



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

# **Parliamentary Debates**

**(HANSARD)**

THIRTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT  
FIRST SESSION  
1997

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 11 March 1997

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**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Strickland) took the Chair at 2.00 pm, and read prayers.

## MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT - SWEARING-IN

The Clerk announced the return of writs for the election of members at the general election held on 14 December 1996, showing that the following had been duly elected -

Eyre	Julian Fletcher Grill
Geraldton	Robert Clyde Bloffwitch
Pilbara	Larry Graham

These members took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance, or made and subscribed the affirmation required by law, and signed the roll.

## STATEMENT - SPEAKER

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Strickland): Members will note that I have approved alterations to the seating plan for members on my right in accordance with Standing Order No 61.

I remind members that I have approved of file footage being taken by the television stations for approximately the first 15 minutes of question time in the House today.

Members will have noticed improvements made to the Chamber's ceiling and roof during the break after the last Parliament. Following replacement of the roof and installation of ceiling insulation, the ceiling was refurbished and heritage colours added. The heritage colours were based on colour scrapings taken throughout the building and advice provided to the Assembly House Committee by heritage consultants. Several colour schemes were submitted and a final decision was made after close inspection of two sample ceiling panels.

Question time in the House is a significant part of each sitting day. In order that members can concentrate on the substance rather than the form of questions, I have circulated to each member, new and experienced alike, a note in relation to the difficulties most often experienced in both the asking and answering of questions without notice. I am seeking to continue the recent practices of the House where both questions and answers are clear and concise, allowing a reasonable number of questions to be asked each day.

Ceremony plays an important part in our lives. It usually marks matters of importance, often recalling the struggles of our forebears and the development of our institutions. Last Thursday, for example, this House demonstrated its independence in three ways. We closed the door of this House against the Usher of the Black Rod, who bore a message from His Excellency the Governor; we refused to have His Excellency in this Chamber and so went to hear him in another place; and we embarked on our own business in the form of the Privilege Bill presented by the Premier before turning to the business related to the Governor, namely the Address-in-Reply.

As Speaker, I support the maintenance of appropriate ceremony and traditions, while keeping in mind that ours is a living and evolving parliamentary democracy. In maintaining some of the ceremony of the office of Speaker, I intend to wear the ceremonial robes of the Speaker on all significant ceremonial occasions. For the day-to-day sittings of the House I intend at present to open proceedings in ceremonial dress, while moving to a more modern form of dress when taking the Chair later in the day. As the Parliament progresses, other changes may be appropriate, in which case I will inform the House accordingly.

## VISITORS AND GUESTS - DR SON

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Strickland): On behalf of members, I wish to welcome in the gallery today a delegation from Vietnam. Dr Son is conducting a study tour related to investigations of land administration. He is accompanied by some colleagues. I welcome the gentlemen to the House and ask members to show their welcome in the normal way.

[Applause.]

## PETITION - PRISONS

*Privatisation*

**MR BROWN** (Bassendean) [2.10 pm]: I have a petition in the following terms -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled.

We, the undermentioned people of Western Australia oppose:

1. any attempt to privatise Western Australia's prison system, especially Canning Vale Prison;
  2. any attempt to privatise prisoner transport services to and from Western Australian prisons;
- because of the real possibility of a decline in security standards and levels of accountability.

Such a decline would place families who live close to prisons and all Western Australians at undue risk.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 53 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 2.]

### **PETITION - ROADS**

#### *Mitchell Freeway-Hodges St off Ramp*

**DR CONSTABLE** (Churchlands) [2.11 pm]: I present the following petition -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned bring to the notice of the Government the increasing traffic problems in Perth's rapidly growing northern suburbs and call on the Western Australian Government to extend the Mitchell Freeway north to Hodges Drive as a matter of greatest urgency in order to ease the strain on local suburban roads and to facilitate public road safety.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 404 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 3.]

### **PETITION - ALINTAGAS**

#### *Rebates*

**MR KOBELKE** (Nollamara) [2.13 pm]: I present the following petition -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned call for AlintaGas to establish a scheme of rebates or discounts for senior citizens, pensioners and other low income earners.

AlintaGas is alone among the public utilities in not providing some form of assistance for low income earners and the elderly and we call on it to display social responsibility in conducting its business affairs.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 117 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 4.]

### **PETITION - HEALTH**

#### *Medical Services, Northern Suburbs*

**DR CONSTABLE** (Churchlands) [2.14 pm]: I present the following petition -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned are concerned at the lack of after hours medical services available to residents in Perth's northern suburbs, particularly the lack of access to a doctor after hours and the wait required before ambulances arrive in emergencies.

In such an emergency residents of Two Rocks, Yanchep and other northern suburbs are forced to travel to Wanneroo or Joondalup medical facilities but not all residents have easy access to a car under normal circumstances let alone an emergency.

We therefore call on the Parliament to immediately establish a twenty four hour medical facility in the Yanchep/Two Rