (PMA) ought be the trustee;
 - (d) investigate means by which greater transparency of transactions between growers and purchasers can be provided within the Perth Market System;
 - (e) determine whether there is a need for a permanently established audit system which is empowered to follow market transactions, from grower to consumer, in order to provide such transparency;
 - (f) examine the degree to which any conflict of interest exists between growers and agents who also operate as wholesalers, merchants and retailers;
 - (g) determine whether the levels of commission and fees such as the ripening fee for bananas are justified and are equitably applied;
 - (h) determine whether adequate feedback is provided by the system to growers from agents, retailers and consumers which allows for appropriate market signals to be provided to growers;
 - (i) determine whether practices employed at the markets, the retail sector, and all links of the market chain, including transport are of the same quality standard as those to which producers are required to adhere;
 - (j) determine whether importers of produce are required to adhere to the same quality and quarantine requirements as apply to Western Australian producers;
 - (k) determine whether the Saturday cash market operates with integrity;
 - (l) investigate concerns that prime WA produce consigned to the markets finds its way interstate without going through the proper market transactions, fumigation and other requirements;
 - (m) determine whether the present regulations relating to market trading hours are adequate and able to promote efficiency and quality in fresh food markets;
 - (n) investigate whether the major retail chains are able to, or do in fact, manipulate market prices by any means including the interstate movement of produce;
 - (o) investigate claims that rebating arrangements exist between the major retail chains and their suppliers, and specifically whether the chains charge agents and persons who deal directly with them a "rebate" in order to ensure prompt payment by the chain;
 - (p) determine if a conflict exists between the PMA's commercial interest in Market City and its role of Market Regulator, and to determine whether the Market Trust is the best and most appropriate body to administer operations at Market City;

- (q) determine if a need exists for an independent appeal process to resolve disputes between stakeholders in Market City;
 - (r) examine any potential conflict between the PMA's strategic plan and the State Government's policies and objectives for rural and regional WA;
 - (s) investigate claims of collusion between market agents and the PMA board, and to refer any such claims to other authorities as the committee considers necessary; and
 - (t) examine the review of the Perth Market Act 1926 which was conducted as a response to national competition policy.
- (2) That the committee present its final report by 16 March 2000.

This motion seeks to establish a select committee into the Perth markets and proposes that the select committee investigate a range of matters. In speaking to this matter I wish, first, to give some background, second, to refer to some of the reports which have previously emanated from the Parliament when investigations of the markets have taken place and, third, to deal with issues of concern about the operation of the Perth markets which have been raised by growers in this State with members of the Opposition. Earlier this year I again had occasion to travel to Carnarvon to meet with a range of business interests to discuss with them concerns and issues they wished to bring to the Parliament's attention. During the time I spent in Carnarvon a number of business people - either growers themselves or family members of growers - raised the Carnarvon growers' concerns. I was asked whether it would be possible for me to return at a later time to discuss those concerns in detail with members of the industry. On my return to Perth, I took the opportunity of writing to all of the growers, or at least as many as I could find the names and address of, about the matters which had been raised. At that stage, the matters related to the question of funds belonging to growers being misused, the issue of water security legislation and the commitment of appropriate resources to a fruit fly eradication program.

I then asked the people to whom I wrote if there was any interest in holding a meeting to discuss those and other matters of concern. There was a good response to that, which prompted me to organise a meeting on return to Carnarvon with my parliamentary colleague Hon Kim Chance, the opposition spokesperson on primary industry. We had a long, detailed and very well attended meeting of growers in that area, and it became apparent that, although the other issues referred to earlier were of concern, the primary concerns related to the operation of the markets. A range of matters were raised with us at that meeting relating to issues concerning agents acting as wholesalers; agents' fiduciary duties to clients; the lack of transparency in the transaction process; the use of terms-of-trade contracts to override or thwart the provisions of the Perth Market by-laws; high quality produce being diverted to the eastern States without going through the proper processes; the misuse of Saturday markets; and the inappropriate application of ripening fees. We indicated that it would be worth considering setting up a select committee of the Parliament to inquire into those matters. The member for Ningaloo, who is in the Chamber at present, had been interviewed on a radio show on that day or the day before when he talked about the need for a select committee of the Parliament to investigate those matters. At the meeting it was agreed that we should draft some terms of reference for consideration of members of the industry. That night and the following day, my colleague, Hon Kim Chance, and I drafted some very crude terms of reference and forwarded those to members of the industry to consider any changes to be made and whether the terms of reference were broad enough to encapsulate the matters they had raised with us.

Following on from that, we received correspondence from a number of growers in Carnarvon supporting the terms of reference, some growers suggesting they should be expanded or modified. After giving time and consideration to those proposals, we then redrafted the terms of reference, which redraft is currently before the Parliament. It is important to understand in the context of this debate that the terms of reference before the Parliament in this resolution are not simply my views but are terms of reference supported by members of the industry and upon which they have made comment and expressed a keen desire for this Parliament to examine.

One of the matters that I explained to the meeting in Carnarvon was that frequently motions for select committees fail in this Parliament because of a lack of agreement on the appropriate terms of reference and that it is important to try to achieve a measure of agreement on the terms of reference in order to ensure that a select committee can be appointed. I understand that other motions for select committees, not necessarily about this matter, that have come before the Parliament have failed because of disagreement between the opposing sides of Parliament about the appropriate terms of reference. I do not want that to occur on this occasion. I am keen for this proposed select committee to survive and therefore keen to ensure that the terms of reference submitted are acceptable to both sides of the House. To that end, I wrote to the minister on 30 September drawing his attention to the notice of motion that I gave on 21 September, and also commenting to him in the following terms -

My purpose in writing to you is to ascertain whether the Government would be prepared to support the establishment of the Select Committee with either the proposed terms of reference or some other terms that may be mutually agreed.

At a recent meeting in Carnarvon, growers asked us to ensure the Select Committee investigated all issues of concern. That is the purpose of the notice of motion. Having said that, I am certainly open to change that could result in the terms of reference being better expressed or couched in another way that gives the committee a clear mandate.

Would you be kind enough to let me know if you would be prepared to enter into some discussions on the proposal with a view to -

1. Reaching in-principle agreement on a Select Committee being established, and
2. Settling the appropriate terms of reference.

I look forward to hearing from you.

That letter was forwarded to the minister less than two weeks ago and I would not expect a response from the minister in that short time. Hence, after I have made my speech tonight in the allotted time, I am happy for this matter to be adjourned in order to give the minister time to consider the letter and the terms of reference. The Opposition's bringing on of the matter today is simply to alert both the minister and the Government that the Opposition is not seeking to fly a kite with this resolution. We are serious about it and wish to achieve a measure of agreement on it, if that is possible. We do not therefore seek to bring on the motion without proper notice or due process.

That is the background to the matter and the reasons for its arrival in the Parliament this evening. There are a range of concerns to growers not only in Carnarvon but generally. Since discussing this matter, I have had the opportunity of speaking to growers in other parts of the State. Earlier today I finally spoke to a gentleman with whom I have been exchanging telephone messages for more than a week. He lives in the Swan Hills electorate and has raised with me a range of concerns similar to those raised by growers in Carnarvon. It is fair to say there is disagreement about the legitimacy or efficacy of the concerns raised by growers in Carnarvon. Following the radio interview of the member for Ningaloo and my parliamentary colleague Hon Kim Chance, there was a radio interview on Karratha 6KP radio station on 3 September 1999 of Graham Anderson from the Perth Market Authority by Russell Wolf, the presenter. I have a transcript with me which was kindly provided by the member for Ningaloo which indicates to me and to all concerned that there is a problem that must be investigated. I will refer to some of the comments made by Mr Anderson in that radio interview. I am happy to make this transcript available. In answer to a question from Mr Woolf, Mr Anderson said this -

I'll be quite blunt, that I'm never surprised at the comments that come out of Carnarvon. It's an area that, for some reason, we've had an historical, almost hysterical problem with, pre-dating my board tenure actually, which is six years.

So, no. It's just more of the same unfortunately.

Mr Anderson made this comment later on -

I've got to be a bit careful there, Russel, because there are some excellent growers at Carnarvon that we don't hear from, quite frankly. Who just put their head down and keep on working and they'd be up with any other grower elsewhere in the state.

Unfortunately, there are a number of growers who haven't made the transition to the twentieth, let alone to the twenty-first century, and they're finding it very hard to compete out there on the market. What was, I think, a . . . you know, Carnarvon's been pretty cocooned over the years and unfortunately now they're competing with the rest of Australia and the rest of the world. That brings a whole new set of pressures.

Members will see from my flicking over the pages of the transcript that the interview is quite long. At page 9 of the transcript of the interview Mr Anderson said -

Equally, let's just have a look at the way in which some of the produce is arriving in Carnarvon. And we had a visit from the Gascoyne Development Commission recently, within the last month. Came in totally un . . . with no . . . without the warning. When I say that, we had twenty-four hours warning type of thing.

They saw the trucks being unloaded as they came into Carnarvon.

I am not sure that is exactly what he meant. I think he meant that they saw the trucks coming into the market from Carnarvon. It continues -

The produce was unloaded and put straight alongside produce from Kununurra, from Queensland, and I've got to tell you, a lot of it looked very, very sorry, in the way it was presented, in the grading and the quality and the sizing; everything. And I know that the Development Commission went away saying, gee, if we'd only seen this before, we've got a lot of work to do.

There is a problem. When the growers from Carnarvon or elsewhere speak to me they indicate that there is a problem. When the chief executive officer of Perth Market Authority is on the radio he perceives a problem. They may be different perceptions and issues but there is a problem, and it needs to be addressed and considered. The problem has not come about recently but has been there for a long time.

I will refer to two previous inquiries which have been conducted in this Parliament. On 11 December 1984 in the Legislative Council a report was presented by the Select Committee Inquiring into the Fruit and Vegetable Industry in Western Australia. I will certainly not refer to all of the quotations that I have marked in that report, but the report is interesting, although obviously somewhat dated at 15 years old. Nevertheless, some of the matters that are still of concern were raised with that select committee in the other place.

Further, the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Government Agencies in its final report of September 1993, entitled "Review of the Perth Market Authority" also considered some of these matters. The first part of that report comprises a report by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu dealing with Market City and the concerns that that consultant company investigated. The problem was identified by those consultants six years ago and is still there. On page 10 of that report, paragraph 19 reads -

Many growers are disappointed that the PMA has not been able to ensure the integrity of the market. In particular, growers express mistrust about the honesty of agents in respect of accurate reporting of prices obtained for produce. Some growers, and notably those more remote from Perth and first hand experience of the markets, consider that agents are not forthcoming about whether they are acting in the market as commission agents or wholesale merchants, and fail to act in the growers' best interests when there is an opportunity to make a larger return by importing interstate produce as a merchant rather than selling local produce on commission. In fact, this situation is not as black and white as it may appear - the issues are discussed in more detail in the main body of the report. Nevertheless, growers tend to hold the PMA responsible for not ensuring that agents' transactions are more transparent and for not regulating agents more effectively.

There is strong support among growers and buyers for legislation along the lines of a Farm Produce Agents Act to compel better reporting of sales data, scrutiny of agent practices, quicker payment and greater security for growers whose produce is in the possession of agents. While these aims are unobjectionable, the method of achieving them has been challenged by agents who are concerned that such legislation may impose extra costs, reduce cash flow, erode the goodwill value of trading floors and lead to the withdrawal of some firms from the market. The consultants favour an Act, supported by self-regulation by the Chamber as far as possible and backed by efficient formal regulation. This does not require the continuation of the PMA, but could be undertaken by a registrar employed within the Department of Agriculture.

Although that was ultimately the consultants' view, the nature of the concern then identified by the consultants remains alive and well today. Unfortunately, it is not a healthy relationship and needs to be investigated. The terms of reference that I have proposed for the committee seek to achieve a number of objectives. One at subparagraph (a) is to determine whether the Perth Market Act 1926 is being adequately enforced. A range of growers are concerned that that is not occurring and that provisions which should be for the protection of all players are not being adequately enforced.

The object of subparagraph (b) is to specifically examine the degree to which section 27 and section 28 of the Perth Market By-laws 1990 are enforced, and the degree to which those provisions are able to be subverted by terms-of-trade contracts. The by-laws set out arrangements which propose a very high degree of transparency in the prices obtained and in the commissions paid to agents. Sections 27 and 28 of the by-laws seek to provide a mechanism for achieving that objective. Section 27 is headed "Duties of an occupier acting as an agent". Subsection (2) reads -

An occupier by whom general produce is received for the sale thereof as agent for another person ("the principal") shall within 7 days, or such time as is agreed in writing by the parties, of the receipt thereof by the occupier, forward to the principal a receipt specifying -

- (a) an accurate description of the general produce so received;
- (b) the quantity thereof;
- (c) the date of its receipt;
- (d) the quantity thereof (if any) considered by the occupier to be unfit for sale and the reason therefor.

It then sets out a range of other requirements which make the transaction process very transparent. Key concerns of growers are that the process is not transparent and that the terms of trade agreements entered into between agents and growers enable sections 27 and 28 of the by-laws to be bypassed.

Before closing, I ask the Minister for Primary Industry to seriously consider this matter. It has not been raised to fly a kite. It is a serious proposition which results from a great deal of consultation with growers in Carnarvon and elsewhere. I and a number of growers are more than happy to talk about changes to the terms of reference on the understanding that the key issues will be investigated. We are keen for the select committee to be established and we seek the minister's support when the matter next comes before Parliament.

[Leave granted for speech to be continued at a later stage.]

Debate thus adjourned.

House adjourned at 7.01 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, SALE OR DEVELOPMENT OF LAND

5. Dr EDWARDS to the Premier:

- (1) How do the State Government departments take into account "public interest" when they decide to sell or develop surplus land?
- (2) How is this evaluated?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1)-(2) The State Government places considerable reliance on the State planning and environmental processes in addition to those of Local Government to raise issues of "public interest". In addition, depending upon individual site circumstances, there may be direct engagement of the community. The Labor Government sold land to the value of \$385 million including the Perth Technical College. The proceeds of sale were treated as Recurrent Revenue and used for Recurrent Expenditure. This Government has raised \$410 million by way of land sales which are properly classified as Capital Revenue and used for debt reduction and new capital investment.

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN, CREDIT CARD EXPENDITURE BY MINISTERIAL OFFICERS

12. Mrs HOLMES to the Minister for Family and Children's Services:

- (1) Will the Minister advise what the total expenditure on Government credit cards was in the Minister's office for the following financial years -
 - (a) 1990-1991;
 - (b) 1991-1992; and
 - (c) 1992-1993?
- (2) For each individual credit cardholder in the Minister's office will the Minister advise -
 - (a) the name and position of the cardholder;
 - (b) the credit limit on the card; and
 - (c) the total expenditure on that card in -
 - (i) 1990-1991;
 - (ii) 1991-1992; and
 - (iii) 1992-1993?

Mrs PARKER replied:

- (1)-(2) Records to December 1992 no longer available - disposal in accordance with Financial Administration and Audit Act (1985). A search of microfilm records cannot identify any credit card information or payments for the Minister's office for the period January 1993 to June 1993.

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN, CREDIT CARD EXPENDITURE BY MINISTERIAL OFFICERS

33. Mr CARPENTER to the Minister for Family and Children's Services; Seniors; Women's Interests:

- (1) Will the Minister state the total expenditure on Government credit cards in the Minister's office for the following financial years -
 - (a) 1993-94;
 - (b) 1994-95; and
 - (c) 1995-96?
- (2) For each individual cardholder in the Minister's office, will the Minister advise -
 - (a) the name and position of the cardholder;
 - (b) the credit limit on the card; and
 - (c) the total expenditure on that card in -
 - (i) 1993-94;
 - (ii) 1994-95; and
 - (iii) 1995-96?

Mrs PARKER replied:

- (1)-(2) I was appointed Minister for Family and Children's Services; Seniors; Women's Interests on 9 January 1997, which was after the 1993-94; 1994-95; 1995-96 financial years.

PAEDOPHILE ACTIVITIES, WAROONA

59. Mr PENDAL to the Minister for Family and Children's Services:

- (1) Has the Child Protection Council undertaken to inquire into and report on a situation involving alleged inaction by her Department regarding known paedophile activities in the Town of Waroona?
- (2) If so, is it expected that the Council's report will be tabled in Parliament?
- (3) If the answer to (2) above is yes, when is this tabling likely to occur?
- (4) If the report is not intended for tabling, what is the reason?

Mrs PARKER replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2)-(4) Report tabled on 17 August 1999.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, CONTRACTS OVER \$ 50 000

92. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Family and Children's Services; Seniors; Women's Interests:

- (1) How many contracts of \$50,000 or more (excluding employment contracts) has each department and agency under the Minister's control entered into between 1 April 1999 and 31 May 1999?
- (2) What was the amount of each contract?
- (3) What is the name of each person/entity with whom the contract has been entered into?
- (4) What is the nature of the work or service required by the contract?
- (5) What is the completion date of each contract?

Mrs PARKER replied:

Family and Children's Services

- (1) Four.

(2)-(5)

Non Government Contracts

Annual Funding Level	Organisation	Service Name/Description	Contract Cease Date
\$100 000	Manin Bowa Dumbara Aboriginal Corporation	Domestic Violence Information and Support Service	30/9/2001
\$50 688	Playgroup Association of WA (Inc)	Playgroup Support Service	30/12/2001
\$375 803	Manguri Corporation Inc.	Placement Service	31/03/2001

General Services Contracts

Contract	Organisation	Service Name/Description	Contract Cease Date
\$270 000	Extralink Outsourcing	Consulting services to Support the Implementation of Information Management Strategic Initiatives	30/11/1999

Office of Seniors Interests

- (1) One.
- (2) \$59,950.
- (3) Council on the Ageing (WA) Inc.
- (4) Coordinate, manage and report on Seniors Week 1999 and stage a high profile week of events and promotional activities.
- (5) 31 December 1999.

Women's Policy Development Office

- (1) None.
- (2)-(5) Not applicable.

WA Drug Abuse Strategy Office

- (1) One.
- (2) \$206,000
- (3) WA Alcohol and Drug Authority (now the Health Department's *Next Step - Specialist Drug & Alcohol Services*).
- (4) Development of the Parent Drug Information Service to provide a parent to parent volunteer service, follow up for callers, development of materials.

(5) 30 June 2001.

Family and Children's Policy Office

(1) None

(2)-(5) Not applicable.

SPEED CAMERAS, NUMBER

129. Mrs ROBERTS to the Minister of Police:

(1) Will the Minister provide details on the number of speed cameras in use in each of the following years -

- (a) 1994-1995;
- (b) 1995-1996;
- (c) 1996-1997;
- (d) 1997-1998; and
- (e) 1998-1999?

(2) Are there plans to increase the number of speed cameras in use in the next financial year?

(3) What is the relationship between the placement of speed cameras and road traffic "black spots"?

(4) Will the Minister explain, given the answers to the above, why the road toll has continued to increase?

(5) What is the current policy regarding the placement of speed cameras?

(6) Is the placement left to the individual operators?

(7) Why are cameras frequently placed where traffic merges which inevitably requires certain vehicles to speed up and others to slow down to avoid collision?

Mr PRINCE replied:

- (1) (a) 5
- (b) 5
- (c) 5
- (d) 13
- (e) 13

(2) With the inception of the Enhanced Traffic Enforcement Project (ETEP) it is anticipated that the number of speed cameras may increase in the 2000-2001 financial year.

(3) "Black Spots" are locations recognised as being particularly conducive to road trauma. The Federal Office of Road Safety recognises this fact and provides funds to Main Roads WA for the maintenance and improvement of these areas in an attempt to reduce road trauma. The Western Australia Police Service becomes involved with Black Spots by launching traffic campaigns, including speed camera operations, to modify driver behaviour in these areas in an effort to reduce road trauma.

(4) Speed cameras alone will not reduce the road toll. It is expected that motorists accept responsibility for their actions on the roads. Fatigue, inattention and alcohol, combined with speed are all contributing factors involved in the road toll. However, it must be noted that with the variation in the incidence of road crashes and casualties from year to year, it has become evident that comparing the current year number of fatal and critical injury with previous years is of limited value. It is now proven to be more meaningful to express the number of crashes and casualties as a fatality rate per 100,000 persons. In this regard, the fatality rate in 1975 was 26.59 per 100,000 persons. However, in 1998 this figure had fallen to 9.40 fatalities per 100,000 persons. In view of this, it is clear that Western Australian roads are becoming safer and police strategies, particularly in relation to speeding, are working.

(5) As per the top 400 crash locations and in accordance with the Commissioner's Guidelines, as follows:

- (i) Metropolitan and arterial roads with a high incidence of road crashes where statistical information provided by Main Roads Western Australia identifies speed as a contributory factor.
- (ii) Locations:
 - (a) of significant complaint; or
 - (b) where other speed detection methods are ineffective in identifying offenders; or
 - (c) which cannot be used in safety by personnel.
- (iii) Locations identified from time to time by the Commander (Traffic and Operations Support). Where written complaints are received identifying a location of significant complaint considering the following:
 - (a) the complaint is speed related;
 - (b) the location, conditions, topography and the length of the carriageway;
 - (c) local Police assessment of the problem;
 - (d) compliance with policy established by the Camera Placement Committee.

(6) No.

(7) Refer to the information provided in response to question (5).

MURDOCH POLICE STATION

131. Mrs ROBERTS to the Minister of Police:

- (1) Will the Minister advise the date Murdoch Police Station was commissioned?
- (2) What is the approximate area Murdoch Police Station is responsible for?
- (3) What population is within the policing area of Murdoch Police Station?
- (4) How many police officers are permanently stationed at Murdoch Police Station?
- (5) How many police vehicles are assigned to this station for operational police on a permanent basis?
- (6) Is the Minister satisfied with the working conditions at Murdoch Police Station and the facilities provided for officers working at this station?

Mr PRINCE replied:

- (1) Murdoch Police Station officially opened on 25 May 1998, however, was occupied and operational from 1 April 1998.
- (2) There are 19 suburbs in the Murdoch sub-district.
- (3) The population is approximately 112,000.
- (4) There are 9 detectives and 33 uniformed officers.
- (5) 4 marked vans, 1 marked sedan, 1 marked traffic car and 3 Detective vehicles unmarked.
- (6) Facilities are modern, functional and adequate for the approved strength. However, with extra staff provided for Detectives and uniformed staff since the opening some internal adjustments have been required to accommodate the additional staff. Nevertheless facilities and space are adequate to meet operational needs and in providing the required services to the public.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS, NEW BREED SECURITY

185. Mr RIEBELING to the Premier:

- (1) Which Government agencies currently have contracts with the company New Breed Security, or its associated companies?
- (2) For each of these contracts -
 - (a) when were they entered into;
 - (b) what is the duration;
 - (c) what is the nature of the service provided; and
 - (d) what is the cost?

Mr COURT replied:

I am advised that :

Premier; Treasurer; Minister for Public Sector Management; Federal Affairs:

Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet

- (1) A search of the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet records has revealed no contracts with New Breed Security.
- (2) Not applicable.

Minister for Resources Development; Energy; Education:

Western Power

- (1) Western Power Corporation currently has contracts with New Breed Security Guards and Patrol Pty Ltd.

- (2) Details of contracts:

Start Date	Duration	Nature of Service	Cost
01/07/99	2 Years	Security Services – Pinjar Gas Turbine Station	\$346 020
01/07/99	1 Year	Security Services – Kwinana Power Station	\$207 125

Minister for Housing, Aboriginal Affairs, Water Resources:

- (1) Ministry of Housing.
- (2)
 - (a) Lockridge August 1995.
Langford December 1998.
New North June 1998.
Kwinana June 1995.
 - (b) Lockridge Under review on a monthly basis
Langford Under review on a monthly basis

	New North	Under review on a monthly basis
	Kwinana	June 1999.
(c)	Security Patrols for all.	
(d)	As at 30 June 1999:	
	Lockridge	\$655,484.69
	Langford	\$65,501.00
	New North	\$84,660.50
	Kwinana	\$377,332.57

Minister for Works; Services; Citizenship and Multicultural Interests; Youth:

- (1) Contract and Management Services (CAMS) is Principal to one Contract (69998) for the Provision of Security Services for Fremantle Prison. This contract is with New Breed Security Guards and Patrols Pty Ltd. Details are provided in response to question (2). It is understood that Parliamentary Services Department also has a contract with New Breed Security Guards and Patrols Pty Ltd. CAMS is not aware of what arrangements other agencies may have in place.
- (2) (a) 7 December 1998.
 (b) 12 months with a further 12 month renewal option.
 (c) Security personnel services for Fremantle Prison.
 (d) \$13,722.80 per month.

Minister for Local Government; Disability Services:

- (1) The Disability Services Commission.
- (2) (a) Contract commenced on 5 November 1997.
 (b) Original term of 12 months with the option of 2 further 12 month extensions.
 (c) Prior to vacation of the Pyrton site, night patrol security services were provided. These were upgraded to 24 hour security services when the Pyrton site was vacated in April, 1999.
 (d) \$3,276 per week for 24 hour security service.

All Ministers :

- (1)-(2) No other agencies have any current contracts with the company New Breed Security or, as far as they are aware, its associated companies.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS, IN EXCESS OF \$50 000

205. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Family and Children's Services; Seniors; Women's Interests:

- (1) How many contracts of \$50 000 or more (excluding employment contracts) has each department or agency under the Minister's control entered into between 1 January 1999 and 31 March 1999?
- (2) What was the amount of each contract?
- (3) What is the name of each person/entity with whom the contract has been entered into?
- (4) What is the nature of the work or services required by the contract?
- (5) What is the completion date of each contract?

Mrs PARKER replied:

Family and Children's Services

- (1) Three.
- | | | | | |
|---------|-----------|--|---|------------|
| (2)-(5) | \$100,000 | Marnin Bowa Dumbara
Aboriginal Corp | Information, advice and support service
for adults and their families who are
affected by family violence | 30/09/2001 |
| | \$200,000 | ML Goulden & Assoc | Internal Audit Contractors | 22/04/2003 |
| | \$200,000 | RDMS | Internal Audit Contractors | 22/04/2003 |

Office of Seniors Interests

- (1) Nil.
 (2)-(5) Not applicable.

Women's Policy Development Office

- (1) Nil.
 (2)-(5) Not applicable.

WA Drug Abuse Strategy Office

- (1) Nil.
 (2)-(5) Not applicable.

Family and Children's Policy Office

- (1) Nil.
 (2)-(5) Not applicable.

CONSULTANCY CONTRACTS, TENDERS

233. Mr BROWN to the Deputy Premier:

- (a) Will the Premier confirm that following a Cabinet decision on 25 July, 1997 there is no requirement to seek tenders

for contracts for ministerial consultants when the value of the contract exceeds \$80,000 (see Question On Notice 1016, 15 June 1999 in the other House);

- (b) does this mean that consultancy contracts under \$80,000 must go to tender;
- (c) if no, will the Minister please explain under what conditions these consultancies are to be exposed to fair and open tendering; and
- (d) will the Minister table the Cabinet decision referred to in part (a)?

Mr COURT replied:

- (a)-(d) Question on Notice 1016 referred to a Cabinet decision dated 25 July 1997. The correct date of the decision was 25 July 1994. This was corrected by the Deputy Premier in a personal explanation on 11 August 1999. Contracts with an expected value between \$10,000 and \$80,000 are required to be undertaken in accordance with the written quotation procedures of the Quotations and Public Tenders Policy. Contracts up to \$10,000 are made in a manner approved by the Minister concerned.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, REGIONAL ACCESS PLANS

246. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Family and Children's Services; Seniors; Women's Interests:

In relation to the Government's election commitment that all Government agencies will develop and publish an affirmative action program (the Regional Access Equity Plan) to improve delivery of services to regional Western Australia will the Minister table the Regional Access Plans that have been published by agencies for which they are responsible?

Mrs PARKER replied:

On July 7 1999 a draft Regional Development Policy for Western Australia was released for public comment. The draft policy includes strategies to ensure equitable access to an appropriate range and mix of services across the regions. The draft policy will require government agencies to include as part of their reporting requirements details of their achievements in delivering services to regional customers. This reporting would be consolidated under the Government's Customer Focus Policy. In addition, the draft policy suggests the development of a State of the Regions report that would include information on all aspects of regional living including levels of service delivery, economic performance, demographic details and quality of life measures. The draft policy is open for public comment until 3 September 1999. Implementation of these initiatives will meet the Government's commitment to monitoring the level of service delivery to regional Western Australia.

CHILD PROTECTION COUNCIL, MEETINGS

331. Ms ANWYL to the Minister for Family and Children's Services:

- (1) How often has the Child Protection Council ("the Council") met since its inception?
- (2) Has there been any change in the membership since its inception?
- (3) If so, will the Minister provide details?
- (4) What issues are being considered by the Council?

Mrs PARKER replied:

- (1) Fifteen times.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Mr Rob Holmes was replaced by Ms Eve Lucas, representing the Education Department of WA. Det. Sgt. Michael Miller was replaced by Det. Superintendent David Caporn, representing the WA Police Service. Dr Bill Macdonald was replaced by Dr Peter Winterton, representing Princess Margaret Hospital for Children.
- (4) Development of best practice models; development of interagency collaborative partnerships; examination of prevention models; examination of training and education needs for professionals and service providers; investigation of issues related to child deaths; examination of across government child protection protocols and processes; advice to Minister for Family and Children's Services on specific matters as requested.

LAWLEY PHARMACEUTICALS, EXPORT OF PRESCRIPTION CREAM

427. Mr BROWN to the Premier:

- (1) Is the Premier aware that in *Hansard* of 11 November 1998, pages 3251, 3252 and 3253, I raised the legislative impediment stopping Lawley Pharmaceuticals from being able to export a prescription cream it produces?
- (2) Is the Premier also aware that he is recorded in *Hansard* as saying he will have people in his office to discuss the matter with Lawley Pharmaceuticals to see if some assistance can be provided?
- (3) Did the Premier honour the undertaking given in *Hansard* and have the matter discussed by people in his office?
- (4) If so, when?
- (5) What was the result of that discussion?

- (6) Does the Government now intend to introduce legislation that will enable the product to be exported?
- (7) If so, when?
- (8) If not, why not?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1)-(3) A representative from my office, in liaison with representatives of the Office of the Minister for Health, have discussed on numerous occasions Mr Buckley's interest in having the Therapeutic Goods Bill drafted and progressed through Parliament. Mr Buckley had spoken to a representative from my office and representatives from the Office of the Minister for Health prior to Mr Brown's *Hansard* comments of 11 November 1998.
- (4) A representative from my office has spoken with Mr Buckley on numerous occasions, including occasions before 11 November 1998.
- (5) I wrote to Mr Buckley on 18 November 1998 advising that Cabinet had approved the drafting of a new Therapeutic Goods Bill.
- (6) This legislation will be introduced in accordance with the Government's legislative priorities.
- (7) Legislation will be introduced once it has been drafted.
- (8) Not applicable.

SYDNEY OLYMPICS, ATTENDANCE BY MINISTERS

467. Mr McGOWAN to the Minister for Family and Children's Services; Seniors; Women's Interests:

- (1) Will the Minister be attending any events or functions at the Sydney Olympics?
- (2) If so, when and which events?
- (3) What is the estimated cost of the Minister's attendance and any attendance by his family and staff?
- (4) Who is meeting these costs?

Mrs PARKER replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.

CRIME RATES AND CLEARANCES, NORTH WEST

514. Mr GRAHAM to the Minister for Police:

For the month of June 1999, what was the number of -

- (a) house break-ins/burglaries;
- (b) clearances of those crimes; and
- (c) vehicle theft,

reported in the following areas -

- (i) South Hedland;
- (ii) Port Hedland;
- (iii) Marble Bar;
- (iv) Nullagine;
- (v) Hall's Creek;
- (vi) Wiluna;
- (vii) Karratha;
- (viii) Wickham;
- (ix) Roebourne;
- (x) Tom Price;
- (xi) Paraburdoo;
- (xii) Newman;
- (xiii) Carnarvon; and
- (xiv) Geraldton?

Mr PRINCE replied:

As from 30 June 1999 the Western Australia Police Service will provide quarterly comparative data for key reported offences and associated clearance rates, including: assault, burglary, drugs, motor vehicle theft and robbery, on a State level and for each Police Region (Metropolitan, Southern, Northern and Central). Annual crime statistics with five year comparative data is printed in the Police Service Annual Report. Additionally, the Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes national crime statistics, including those for this State, for each calendar year in its publication 'Reported Crime'. Given the time and resources necessary to provide the statistical information on individual areas and the availability of the relative statistical information, I am not prepared to commit further police resources to provide this additional information. [See paper No 211.]

CRIME RATES AND CLEARANCES, NORTH WEST

515. Mr GRAHAM to the Minister for Police:

For the month of July 1999, what was the number of -

- (a) house break-ins/burglaries;
- (b) clearances of those crimes; and
- (c) vehicle theft,

reported in the following areas -

- (i) South Hedland;
- (ii) Port Hedland;
- (iii) Marble Bar;
- (iv) Nullagine;
- (v) Hall's Creek;
- (vi) Wiluna;
- (vii) Karratha;
- (viii) Wickham;
- (ix) Roebourne;
- (x) Tom Price;
- (xi) Paraburdoo;
- (xii) Newman;
- (xiii) Carnarvon; and
- (xiv) Geraldton?

Mr PRINCE replied:

As from 30 June 1999 the Western Australia Police Service will provide quarterly comparative data for key reported offences and associated clearance rates, including: assault, burglary, drugs, motor vehicle theft and robbery, on a State level and for each Police Region (Metropolitan, Southern, Northern and Central). Annual crime statistics with five year comparative data is printed in the Police Service Annual Report. Additionally, the Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes national crime statistics, including those for this State, for each calendar year in its publication 'Reported Crime'. Given the time and resources necessary to provide the statistical information on individual areas and the availability of the relative statistical information, I am not prepared to commit further police resources to provide this additional information. [See paper No 211.]

CRIME RATES AND CLEARANCES, NORTH WEST

516. Mr GRAHAM to the Minister for Police:

For the month of August 1999, what was the number of -

- (a) house break-ins/burglaries;
- (b) clearances of those crimes; and
- (c) vehicle theft,

reported in the following areas -

- (i) South Hedland;
- (ii) Port Hedland;
- (iii) Marble Bar;
- (iv) Nullagine;
- (v) Hall's Creek;
- (vi) Wiluna;
- (vii) Karratha;
- (viii) Wickham;
- (ix) Roebourne;
- (x) Tom Price;
- (xi) Paraburdoo;
- (xii) Newman;
- (xiii) Carnarvon; and
- (xiv) Geraldton?

Mr PRINCE replied:

As from 30 June 1999 the Western Australia Police Service will provide quarterly comparative data for key reported offences and associated clearance rates, including: assault, burglary, drugs, motor vehicle theft and robbery, on a State level and for each Police Region (Metropolitan, Southern, Northern and Central). Annual crime statistics with five year comparative data is printed in the Police Service Annual Report. Additionally, the Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes national crime statistics, including those for this State, for each calendar year in its publication 'Reported Crime'. Given the time and resources necessary to provide the statistical information on individual areas and the availability of the relative statistical information, I am not prepared to commit further police resources to provide this additional information. [See paper No 211.]

PROFESSOR JOEL BRIND, FUNDING OF LECTURE TOUR

547. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister for Women's Interests:

- (1) What assurance will the Minister provide that public money has not been used to facilitate the speaking tour of

Professor Joel Brind who is in Perth lecturing on his disputed claim that there are links between induced abortions and breast cancer?

- (2) If no assurance can be provided that public money has not been used to facilitate the visit and lectures by Professor Brind, why is this the case?
- (3) If public money has been used to facilitate the visit and lectures by Professor Brind, from which government agency or government funded non government organisation did the money originate?

Mrs PARKER replied:

- (1) There has been no financial assistance provided through the Women's Interests portfolio to Professor Joel Brind.
- (2)-(3) Not applicable.

MINISTRY OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET, DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL

575. Mr RIEBELING to the Premier:

- (1) Has the position of Deputy Director General in the Ministry of Premier and Cabinet been filled?
- (2) If yes, will the Premier state -
 - (a) the name of the successful applicant; and
 - (b) the date the successful applicant commenced employment in the position?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2)
 - (a) Mr Stephen Wood.
 - (b) 21 May 1999.

METROPOLITAN HEALTH SERVICE BOARD, MR ANDREW WEEKS

611. Ms McHALE to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the appointment of Mr Andrew Weeks as Chief Executive Officer, Metropolitan Health Service Board (the Board) and ask -

- (a) is Mr Weeks employed on a fixed term contract;
- (b) is Mr Weeks on a Workplace Agreement;
- (c) what are the terms and conditions of his appointment;
- (d) what are the components of his remuneration package;
- (e) what is the value of each component;
- (f) is Mr Weeks' package entirely consistent with Public Sector Management Salary guidelines;
- (g) if the answer to (f) above is no, in what areas does it differ?

Mr DAY replied:

- (a) Yes.
- (b) No.
- (c)-(g) Mr Andrew Weeks has been appointed for a three year term under the following terms and conditions -

Salary	\$240,000
Superannuation	\$33,600
Leave loading	\$708
Motor Vehicle	\$19,500
Telephone reimbursement	
TOTAL	\$293, 800

The terms and conditions of Mr Weeks' appointment and his remuneration do not represent a departure from public sector policy.

MR M.J. MURPHY, REPRESENTATIONS

613. Mr McGINTY to the Premier:

- (1) Has the Premier received and read letters addressed to him dated 2 and 8 July 1999 from Michael J Murphy, Administration of 'The Murphy Interest' dealing with the response supplied by the Premier in the Legislative Council Supplementary Notice Paper on 23 June 1999 to question on notice No. 1510 to him through his representative in the Legislative Council by the Hon Nick Griffiths MLC?
- (2) If the answer to (1) above is yes, what does the Premier say to Mr Murphy's representations and what does he intend to do in respect of the matters raised by Mr Murphy?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1) The letter dated 2 July 1999 was received. Records indicate that no letter dated 8 July 1999 has been received.

- (2) The letter follows previous correspondence from Mr Murphy on behalf of "The Murphy Interest" which indicates that action may be taken against the State of Western Australia and others. Crown Solicitor's Office has advised that if and when such action is instituted it will be defended vigorously.

LAND CLEARING APPLICATIONS

615. Mr GRILL to the Minister for Primary Industry:

- (1) How many people or companies have applied to the Commissioner for Soil and Land Conservation to clear land in the following periods -
- (a) from 1 January 1996 to 31 December 1996;
 - (b) from 1 January 1997 to 31 December 1997;
 - (c) from 1 January 1998 to 31 December 1998; and
 - (d) from 1 January 1999 to 30 June 1999?
- (2) In each year or part of the year could the Minister supply the name and number of applicants per year, the number of hectares granted per year and the number of hectares refused per year?
- (3) How many appeals per year went to the Minister?
- (4) How many of those appeals were successful and which appeals were successful?

Mr HOUSE replied:

- (1) The information sought by the member has been provided in the financial year format, 1/7/ to 30/6, in accordance with the records maintained by Agriculture Western Australia

(a)-(d)	Year	Number of Applications
	1995/96	146
	1996/97	167
	1997/98	122
	1998/99	101

- (2) Prior to 10 April 1997, persons or companies notifying the Commissioner of their intent to clear land did so in confidence and details such as names or other identifiers were not/are not released without their consent. As a result of the Memorandum of Understanding for the protection of remnant vegetation on private land being announced on 10 April 1997, land owners and occupiers were/are required to publicly advertise their intent to clear rural zoned land.

"RURAL ZONED LAND" NOTICES OF INTENT TO CLEAR (ADVERTISED IN THE PUBLIC NOTICES)

NAME

1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999

NAME

Water Corporation
Croft, Michael
Shire of Plantagenet
Fewings, M J
Keller, P.
Fontanini, B J
Dawson & Morris
Main Roads Dept
Mathews and Kingdon
Egerton-Warburton M and D
Thomas, K (Thomas Holdings P/L)
White, H
Giacci Holdings P/L
Elix, J and A
Nickles, C & K
Homeswest
Burns, Brian
Pozzie, D
Starcevich, M & G
Weatherhead, A & J
Rose, R
Hill, J (Strawberry Downs P/L)
Morgan, J and D
Kenney, P
Gandy, Alexander
Brockman, Trevor
Bellgrove Holdings P/L (Delroy)
Sayers, Sarah
Adine Holdings P/L & Drake Brockman
Hoffrichter, P
Giacci Holdings P/ L
Salmon Gums Pastoral Co P/L
Abell, T and M
Jangle P/L
BMP Holdings P/L

Jackson, HF, DM & K
Prunster, Ross
Johnston, D S & W
Mills, David
Pond, Sydney
Wilson, Roger (Kurdardup Trust)
Mullins, Lester
Iley, Peter
Reynolds, M E
CALM (Nursery)
Daykin, J S
Bradford, Donald

Burns, Brian
 Illinois Pty Ltd
 Legalserv Invest. Pty Ltd
 Feltham, J and S
 Meek, G and S
 Joyce, Dennis
 Roberts, Jeremy
 Northcity Pty Ltd
 Tassone, Guiseppe
 Lette, WT & ML
 James, L G
 Meade, DW and SM
 Tate, AL, MJ & G

1 July 1997 to 30 June 1998

Ailakis, AJ and M
 Humphrey, Ronald
 Black, Brian
 Screaigh, P G
 Tudorwest Management Pty Ltd
 Dobney, R E
 Tomcsanyi, L
 Wilkie, RT and N
 Baker, Ronald
 Bedford, Dennis
 Noakes, Raymond
 Sewell, A G
 Lytton Nominees Pty Ltd
 Money, Joan
 O'Hara, Jean
 McCann, John
 Cale Enterprises P/L
 Petchell, Robert
 Mapstone A & Hendry C
 Abbott, R and N
 Schied, Kurt
 Bennett, JJ, LR and MG
 Hart, John Michael
 Hobbs, Kenneth
 Forever Nominees P/L
 Ainsley, George
 Lovi, F and I
 Vines, David and Paul
 Baker, G & Reinke, A
 Winton, Michael
 Giacci Holdings Pty Ltd
 Rose, P H
 Coombe, D A and J
 Cawser, Peter
 Cameron, M & Betsworth K
 Hannay, D
 Mammone, D & Lanza L
 Cale Enterprises P/L
 Forever Nominees P/L
 Clarke, B and M
 James, L G
 Abbott, R
 Crook, Greg
 Monks, EN, DM and H
 Sandgate Pty Ltd
 Smith, Kevan
 Birsay Pty Ltd
 McKay and Ellery

Brown, LN and JR
 Adori Pty Ltd
 Premier Holdings Pty Ltd
 Giacci Holdings Pty Ltd
 Braccia, N
 Barfield, D H
 Jones, Warren
 Nanovich, M P
 Browne, JR
 Leonhardt, J RH
 Down, Greg
 Koric, JA
 Vincent Nominees Pty Ltd
 McDonald, P
 Syred, G
 Vidovich, B
 Dorigo, John
 Woolridge, B
 Warren, R
 Baker, G
 Klaassen, R and A
 Sorgiovanni, B
 Soils aint Soils
 Chopin Holdings Pty Ltd
 Bunnings Treefarms
 Iley, P
 Notley, R
 Manning, A
 Shreeve, D
 English, R
 Skoss, J
 Simkin, E
 Paulownia Farm Forestry
 Jeeves, J

NAME

10 April 1997 - 30 June 1997

Edwards, E and D
 Huston P and Biddle N
 Lyssos Investments
 Day, John
 Tayler, Jon
 Stoiche George
 Alcoa Aust Pty Ltd
 Chester, Robert
 Multiplex Pty Ltd
 Scott, Kinglsey
 Patrick, W J

The number of hectares over which the Commissioner either raised no objection to clearing or objected to clearing for the relevant years were:

YEAR	NO OBJECTION TO CLEARING (HA)	OBJECTION TO CLEARING (HA)
1995/96	5624.2	12448.7
1996/97	2258.0	12737.8
1997/98	956.4	3933.0
1998/99	1167.2	5497.0

(3)	Year	Number of Appeals to Minister
	1995/96	7
	1996/97	4
	1997/98	7
	1998/99	10

- (4) Three Soil Conservation Notices issued against Chester, O'Dea and Genstock Pty Ltd were quashed.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX, IMPACT ON SENIORS CLUBS

617. Ms McHALE to the Minister for Seniors:

I refer to the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and ask -

- (a) will the Minister confirm whether seniors' clubs and associations' membership fees are subject to GST;
- (b) will seniors' clubs have to charge GST on bingo games run by the clubs?

Mrs PARKER replied:

- (a) Not for profit seniors clubs and associations with annual turnovers of less than \$100,000 will not be required to register with the Australian Taxation Office for the purposes of the GST and therefore will not be required to charge GST on membership fees. Those with turnovers above \$100,000 will be required to register and charge the 10% GST on membership fees. Seniors clubs and associations operating for profit will be subject to a \$50,000 threshold before they are required to register and charge the GST on membership fees.
- (b) Under the Goods and Services Tax Act 1999 raffles and bingo games operated by charities and not for profit groups are not required to charge a GST on these activities provided that they are allowable under state law.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX, IMPACT ON REGIONAL WESTERN AUSTRALIA

649. Mr BROWN to the Treasurer:

- (1) Has the Government carried out an assessment on the impact of the Goods and Services Tax on regional Western Australia?
- (2) Given the added cost of acquiring a range of services and goods outside the metropolitan area, will the Goods and Services Tax add an additional 10% onto the cost of goods and services in the regions?
- (3) Will the difference between certain goods and services in the Perth metropolitan area compared to regional Western Australia increase in money and/or percentage terms?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1) For businesses, including those outside the metropolitan area, costs are expected to fall as they can claim credits for GST paid on inputs. To the extent that prices rise for consumers, this will be offset by income tax reductions.
- (2) In general, prices of goods and services will not increase by the full 10% of the GST due to cost reductions from the abolition of wholesale sales tax, some State taxes and a reduction in fuel taxes.
- (3) It is expected that under the New Tax System the reduction in the diesel fuel excise from 43 cents per litre to 20 cents per litre for regional transport vehicles over 4.5 tonnes will result in reductions in the general cost of goods and services in regional Western Australia.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS, CONEY STEVENS PROJECT MANAGEMENT PTY LTD

660. Ms McHALE to the Minister for Family and Children's Services; Seniors; Women's Interests:

- (1) How many contracts were awarded to Coney Stevens Project Management by agencies and departments under the Minister's control in -
 - (a) 1996-97;
 - (b) 1997-98; and
 - (c) 1998-99?
- (2) For each contract, will the Minister state -
 - (a) the project that the contract was awarded for;
 - (b) the date that the contract was awarded;
 - (c) the expiry date of the contract;
 - (d) the value of the contract;

- (e) did the contract go to tender; and
- (f) how many companies or individuals submitted tenders?

Mrs PARKER replied:

- (1) Nil.
- (2) Not applicable.

ONSLow, SEA WALL

689. Mr BROWN to the Premier:

- (1) Does the Government intend to rebuild the sea wall in Onslow?
- (2) If so, when?
- (3) If not, why not?
- (4) Will the sea wall be rebuilt before the next cyclone season?
- (5) If not, why not?
- (6) Does the Government accept that any failure to rebuild the sea wall before the next cyclone season will leave the people and property at Onslow vulnerable?
- (7) If not, why not?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1)-(7) The State Government, through the State Recovery Coordination Committee, the Cyclones Elaine and Vance Trust Fund and other relevant State and Commonwealth Government departments and agencies, has consulted with the Ashburton Shire Council on the restoration of the Onslow foreshore. Until the results of a storm surge study are completed the Government does not believe that it would be appropriate for the seawall to be reconstructed. The Trust has made a contribution towards the stabilisation of the seawall and has also contributed \$30,000 towards the storm surge study. When this study is completed further consideration will be given to funding for the foreshore restoration, including reconstruction of the seawall. I am advised that the Shire has recently accepted a tender for the study, subject to negotiation on costs and the scope of the work.

CRIME STATISTICS

702. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Police:

- (1) For each month from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999 inclusive, what was the number of -

- (a) house break-ins/burglaries; and
- (b) clearances of these crimes,

reported in the following areas -

- (i) Floreat;
- (ii) City Beach;
- (iii) Wembley Downs;
- (iv) Churchlands;
- (v) Woodlands;
- (vi) Wembley;
- (vii) Scarborough;
- (viii) Glendalough;
- (ix) Doubleview; and
- (x) Osborne Park?

- (2) How do those figures compare with the period 1 July 1997 to 30 June 1998?

Mr PRINCE replied:

As from 30 June 1999 the Western Australia Police Service will provide quarterly comparative data for key reported offences and associated clearance rates, including: assault, burglary, drugs, motor vehicle theft and robbery, on a State level and for each Police Region (Metropolitan, Southern, Northern and Central). Annual crime statistics with five year comparative data is printed in the Police Service Annual Report. Additionally, the Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes national crime statistics, including those for this State, for each calendar year in its publication 'Reported Crime'. Given the time and resources necessary to provide the statistical information on individual areas and the availability of the relative statistical information, I am not prepared to commit further police resources to provide this additional information. [See paper No 211.]

CRIME STATISTICS

703. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Police:

- (1) For each month from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999 inclusive, what was the number of -

- (a) crimes of violence/assaults; and
- (b) clearances or successful prosecution of those crimes,

reported in the following areas -

- (i) Floreat;
- (ii) City Beach;
- (iii) Wembley Downs;
- (iv) Churchlands;
- (v) Woodlands;
- (vi) Wembley;
- (vii) Scarborough;
- (viii) Glendalough;
- (ix) Doubleview; and
- (x) Osborne Park?

- (2) How do those figures compare with the period 1 July 1997 to 30 June 1998?

Mr PRINCE replied:

As from 30 June 1999 the Western Australia Police Service will provide quarterly comparative data for key reported offences and associated clearance rates, including: assault, burglary, drugs, motor vehicle theft and robbery, on a State level and for each Police Region (Metropolitan, Southern, Northern and Central). Annual crime statistics with five year comparative data is printed in the Police Service Annual Report. Additionally, the Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes national crime statistics, including those for this State, for each calendar year in its publication 'Reported Crime'. Given the time and resources necessary to provide the statistical information on individual areas and the availability of the relative statistical information, I am not prepared to commit further police resources to provide this additional information. [See paper No 211.]

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS, WESTERN PACIFIC CONSULTING

718. Mr RIPPER to the Minister for Lands; Fair Trading; Parliamentary and Electoral Affairs:

- (1) Has the company 'Western Pacific Consulting' provided any form of service for departments under the Minister's control?
- (2) If yes -
 - (a) what was the nature of the service;
 - (b) when was the service provided; and
 - (c) what was the cost of the service?

Mr SHAVE replied:

I am advised as follows:

LandCorp

- (1) No.
- (2) (a)-(c) Not applicable.

Western Australian Electoral Commission.

- (1) No.
- (2) (a)-(c) Not applicable.

Department of Land Administration

- (1) 1993/94 to 1995/96
- 1996/97 to present

The Department of Land Administration's financial records reveal no payments to Western Pacific Consulting during this period.
Yes.

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------------|--------------------------------|------------|
| (2) | (a) | (b) | (c) |
| | Training courses | 11-13 September 1996 | \$300.00 |
| | | 11 and 18 April 1997 | \$3 568.00 |
| | | 14 April 1997 | \$185.00 |
| | | 5 and 12 May 1997 | \$3 568.00 |
| | | 19 and 26 May 1997 | \$3 568.00 |
| | | 12-13 June 1997 | \$480.00 |
| | | 22 August 1997 | \$185.00 |
| | | 25-26 August 1997 | \$370.00 |
| | | March 1998 | \$150.00 |
| | | 8-10 June 1998 | \$769.50. |
| | | 13 and 17 July 1998 | \$850.00. |
| | | 13 and 17 July 1998 | \$160.00 |
| | | 27-28 August 1998 | \$355.00 |
| | | 2 March and 15 April 1999 | \$2 338.00 |
| | | 21/22 April and 17/18 May 1999 | \$4 698.00 |
| | | 13 July 1999 | \$780.00 |
| | | 23 July 1999 | \$730.00 |
| | | 23 June 1999 | \$1 150.00 |
| | Contract Negotiation | 30 September 1998 | \$6 069.82 |

Ministry of Fair Trading

- (1) Yes.

(2) See below.

Nature of Service	Date Service Provided	Cost \$
Consulting services	May 1997	12 150
Applied purchasing and supply skills - training conferences	June 1997	710
Facilitation for training in Quality Improvement	July 1997	1 200
Entry level training in simple procurement	July 1997	240
Middle Management Workshop	July 1997	3 000
Facilitators Workshop	September 1997	1 800
Competitive Tendering and Contracting	September 1997	740
Facilitation of Middle Management	October 1997	1 200
Facilitators Workshop	November 1997	4 425
Planning and Value Workshop	January 1998	3 000
Value Workshop	March 1998	1 800

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, GRANTS, LOANS AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

736. Mr RIEBELING to the Minister for Primary Industry; Fisheries:

Will the Minister provide the following details of all grants, loans and any other form of financial assistance, offered within the Minister's portfolio -

- (a) the name of the financial assistance;
- (b) the purpose of the assistance;
- (c) the eligibility criteria for assistance;
- (d) the actual expenditure in -
 - (i) 1997-98;
 - (ii) 1998-99; and
- (e) the budgeted allocation in 1999-2000?

Mr HOUSE replied:

- (a)-(e) The information sought by the member will require the allocation of considerable resources in order to research files in both the Agriculture Western Australia and Fisheries Western Australia record systems. If the member requires information related to a specific matter, this can be addressed.

FAIR TRADING, ZONE CAR WHOLESALE

754. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Fair Trading:

- (1) When did the Ministry for Fair Trading first receive an inquiry or complaint about the company 'Zone Car Wholesale' or its principal Mr Neville McKerrow?
- (2) How many complaints/inquiries have been received?
- (3) Does Mr McKerrow still hold the requisite licence to trade as a motor vehicle dealer?
- (4) If the answer to (3) above is yes, why has the Ministry or Board failed to act against him?
- (5) If the answer to (3) above is no, when was his licence revoked or suspended?
- (6) Has Mr McKerrow's licence been suspended or revoked on any previous occasion?
- (7) If the answer to (6) above is yes, under what circumstances?

Mr SHAVE replied:

The Ministry of Fair Trading have advised:

- (1) The first complaint that could have been connected with the closure of Zone Car Wholesale was received on 10 June 1999.
- (2) 20 complaints since 10 June 1999.

- (3) No.
- (4) Not applicable.
- (5) Mr McKerrow surrendered his licence on 26 August 1999. On 31 August 1999 the Motor Vehicle Dealers Licensing Board disqualified Mr McKerrow from holding or obtaining a licence until further order of the Board
- (6) No.
- (7) Not applicable.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS, IN EXCESS OF \$50 000

784. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Primary Industry; Fisheries:

- (1) How many contracts of \$50 000 or more (excluding employment contracts) has each department and agency under the Minister's control entered into between 1 June 1999 and 31 July 1999?
- (2) What was the amount of each contract?
- (3) What is the name of each person/entity with whom the contract has been entered into?
- (4) What is the nature of the work or service required by the contract?
- (5) What is the completion date of each contract?

Mr HOUSE replied:

Fisheries Western Australia

- (1) Nil.
- (2)-(5) Not applicable.

Agriculture Western Australia

- (1) Nil
- (2)-(5) Not applicable.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS, IN EXCESS OF \$50 000

791. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many contracts of \$50 000 or more (excluding employment contracts) has each department and agency under the Minister's control entered into between 1 June 1999 and 31 July 1999?
- (2) What was the amount of each contract?
- (3) What is the name of each person/entity with whom the contract has been entered into?
- (4) What is the nature of the work or service required by the contract?
- (5) What is the completion date of each contract?

Mr DAY replied:

Healthway

- (1) 6.
- (2)-(5) See below.

Amount	Entity	Nature of Contract	Completion Date
\$180,000	HockeyWest Pty Ltd	Sponsorship of Hockey WA development programs promoting the Eat More Fruit n Veg message	30 January 2000
\$240,000	Cancer Foundation of WA	Funding of a project to improve the health status of men aged 40-60 years by improving their knowledge, attitudes and behaviour towards cardio-vascular disease, mellitis and cancer	30 June 2001
\$50,000	Department of Transport	Funding of the walking component of the South Perth Travelsmart project	30 May 2000
\$172,897	Australian Association of Health Promotion Professionals	Funding of a Graduate Scholarship and Aboriginal Health Traineeship Program	30 January 2003
\$292,196	Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service	Funding of an Early Detection and Community Awareness Program	30 August 2001
\$50,000	Musicians Guild of WA Inc	Sponsorship of The Next Big Thing – a statewide band competition promoting the Respect Yourself message	30 March 2000

Office of Health Review

(1)-(6) Nil.

Health Department of Western Australia

(1) 89. There were in addition a number of grants made by the Health Department of Western Australia (HDWA) to various organisations to support their activity in health related services. The HDWA has commenced a review of the business relationships with all Non Government Organisations to clarify the specification of the services being sought. This review may cause some current grants to become contracts in the future or vice versa.

(2)-(5) See below.

(2) Estimated Amount of Contract	(3) Person/Entity	(4) Nature of Work or Service	(5) Estimated Completion Date
\$137 980	Diasonics GE Pty. Ltd	Supply of diagnostic ultrasonic scanner for Derby Regional Hospital.	Contract completed 13 September 1999
\$300 000	3M & Beiersdorf	Skin closure strips.	1 February 2000 plus 2 extension periods of 12 months each
\$6.4m	Guidant Medtel Medtronic	Cardiac pacemakers.	30 August 2000 plus 2 extension periods of 12 months each
\$450 000	Maersk Indoplas Pty Ltd	Straight & Y-suction catheters.	19 July 2000 plus 2 extension periods of 12 months each
\$3.1m	National Foods Milk Peters Brownes	Dairy products	31 July 2000 plus 2 extension periods of 12 months each
\$1.38m	Tip Top Buttercup	Bread.	31 July 2000 plus 2 extension periods of 12 months each
\$600 000	Kestral Computing	Supply and implementation of a radiology information system.	June 2002
\$1m	Maersk Indoplas Pty Ltd Drager Australia Johnson & Johnson Medical Pty Ltd Baxter Healthcare Pty Ltd Promedica Pty Ltd Heron Agencies (WA) Pty Ltd Kimberly-Clark Australia Pty Ltd Smith & Nephew Pty Ltd	Clinical protective apparel.	18 July 2000 plus 2 extension periods of 12 months each
\$1.03m	Oracle Australia	Purchase of Oracle licences & support services.	July 2001
\$235 000	AW Execom Resources	Provision of Progress programmer services.	July 2002
\$544 900	Stott & Hoare	Supply and delivery of desktop PCs for country health services.	17 August 1999
\$80 000	Bowtel Clarke & Yole	Promotional material development and marketing.	November 1999
\$400 000	Lexwest	Supply of Lexmark printers.	July 2002
\$82 131	Newchurch Australia	Review of teaching, training, development and research within the WA public health system.	30 September 1999
\$57 050	OVE ARUP & Partners	To develop and appropriate health standards for Aboriginal communities.	1 January 2000
\$66 057	Dr Richard Vaughan – Medical Director CTEC	Continued development and establishment of a collaborative training and education centre for surgical and medical skills.	30 June 2000
\$68 375	David Hides Consumer Group	To conduct the 1999 student alcohol and drug survey.	30 September 1999
\$145 937	Communications Supplies Group Pty Ltd	For the upgrade of the existing metropolitan area UHF emergency radio network.	October 1999
\$145 000	AeM Consulting	Year 2000 Compliance quality assurance program.	December 1999
\$130 000	Robinson Technology	For a team leader supporting HRIS and Rostar.	30 June 2000
\$160 000	Social and Public Health Economics Research Group (SPHERE) Curtin Consultancy Services Lewin/Fordham Group	Provision of health economics consulting.	30 July 2000
\$525 000	Westcare	Forms management service.	16 July 2003
\$3 200 135	Sita BFI	Waste collection & disposal.	5 July 2004
\$75 990	WX Windows	Window cleaning.	1 July 2002
\$300 000	Sealanes	Frozen food.	1 July 2002
\$66 300 income plus commission	Smith Snackfoods	Vending machines.	12 July 2002

\$370 923	Lanier (Australia)	Supply of dictation & transcription system.	29 September 1999
\$84 115	Lenny's Kitchens	Supply of bulk food regeneration trolleys & transport transfer system.	6 August 1999
\$115 000	Alcohol Advisory Council of WA	Research - WA Liquor Licensing Demonstration Project.	30 June 2000
\$154 260	Anglican Homes Inc	Residential care.	30 June 2000
\$51 500	Australian Red Cross, Peel	Client transport to appointments.	30 June 2000
\$53 550	Bega Gambirringu Health Services	Diabetes education.	31 August 1999
\$57 780	Bega Gambirringu Health Services	Sexual Health Program.	30 June 2000
\$50 000	Bindi Bindi Community Aboriginal Corp	Healthy Homes - Healthy Families.	30 June 2000
\$207 300	Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service	Diabetes education & heart health.	30 June 2000
\$77 500	Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service	Diabetic Retinopathy Pilot Program.	30 June 2000
\$411 086	Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service	Health promotion services.	30 June 2000
\$188 000	Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service	Sexual Health Program.	30 June 2000
\$847 080	Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service	Delivery of Aboriginal Family Futures Program in metro area.	30 June 2000
\$68 018	Derby Aboriginal Health Service Council	Sexual Health Program.	30 June 2000
\$75 198	Gascoyne Health Service	Medical services - Medicare Access Model.	30 June 2000
\$108 320	Goldfields Women's Health Centre, Kalgoorlie	Support services.	30 June 2000
\$168 000	Home Health Pty Ltd (Tendercare)	Managed Care program.	30 June 2000
\$67 500	Home Health Pty Ltd (Tendercare)	Swan Accommodation Support.	30 June 2000
\$90 000	Home Health Pty Ltd (Tendercare)	North Metro Community & Accommodation Support.	30 June 2000
\$58 200	Kimberley Health Service	Aboriginal Environmental Health Services.	30 June 2000
\$71 517	Kimberley Health Service	Alcohol and Drugs Program.	30 June 2000
\$78 200	Koondoola Girrawheen Youth Health	Support services.	30 June 2000
\$908 322	Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corporation	Family Futures Program.	30 June 2000
\$94 285	Mawarnkarra Health Service	Aboriginal Environmental Health Services.	30 June 2000
\$820 573	Mercy Community Health Service	Remote area primary health services.	30 June 2000
\$57 442	Moorditch Gurlongga Association	Healthy Homes - Healthy Families Program .	30 June 2000
\$106 000	Murchison Region Aboriginal Corp	Aboriginal Environmental Health Services.	30 June 2000
\$393 776	Ngaanyatjarra Health Service	Aboriginal Environmental Health Services.	30 June 2000
\$449 794	Ngaanyatjarra Health Service	Medical services - Medicare Access Model.	30 June 2000
\$733 354	Ngaanyatjarra Health Service	Remote area primary health services.	30 June 2000
\$142 800	Ngaanyatjarra Health Service	Sexual Health Program.	30 June 2000
\$77 182	Ngangganwaili Aboriginal Health Service	Aboriginal Environmental Health Services.	30 June 2000
\$465 500	Ngangganwaili Aboriginal Health Service	Health Promotion Service & Internet.	30 June 2000
\$197 500	Ngangganwaili Aboriginal Health Service	Medical services - Medicare Access Model.	30 June 2000
\$52 800	Nintirr Neighbourhood Centre	Support services.	30 June 2000
\$90 000	Peel & SW Division of GPs	Youth Suicide Prevention Program.	30 June 2000
\$57 030	Pilbara Home Care	Port Hedland Community & Accommodation Project.	30 June 2000
\$98 000	Pilbara Public	Aboriginal Environmental Health Services.	30 June 2000
\$279 178	Puntuturnu AMS	Medical services - Medicare Access Model.	30 June 2000
\$665 249	Puntuturnu AMS	Remote area primary health services.	30 June 2000
\$70 406	Richmond Fellowship of WA	Supported accommodation.	30 June 2000
\$81 194	Royal Flying Doctor Service	Medical services - Medicare Access Model.	30 June 2000

\$100 000	Shire of Derby West Kimberley	Aboriginal Environmental Health Services.	30 June 2000
\$90 000	Shire of Derby West Kimberley	Environmental Health Officer.	30 June 2000
\$120 000	Southern Aboriginal Corporation	Health Promotion Services.	30 June 2000
\$118 455	Wirraka Maya Health Service	Diabetic Retinopathy Pilot Program	30 June 2000
\$100 000	The Injury Control Council of Western Australia (Inc)	Research - falls & the prevention of hip fractures in nursing home residents.	30 June 2000
\$52 976	The Lady Gowrie Centre (WA) Inc	Start Right-East Right Award for Lone Day Care Centres.	30 June 2000
\$79 978	Women's Health Care Assn. Inc (for Perth Women's Centre)	Women's Health Program.	30 June 2000
\$430 328	Women's Health Care Assn. Inc (for Women's Health Care House)	Women's Health Program.	30 June 2000
\$90 000	Women's Health Care House	Support services.	30 June 2000
\$73 685	Yuella Fabrications	Aboriginal Environmental Health Services.	30 June 2000
\$109 021	NEC Australia	Supply and installation of replacement PABX systems.	October 1999
\$115 000	Perkin-Elmer	Supply of equipment for forensic pathology.	Completed.
\$63 486	Leica Minisystems	Supply of equipment for tissue pathology.	Completed
\$100 000	Imaging the South	Radiological reading services.	30 June 2002
\$50 107	A & K Fencing & Maintenance	Replace fencing at various hospital houses.	November 1999
\$264 069	W J Moncrieff	Provision of computer hardware (9 servers).	Completed
\$111 439	BTR Environmental Pty Ltd	Safety cabinets and fume hood cupboards.	1 July 2002
\$56 425	Southway Distributors	Supply of frozen foods.	30 June 2000
\$52 000	Cancer Foundation of WA Inc	Chairman, WA Oncology Group (WACOG) - to oversee projects and activities of WACOG and provide expert comment on clinical aspects of cancer services.	30 June 2000
\$60 735	Gregory's Plumbing & Pipeline Services	Installation of back-flow prevention plumbing equipment.	30 September 1999
\$187 900	St John Ambulance Service	Patient transport.	27 June 2000

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS, IN EXCESS OF \$50 000

794. Mr BROWN to the Minister representing the Minister for Racing and Gaming:
- (1) How many contracts of \$50 000 or more (excluding employment contracts) has each department and agency under the Minister's control entered into between 1 June 1999 and 31 July 1999?
 - (2) What was the amount of each contract?
 - (3) What is the name of each person/entity with whom the contract has been entered into?
 - (4) What is the nature of the work or service required by the contract?
 - (5) What is the completion date of each contract?

Mr COWAN replied:

The Minister for Racing and Gaming has provided the following response:

Office of Racing, Gaming and Liquor

- (1) Nil.
- (2)-(5) Not applicable.

Totalisator Agency Board

- (1) One.
- (2) \$798,560 (estimate) – variable price/according to projects/fee for service.
- (3) Dynamic Business Resources.
- (4) Project management and systems development.
- (5) 31 January 2000 + 6 months option.

W A Greyhound Racing Authority

- (1) One.
- (2) \$120,000
- (3) Jalake Pty Ltd. Proprietor Dr Peter Thomas BVSc.
- (4) Supply of veterinary services to WAGRA race meetings.
- (5) 30 June 2004.

Burswood Park Board

- (1) One.
- (2) \$113,594
- (3) Hydro Engineering Pty Ltd.
- (4) Supply and installation of turbine irrigation pumps, motors and electrics on golf course.
- (5) 24 September 1999.

Lotteries Commission

- (1) The Lotteries Commission has not entered into any new contracts between 1 June 1999 and 31 July 1999. The Commission did, however, following State Supply Commission approval, extend its Scratch'n'Win advertising and promotional services contract to align the contract termination date with the Commission's Lotto advertising contract.
- (2) Contract extension value is \$545,000.
- (3) Marketforce Pty Ltd.
- (4) Advertising and promotional services.
- (5) 9 July 2000.

ATLAS CALINGIRI COMPOSTING FACILITY, COMPLIANCE WITH LICENCE CONDITIONS

816. Mr KOBELKE to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) Does the preamble to Licence No. 7329/1 for the Atlas Group Pty Ltd Calingiri Composting and Soil Blending facility contain the following requirement "where the licensee is unable to comply with the above the director should be contacted"?
- (2) If the answer to (1) above is yes, has the licensee of the Atlas Calingiri Composting facility ever contacted the director of the Environmental Protection Authority to inform the Authority of their inability to comply with the said above conditions?
- (3) If the answer to (2) above is yes, then what were the dates and issues of potential non-compliance which the director was contacted in regard to?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (1)-(2) The preamble to Licence No. 7329/1 does contain the statement "Where the licensee is unable to comply with the above the Director should be contacted". The preamble also explains that this statement provides relevant background information for the licensee and should not be regarded as a condition (or requirement) of the licence. 'Director' is defined in the licence as meaning the Director of the Pollution Prevention Division of the Department of Environmental Protection.
- (3) Not applicable.

THERAPEUTIC GOODS LEGISLATION

822. Mr PENDAL to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is it correct that all Australian States, except Western Australia, have passed legislation relating to therapeutic goods?
- (2) What consideration has been given to drafting similar legislation in Western Australia?
- (3) If such legislation is planned, when is it likely to be introduced into the Parliament?
- (4) If no legislation is being considered, what are the reasons for this situation?
- (5) Is it correct that under the Commonwealth Therapeutic Goods Act 1989 interstate trading in therapeutic goods is prohibited until all States have passed complementary legislation?

Mr DAY replied:

I thank the member for notice of this question.

- (1) No. A number of States do not have complementary State-based therapeutic goods legislation.
- (2) I am committed to introducing complementary therapeutic goods legislation as soon as possible.
- (3) The date of introduction for this legislation will be dependent on the Government's legislation priorities generally.
- (4) Not applicable.
- (5) No.

ABORIGINAL HEALTH WORKERS, PILBARA

834. Mr GRAHAM to the Minister for Health:

How many Aboriginal health workers are in training to be employed in Aboriginal communities in the Pilbara region of the State?

Mr DAY replied:

This information is not available from health services or the Health Department of WA. The training colleges have this information and it is not routinely available to the health services.

PORT HEDLAND REGIONAL HOSPITAL, REDEVELOPMENT

835. Mr GRAHAM to the Minister for Health:

- (1) On what date will the redevelopment of the Port Hedland Regional Hospital commence?
- (2) What is the anticipated completion date of the Port Hedland Regional Hospital redevelopment?
- (3) What is the anticipated cost of the redevelopment of the Port Hedland Regional Hospital?

Mr DAY replied:

- (1)-(2) Funding has not been committed for the planning and documentation of the redevelopment of the Port Hedland Hospital.
- (3) The NORHEALTH 2020 Plan addresses service and infrastructure needs in the North West of the State, including Port Hedland. The final review of the Plan will determine priorities for funding of planning and documentation in future capital works programmes.

HALLS CREEK HOSPITAL, REDEVELOPMENT

836. Mr GRAHAM to the Minister for Health:

- (1) On what date will the redevelopment of the Halls Creek Hospital commence?
- (2) What is the anticipated completion date of the Halls Creek Hospital redevelopment?
- (3) What is the anticipated cost of the redevelopment of the Halls Creek Hospital?

Mr DAY replied:

- (1) Funding has not yet been committed for the planning and documentation of redevelopment of the Halls Creek Health Services (hospital and community health centre).
- (2) The NORHEALTH 2020 Plan recognized that the redevelopment of Halls Creek Health Services is a significant priority.
- (3) The NORHEALTH 2020 Plan addresses service and infrastructure needs in the North West of the State, including Port Hedland. The final review of the Plan will determine priorities for funding of planning and documentation in future capital works programmes.

TELEHEALTH, BUDGET

837. Mr GRAHAM to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Not including infrastructure costs, what was the budget for the delivery of telehealth initiatives in the State for the following financial years -
- (a) 1993-94;
 - (b) 1994-95;
 - (c) 1995-96;
 - (d) 1996-97;
 - (e) 1997-98; and
 - (f) 1998-99?
- (2) Not including infrastructure costs, what are the forward estimates for the delivery of telehealth initiatives in the State for the following financial years -
- (a) 1999-2000;
 - (b) 2000-2001; and
 - (c) 2001-2002?

Mr DAY replied:

I thank the member for notice of this question. From 1993 till 1997 there were no specific budget allocations for Telehealth Initiatives. Developments in Telehealth in this period were funded as a part of normal budgets.

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|----------|-------------|
| (1) | (a) | 1993-94 | Nil |
| | (b) | 1994-95 | Nil |
| | (c) | 1995-96 | \$ 330,000 |
| | (d) | 1996-97 | Nil |
| | (e) | 1997-98 | \$ 858,862 |
| | (f) | 1998-99 | \$1,059,000 |
| (2) | (a) | 1999-00 | \$3,495,000 |
| | (b) | 2000-01 | \$5,566,000 |
| | (c) | 2001-02? | \$4,076,000 |

CRIME, NORTH WEST

841. Mr GRAHAM to the Minister for Police

For the month of July 1999, what was the number of -

- (a) house break-ins/burglaries;
- (b) clearances of those crimes; and
- (c) vehicle theft,

reported in the following areas -

- (i) South Hedland;
- (ii) Port Hedland;
- (iii) Marble Bar;
- (iv) Nullagine;
- (v) Halls Creek;
- (vi) Wiluna;
- (vii) Karratha;
- (viii) Wickham;
- (ix) Roebourne;
- (x) Tom Price;
- (xi) Paraburdoo;
- (xii) Newman;
- (xiii) Carnarvon; and
- (xiv) Geraldton?

Mr PRINCE replied:

As from 30 June 1999 the Western Australia Police Service will provide quarterly comparative data for key reported offences and associated clearance rates, including: assault, burglary, drugs, motor vehicle theft and robbery, on a State level and for each Police Region (Metropolitan, Southern, Northern and Central). Annual crime statistics with five year comparative data is printed in the Police Service Annual Report. Additionally, the Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes national crime statistics, including those for this State, for each calendar year in its publication 'Reported Crime'. Given the time and resources necessary to provide the statistical information on individual areas and the availability of the relative statistical information, I am not prepared to commit further police resources to provide this additional information. [See paper No 211.]

CRIME, NORTH WEST

842. Mr GRAHAM to the Minister for Police

For the month of August 1999, what was the number of -

- (a) house break-ins/burglaries;

- (b) clearances of those crimes; and
- (c) vehicle theft,

reported in the following areas -

- (i) South Hedland;
- (ii) Port Hedland;
- (iii) Marble Bar;
- (iv) Nullagine;
- (v) Halls Creek;
- (vi) Wiluna;
- (vii) Karratha;
- (viii) Wickham;
- (ix) Roebourne;
- (x) Tom Price;
- (xi) Paraburdoo;
- (xii) Newman;
- (xiii) Carnarvon; and
- (xiv) Geraldton?

Mr PRINCE replied:

As from 30 June 1999 the Western Australia Police Service will provide quarterly comparative data for key reported offences and associated clearance rates, including: assault, burglary, drugs, motor vehicle theft and robbery, on a State level and for each Police Region (Metropolitan, Southern, Northern and Central). Annual crime statistics with five year comparative data is printed in the Police Service Annual Report. Additionally, the Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes national crime statistics, including those for this State, for each calendar year in its publication 'Reported Crime'. Given the time and resources necessary to provide the statistical information on individual areas and the availability of the relative statistical information, I am not prepared to commit further police resources to provide this additional information. [See paper No 211.]

CRIME, NORTH WEST

843. Mr GRAHAM to the Minister for Police;

For the month of September 1999, what was the number of -

- (a) house break-ins/burglaries;
- (b) clearances of those crimes; and
- (c) vehicle theft,

reported in the following areas -

- (i) South Hedland;
- (ii) Port Hedland;
- (iii) Marble Bar;
- (iv) Nullagine;
- (v) Halls Creek;
- (vi) Wiluna;
- (vii) Karratha;
- (viii) Wickham;
- (ix) Roebourne;
- (x) Tom Price;
- (xi) Paraburdoo;
- (xii) Newman;
- (xiii) Carnarvon; and
- (ix) Geraldton?

Mr PRINCE replied:

As from 30 June 1999 the Western Australia Police Service will provide quarterly comparative data for key reported offences and associated clearance rates, including: assault, burglary, drugs, motor vehicle theft and robbery, on a State level and for each Police Region (Metropolitan, Southern, Northern and Central). Annual crime statistics with five year comparative data is printed in the Police Service Annual Report. Additionally, the Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes national crime statistics, including those for this State, for each calendar year in its publication 'Reported Crime'. Given the time and resources necessary to provide the statistical information on individual areas and the availability of the relative statistical information, I am not prepared to commit further police resources to provide this additional information. [See paper No 211.]

HEPATITIS C

844. Ms McHALE to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the medical condition Hepatitis C and ask -

- (a) what is the purpose of notifying certain infectious diseases to the Health Department of Western Australia;
- (b) how is this information used;
- (c) when did the reporting of Hepatitis C commence;

- (d) what is the total number of Hepatitis C cases reported to date in Western Australia;
- (e) is this number deemed to be a reliable reflection of the number of Hepatitis C cases in Western Australia;
- (f) if not, what is the estimate of cases in Western Australia;
- (g) is it possible to distinguish between new and chronic infections;
- (h) who are the people/populations most at risk of contracting Hepatitis C;
- (i) who is responsible for the reporting of Hepatitis C cases;
- (j) is the reporting process considered effective;
- (k) are there any proposals to improve the reporting process;
- (l) what plans are there to amend the existing legislation;
- (m) how many people from non metropolitan Western Australia have applied for Patient Assisted Travel Scheme funding for the treatment of Hepatitis C;
- (n) how many people from non metropolitan Western Australia have been refused Patient Assisted Travel Scheme funding for the treatment of Hepatitis C; and
- (o) what are the three most common reasons for refusal of Patient Assisted Travel Scheme funding for treatment of Hepatitis C?

Mr DAY replied:

- (a) Notification of infectious diseases serves a number of purposes, including:
 1. to enable prompt investigation, contact tracing and public health preventative action (eg immunisation, antibiotic prophylaxis, food recalls, etc)
 2. to facilitate the early identification of outbreaks
 3. to enable changes in the incidence of disease to be identified and to guide the implementation of control measures
 4. to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of control programs
 5. to identify risk factors and areas of need
 6. to generate hypotheses for research into infectious diseases.
- (b) The information is used for the purposes outlined above. In WA doctors notify diseases gazetted as being notifiable, based on the postcode of residence of the patient, to one of 8 regional Public Health Units covering rural and remote areas, and to the Communicable Disease Control Branch for residents of the Perth Metropolitan area. Follow-up and action thus occurs in the area in which it is most immediately required. Data for the whole state are merged on a weekly basis, and in turn are transferred to the National Centre for Disease Control on a fortnightly basis for national surveillance.
- (c) Hepatitis C became notifiable in February 1993.
- (d) 7949 cases.
- (e) No.
- (f) Estimates for 1996 are between 16,400 and 18,800 Western Australians living with hepatitis C, with lower and upper limits of 12,500 to 22,188 persons, respectively. There would be some increment on those figures for 1999.
- (g) No.
- (h) Current and new injecting drug users.
- (i) Attending medical practitioners.
- (j) Yes as around 66% of confirmed cases are notified.
- (k) Yes.
- (l) Draft infectious disease legislation allowing laboratory reporting has been prepared and will be considered as the legislative program allows.
- (m)-(o) Number is not known as the Patients Assisted Travel Scheme does not require the referring medical practitioner to provide details of the patient's medical condition or history in order to complete the application process for PATS.

SIR CHARLES GAIRDNER HOSPITAL, WARD CLOSURE

850. Ms McHALE to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Why did Ward B.12, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, close in 1998?

- (2) How many beds are currently available for respiratory patients?
- (3) Was Ward B.12 a respiratory ward and if so, how many beds did it have?
- (4) Is it intended that respiratory patients be placed in G64, an eye, ENT and plastics ward, which is currently closed?
- (5) If so, why?

Mr DAY replied:

I thank the member for notice of this question.

- (1) I am advised by the Chief Executive, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, that Ward B12 was initially closed in December 1998 because of dust contamination from the building site for the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research, which involved renovating a portion of B Block. It remained closed over the summer months because fewer respiratory beds are needed during the warmer months and bed numbers are traditionally seasonally adjusted. Following a review of SCGH's annual bed requirements for respiratory medicine, it was decided to keep Ward B12 closed and consolidate the hospital's acute respiratory medicine expertise into one ward – Ward B 11. At times of peak demand, additional respiratory patients are cared for in G Block.
- (2) There are 27 beds on the dedicated respiratory ward (Ward B11), with additional access to other beds in G Block, as required.
- (3) Yes. It had a capacity for 25 beds, but with considerable seasonal variation in occupancy levels.
- (4) No.
- (5) Not applicable.

ABORTION LEGISLATION, EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

853. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What has the Government done to promote knowledge about the new law relating to abortion (passed in May 1998) to the medical profession and to the general public in this State?
- (2) If there has been no public education campaign, will the Government consider funding one?
- (3) Is the Government aware of a publication about the law being promoted by a group of doctors, independent of the Australian Medical Association or the Health Department?

Mr DAY replied:

- (1) The Health Department of Western Australia has produced and distributed two publications;
 - (a) a booklet entitled 'Medical risk of induced abortion and of carrying a pregnancy to term; Information for General Practitioners',
 - (b) a pamphlet entitled 'A Summary of Medical Risk of Induced Abortion and of Carrying a Pregnancy to Term; Information for Women'.

HDWA provides information in response to queries, relating to the new abortion laws, from medical practitioners and public. In addition the HDWA has provided funds to seven counselling services Statewide.

- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Yes.

FBIS, USE OF SERVICES IN WATERFRONT DISPUTE

862. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Police:

- (1) Did the Western Australian Government/Police Service use the company FBIS in any way during the dispute between the Maritime Union of Australia and Patrick Stevedores?
- (2) In what way was FBIS used?
- (3) What was the nature of the services provided?
- (4) In what way were the services used before, during and after the dispute?
- (5) What was the cost of the services provided by FBIS?
- (6) From which budget allocation were FBIS paid?
- (7) Which Minister/Department/agency engaged FBIS?

Mr PRINCE replied:

- (1)-(7) The Western Australia Police Service did not use FBIS during the dispute between the Maritime Union of Australia and Patrick Stevedores.

BUSHLAND SITES, CLEARING

863. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for Planning:

- (1) Which bushland sites have been cleared, either partially or completely, since the release of Bushplan?
- (2) When was each site cleared?
- (3) What permission was sought prior to clearing?
- (4) What action can be taken by Government following this clearing?

Mr KIERATH replied:

- (1) A few isolated cases of some clearing within Bushplan sites: 125, 42, 327, 472, 386, 390, 87, 378, 387 and 65 have been reported.
- (2) Clearing occurred primarily within June and July 1999.
- (3) None.
- (4) A Notice of Intent to clear is required to be submitted to the Commissioner for Soil and Land Conservation under the *Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945*. When this has not occurred the Commissioner can take action. Once notified of clearing activity, Officers of the government agencies involved with Bushplan contact relevant personnel at the office of the Commissioner who visit the reported site to investigate and pursue any necessary course of action.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

GOVERNMENT VEHICLE FLEET, RENEGOTIATION OF LEASING ARRANGEMENTS

287. Dr GALLOP to the Premier:

I refer to the Premier's statement yesterday that the Government is renegotiating the State's vehicle leasing arrangements with other parties.

- (1) On what basis is it seen to be necessary to change the existing contract?
- (2) If the Premier cannot successfully renegotiate the contract, will he move to terminate it?
- (3) If so, will there be penalties and what are they?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1)-(3) I find it amazing that the Leader of the Opposition has continued to promote the view that there is something wrong with this car leasing contract. I will explain a bit of history which the Leader of the Opposition wants to forget. Governments often lease equipment. The Labor Government did a lot of what was called cross-border leasing. It did it for the rolling stock on the new railway to the northern suburbs. When the Labor Party was in government, its arrangements allowed it to lease equipment overseas effectively. It was taking advantage of different tax arrangements overseas and that was being used to help fund the rolling stock on this railway line. It then did another sort of lease deal in relation to Stateships, and that will go down in the political history of this State as how not to write a lease arrangement. What started as a transaction for three new state ships ended up becoming a financial scandal in this State.

Ms MacTiernan interjected.

Mr COURT: I am talking about the Government of which the Leader of the Opposition was a member. In relation to a car lease deal, which we demonstrated in the Parliament yesterday, independent actuarial advice has stated that there was a \$39m cash flow benefit compared with that of our owning that fleet; yet the Opposition still says that it is not a good lease deal.

Dr Gallop: Answer the question!

Mr COURT: I am getting to the answer to the question. Unlike the Opposition's Stateships arrangements, if conditions change, we have the ability within that agreement to renegotiate. An article in *The West Australian* this morning was headed "Court rethink on \$230m car deal". It is a nonsense to say that it is a backflip when that newspaper was advised in writing that, because circumstances have changed, we would be renegotiating the contract. One could hardly call that a backflip; it is part of the original lease arrangements that we signed.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked me three questions yesterday, and I will correct something I said in an answer I gave. In one of those questions he asked me whether we were going to sell the existing fleet of buses. The Deputy Leader

of the Opposition did not give me notice of that question, and I got the answer wrong. I have been advised by Treasury that we are not proposing to sell the existing buses. There will be financial arrangements, but we will retain the ownership of those buses.

GOVERNMENT VEHICLE FLEET, RENEGOTIATION OF LEASING ARRANGEMENTS

288. Dr GALLOP to the Premier:

If the Premier cannot successfully renegotiate the contract, will he terminate it; and, if so, will there be penalties?

Mr COURT replied:

As long as the contract is giving us benefits, we are pleased. Because we can renegotiate under our contract, it is a good arrangement. That is good financial management. Poor financial management is doing one of the Opposition's Stateships-type deals.

RURAL HEALTH SERVICE FUNDING

289. Mr OSBORNE to the Minister for Health:

Is the minister aware of a claim that funding to rural health services will be reduced, and what is his response to that claim?

Mr DAY replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. I am aware of some concern that was expressed through a media statement issued by the Rural Doctors Association of Western Australia yesterday, which stated that the association was concerned that I, as Health Minister, was planning to "further reduce funding for country hospitals". I am absolutely mystified how anyone could come to such a conclusion because exactly the opposite is the case; in fact, this year funding for rural health services in Western Australia is being increased by approximately \$23m over the allocation for last year. That is an increase of about 8 per cent, up from \$291.6m last year to \$314.8m in the current financial year. It is a very substantial increase.

Funding in the past five years has been increased by a total of about \$65m, up from \$250m in 1995-96 to \$314m now. For example, the allocation for the Bunbury Health Service has been increased from \$24.8m to \$28.1m, a 14 per cent increase; the allocation for the Geraldton Health Service is up from \$18.2m to \$20.6m, a 13 per cent increase; the allocation for the Lower Great Southern Health Service, which includes the Albany Regional Hospital, is up from \$24.6m to \$27m, a 9.7 per cent increase; and the allocation for the Northern Goldfields Health Service, which includes the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital, is up from \$30.4m to \$32.8m, an increase of 7.9 per cent. Those increases are all substantially above the rate of inflation, and have been brought about by the fact that increased funding for the Health budget is now about \$600m a year higher than when the Government gained office. A very substantial part of that increase has flowed through to our rural health services. We give those health services a very high priority, and certainly funding is not being decreased in any way.

BUS FLEET LEASING ARRANGEMENT

290. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Services:

I refer to the proposed leasing arrangement for the State's bus fleet revealed in *The West Australian* yesterday.

- (1) Is the planned arrangement as per State Supply Commission rules?
- (2) Who were the members of the assessing panel?
- (3) Did they sign off their agreement?
- (4) If not, who decided to continue with this scheme?
- (5) On what basis is it proposed to continue?

Mr BOARD replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) Yes. The State's bus fleet was publicly tendered in accordance with State Supply Commission guidelines.
- (2) It involved representation from State Treasury, the Western Australian Treasury Corporation, the Department of Transport, the Department of Contract and Management Services and the Crown Solicitor's Office. Members of the assessing panel were also supported by financial, tax and legal advisers.
- (3) Yes; it was subject to the resolution and agreement between the Treasurer and the Minister for Transport of a number of issues as agreed to by Cabinet.
- (4) Not applicable.
- (5) A conditional mandate has been given to Matrix Finance Group which is dependent on a number of financial arrangements being resolved. Matrix is also required to provide a binding taxation ruling from the Australian Taxation Office before the financial arrangements are agreed by the Government.

BUS FLEET LEASING ARRANGEMENT

291. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Works:

What matters were referred to the minister and Treasurer for resolution?

Mr BOARD replied:

The agreement was signed off, subject to agreement between the Treasurer and Minister for Transport on a number of issues as agreed to by Cabinet.

LANDCORP, OPERATING PROFITS AND DIVIDENDS

292. Mr BAKER to the Minister for Lands:

Can the minister please provide the House with details concerning the operating profits and dividends recorded by LandCorp for the 1998-99 financial year?

Mr SHAVE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. As I said yesterday, this Government places a high value on the financial performance of the public sector. Agencies such as LandCorp are required to lift their financial performance. LandCorp's response is clearly demonstrated. Its financial statements, particularly the profit and loss statements, report an operating profit in 1996-97 of \$9m, \$23m in 1997-98 and \$38m in 1998-99. In 1996-97 the dividends provided by LandCorp to the State's consolidated fund were \$6m, in 1997-98 they were \$10 and in 1998-99 they were \$17m.

When LandCorp's future activities are translated into profits and dividends, they will continue to reflect this Government's emphasis on achieving positive financial results that bring a benefit to all Western Australians. I compliment the staff and board of LandCorp for their efforts.

MR JACK GILLEECE, BUSINESS DEALINGS

293. Mr RIPPER to the Premier:

- (1) Does the Premier stand by his claim that he was unaware his disgraced former confidante and adviser, Jack Gilleece, had private business dealings until just prior to the exposure of three such deals by the media in July?
- (2) If so, is the Premier attempting to claim that he was unaware of Mr Gilleece's business activities and conflicts of interest in Mongolia in 1997, even though the report tabled yesterday reveals that the Minister for Mines was so concerned about the issue he took up the matter with the Premier?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1)-(2) I did not know about Mr Gilleece's business dealings. I had a meeting with Mr Gilleece when they were revealed and he made the right decision and resigned immediately.

Mr Kobelke: What about Mongolia?

Mr COURT: A letter went from my office in relation to Mongolia. That was all part of the inquiry. The letter said Mr Gilleece was not representing the Government at all.

Mr Ripper: Did the Premier have to write to Mongolia?

Mr COURT: No. If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition bothered to read the report, he would find that it is all in there. I was not aware of any dealings that Mr Gilleece had, except to say that when he travelled privately it had nothing to do with the Government.

Mr Ripper: The Premier knew he had private dealings.

Mr COURT: I find it cowardly that when the matter was first raised a few months ago, the Leader of the Opposition did not mind saying a few things about it. However, I did not see his comments when the report came out yesterday. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition -

Dr Gallop: Touchy, touchy.

Mr COURT: I think someone is touchy, touchy. This report revealed that when evidence is provided that members of the Labor Party's team have been running businesses from their government offices, it is swept under the carpet.

Mr Kobelke: Who has been running businesses?

Mr COURT: Members opposite.

Mr Kobelke: Who?

Mr COURT: Does the member for Nollamara want me to name some members?

Mr Kobelke: If the Premier makes the accusation he should stand by it.

Mr COURT: The member for Kalgoorlie has been running a legal practice from her electorate office. She sends out letters of demand. She is a debt collector.

Opposition members interjected

Mr COURT: This letter is to a Mr Main and reads -

RE: WAYNE DAVIDSON - DEBT OF \$30,000 PLUS INTEREST

I have been approached by Mr Davidson who has presented me with a copy of the Deed of Loan executed by you and stamped on 21 January 1997.

I note that you have paid a total of \$990.00 to date.

Mr Davidson is becoming very concerned about your breach of the initial Deed of Loan and I would be obliged if you could advise by return when monies will be paid in full to him.

That is a letter of demand. My point is that it is okay for opposition members to run businesses and -

Opposition members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I can understand the feelings on these matters, but we cannot have the level of interjection that we have just been having.

Point of Order

Mr KOBELKE: The standing orders make it clear that members should not impugn the reputation of another member without a substantive motion. I was happy to listen to the Premier making accusations against the member for Kalgoorlie on the basis that there might be some substance. What the Premier laid before the House was a blatant slur that does not seem to have any facts attached to it at all. He is quite clearly making imputations that the member for Kalgoorlie actually earned money from operations at her electorate office. All the Premier has told the House so far is that she helped someone who was, in all probability, a constituent. I do not think it is proper to canvass those issues. However, the Premier is making direct imputations against the member for Kalgoorlie, in a desperate attempt to cover up the wrongdoings in his office. He has gone well beyond what is acceptable under standing orders and I require you, Mr Speaker, to act in accordance with those standing orders.

The SPEAKER: When the member for Nollamara reads the comments in *Hansard*, he will find that a letter has been read out. I do not believe that any member has been impugned.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr COURT: My point is that on this side of the House, one can be completely open and accountable, but on the other side -

Point of Order

Mrs ROBERTS: The Premier said the member for Kalgoorlie was running a business from her office. I think he should substantiate that or withdraw the allegation.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. It is a point of view.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr COURT: My point is that when Hon Nick Griffiths advertised himself using his parliamentary office, the Leader of the Opposition -

Dr Gallop: The Premier should get out of the gutter.

Mr COURT: He is a bit sensitive.

The Leader of the Opposition said he would have an inquiry into the matter. A week later he came back to the Parliament and said there was no longer a need for an inquiry. The Leader of the Opposition should not say the Government is not open and accountable. One cannot have a more detailed inquiry that is completely open.

Mr McGinty: That is a malicious lie!

Mr COURT: There are two sets of standards. The Government is prepared to immediately have a full inquiry but the Opposition sweeps it under the carpet. One could not have a more detailed inquiry or one that was more completely open. There are two sets of standards, my friend. We were prepared to have a full inquiry immediately, while the Opposition swept it under the carpet.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr COWAN: I distinctly heard a member state that the Premier's comments were a lie. I am not sure how the standing orders interpret that but I ask you, Mr Speaker, to make an interpretation. If you believe that that is in some way a slight upon the Premier, I ask you to seek a retraction of that remark.

The SPEAKER: There was a rather large barrage of interjection and I did not hear anyone say that. If I had heard someone say that, I would require that member to withdraw the comment. We know that it is impugning a member to indicate that he is telling a deliberate untruth. I did not hear it but if a member did say that, I ask him to withdraw voluntarily.

Mr McGINTY: I said, "That is a malicious lie." Does that require a withdrawal?

The SPEAKER: Please withdraw.

Mr McGINTY: I withdraw.

Questions without Notice Resumed

MR JACK GILLEECE, BUSINESS DEALINGS

294. Mr RIPPER to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. As a demonstration of his standards of accountability, will the Premier table the Minister for Mines' letter of 1997 along with Mr Gilleece's memo explaining his conduct, together with any other correspondence and documents relating to Mr Gilleece's Mongolian business activities?

Mr COURT replied:

When one has an ombudsman or a senior officer from the Ombudsman's office conduct a full probity audit and a full inquiry, that is what I call a full inquiry.

HERITAGE GRANTS, EAST METROPOLITAN REGION

295. Mrs van de KLASHORST to the Minister for Heritage:

I was pleased to read in this morning's newspaper about the government grant to save the Gledden building. As many of my constituents in and around the Midland area are interested in heritage preservation, could the minister inform the House of any heritage grants for the East Metropolitan Region?

Mr KIERATH replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. I am pleased to inform members that the coalition Government takes great pride in not only advancing this State economically but also protecting some of our most valuable heritage sites and buildings. I am also pleased to inform the member for Swan Hills that the most recent grant recipients in the East Metropolitan Region were: Lynwood, a residence in Middle Swan; the Church of Ascension in Midland; the Johnson's complex in Guildford, which includes a cottage, a former maternity hospital, a coach-house and the remains of a flour mill; and the Wesley Chapel in Guildford - for those old Guildfordians who are here today. I hope the member for Midland will remind the Leader of the Opposition next time he wheels out the old chestnut about this Government being central business district-centric -

Dr Gallop: Are you willing to be my librarian? You seem to collect all of my statements.

Mr KIERATH: I listen to the statements the Leader of the Opposition makes publicly because they are most fascinating. They are usually devoid of any logic; he seems to make them up on the spot according to the person calling him on the telephone. That is what is so amazing about the Leader of the Opposition's statements.

Dr Gallop: Can I put you on my curriculum vitae?

Mr KIERATH: I would even be a personal referee for the Leader of the Opposition. However, that would not help him with preselections for the Labor Party.

For the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition I will remind him and other members of the House that 82 per cent - more than four-fifths - of the heritage grants worth nearly \$1m go to regional Western Australia and only 18 per cent go to the metropolitan area. That shows the coalition Government's commitment not only to heritage issues but also to the regional parts of this great State of ours.

MR JACK GILLEECE, BUSINESS DEALINGS

296. Mr RIPPER to the Premier:

I refer to the report tabled yesterday into the improper and previously secret business dealings of the Premier's former right-hand man, Jack Gilleece, and ask -

- (1) Why did the Premier tell this place on 11 August that "all of the parties have fully cooperated with the inquiry" when this was clearly untrue?
- (2) Is the Premier aware that the report states that Mr Gilleece's private financial records were not inspected because of the conditions Mr Gilleece imposed?
- (3) Is the Premier also aware of the inquiry's findings that access to such material could have resulted in additional opinions being formed?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1)-(3) I find it quite interesting that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition made the comment yesterday that the inquiry was a joke because it had no coercive powers.

Mr Ripper: I did not say it was a joke.

Mr COURT: What did the Deputy Leader of the Opposition say about the coercive powers?

Mr Ripper: I said we needed an independent inquiry with coercive powers because your inquiry was an internal inquiry.

Mr COURT: He said we needed an independent inquiry. Does the Deputy Leader of the Opposition accept that the inquiry was independent?

Mr Ripper: Yours was a departmental inquiry however you dress it up.

Mr COURT: I will go through the history of this matter because it is important. I hope members opposite maintain the same standards.

Mr Ripper: Why don't you answer the question?

Mr COURT: I will answer the question. First, there was no need for an inquiry; I insisted on the inquiry. My standards are that I directed there be an immediate inquiry.

Several members interjected.

Mr COURT: If the Leader of the Opposition lives by those standards, why did he not have an inquiry into his members?

Dr Gallop: Come on, you are covering up.

Mr COURT: It is on the record that there is no answer to that question. I directed that there be an inquiry; the Leader of the Opposition directed that it be swept under the carpet. In relation to independence, I have every confidence -

Mr Ripper: Come back to full cooperation. Did Mr Gilleece cooperate fully?

Mr COURT: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has asked me a question and I am giving him the answer. I have every confidence in Mr Wauchope, the Director General of the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet, and his ability to conduct that inquiry independently. However, so there could be no accusations that the inquiry had been done inside the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet, Mr Wauchope arranged for a senior, experienced person from the Ombudsman's office to conduct an outside probity audit. Does the Opposition accept that that is independent?

Mr Kobelke: The probity audit said it did not include checking the effectiveness or results of the inquiry. There is no guarantee of the effectiveness or accuracy of the report

Mr COURT: I will read out the section of the report dealing with the coercive powers. It states -

The inquiry was conducted without the benefit of coercive powers. Most of the people approached co-operated by providing documents and participating in interviews. There is no evidence which might indicate that the people who co-operated were circumspect in providing information in the light of the lack of coercive powers, although that possibility cannot be entirely discounted.

Of course, it cannot be entirely discounted. However, the report goes on to say that the inquirers checked what Mr Gilleece said about the financial arrangements against what the other companies said and it all matched up. Mr Gilleece said he was quite prepared to provide all of those financial arrangements.

Mr Ripper: But then he put on a condition that could not be met.

Mr COURT: I think that is fair enough in relation to the confidentiality of that information.

Mr Ripper: So he did not fully cooperate like you said.

Mr COURT: He did fully cooperate. He said we could have all his financial arrangements.

Mr Ripper: He concealed his financial records.

Mr COURT: The report says all the information was provided and correlated. He said something and it was checked on the other side.

Dr Gallop: What sort of a State is this when your senior advisers are running businesses from your offices?

Mr COURT: My friend, the Leader of the Opposition, had better look behind him. Mr Gilleece lost his job; opposition members still have theirs.

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT, PILCHARD STOCKS

297. Mr PENDAL to the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to the release today of the Auditor General's report, and ask -

- (1) Is the minister aware of the report expressing alarm at the fall in pilchard stocks in the Albany and King George Sound regions, which report described the stocks as being critically low?
- (2) Is the minister aware that the fall in catch has been of the order of 75 per cent in the past decade?
- (3) What action does the minister propose to protect the fishery?
- (4) Will the minister consider the reintroduction of the management plan that was apparently disallowed in recent years by the Parliament?

Mr HOUSE replied:

- (1)-(4) Yes, I am well aware of the problems of the pilchard fishery off the south coast of the State. I indicate to the member for South Perth that there have been two disease incidents in that fishery, one about four years ago and one in the past year. The percentage of fish decimated by that disease is not accurately quantifiable; however, we are aware that in 1998 in some places it took out 30 to 50 per cent of the stock. There has been conjecture about how the disease got into the fishery. Some of that conjecture has revolved around imported fish products that have come into Western Australia, and indeed into Australia because the disease started in South Australia.

There have been a number of meetings on the south coast with the industry advisory committee comprising fishermen and processors in that industry. The consequences will be severe for those fishermen. The quota will most likely be set at zero and is unlikely to be anything much above zero in the next four to five years. The only fishing that may be allowed will be for scientific purposes. There are 20 or 30 fishermen and some 300 or 400 jobs associated with the fishery in the factories, on the boats and in the transport sector of that fishery. This problem will have a very severe consequence on a number of people and will be devastating for a number of businessmen, including fishermen and processors. We have been working closely with the fishermen to try to overcome the problem. We have agreed not only to a new management plan, but also a financial rescue package that we are currently working through with the fishermen. That financial rescue package has not yet been finalised. However, there have been three or four meetings in the past month or so to try to alleviate the problems they will face.

SWAN AND CANNING RIVERS, CLEANUP AWARD**298. Mrs HOLMES to the Minister for Water Resources:**

Is the minister aware that Western Australia was represented at an international river management symposium held recently in Brisbane and that the Government's cleanup program for the Swan and Canning Rivers was submitted for consideration in the international award for river management?

Dr HAMES replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. It has been a fairly exciting month for the Water and Rivers Commission. At the second international river management symposium held at the beginning of this month in Brisbane, there was a prize for community education involvement in river management. Three proposals were submitted by Western Australia, including - the member for Dawesville will be pleased to know - the Dawesville Channel river management project on the Peel-Harvey estuary. One of the proposals was the Swan-Canning cleanup program. Members would be aware that the Premier recently announced funding of \$14m to support that cleanup action plan for the next five years. In doing that, we are trying to solve some of the problems relating to our river. Members will be aware that our river is one of the best in the world and its quality is exceptionally high. However, we do have some long-term problems, particularly with the build-up in the river of sediment containing large amounts of phosphates and nitrates that can lead to algal blooms because it is a fairly broad and slow moving river in summer. As part of the Swan-Canning River Cleanup Program, we have developed an intense program to manage those issues including things like oxygenation of the river bed, modified clay to soak up the phosphates, artificial wetlands, and in particular support for catchment management groups to reduce the amount of phosphates coming into the river.

At the symposium there were 40 worldwide applicants for the prize of \$100 000. Although we did not win that prize, the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program was one of the final three contestants, which is an excellent effort. The prize was won by the United Kingdom for its Mersey River Basin Program which has been running for 13 years. Our cleanup action plan has only just commenced. There has been therefore a tremendous effort by the Water and Rivers Commission and the Swan River Trust with, of course, the support of \$14m from the Government.

GILLEECE, MR JACK, MONGOLIAN VISIT**299. Mr RIPPER to the Premier:**

- (1) Why was not a proper inquiry conducted into Mr Gilleece's activities in Mongolia in 1997, including his meeting with the Secretary of State and the Ministry of Agriculture and Industry in Mongolia, the conflict of interest involved in that meeting and the embarrassment caused to the Minister for Mines in this State?
- (2) Why was not Mr Gilleece asked to resign in 1997?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1)-(2) Mr Gilleece went on a private trip at his expense.

Dr Gallop: Hang on! Read the report.

Mr Ripper: He attended a meeting which resulted in a memo from Mongolia to the Minister for Mines referring to him as an adviser of the Premier's Department of the Government of Western Australia.

Mr COURT: He went on a private trip at his expense.

Mr Ripper: How come the Minister for Mines got a memo? How come he called the Minister for Mines several times after he came back?

Mr COURT: It was made very clear that he was neither on government business nor representing the Government.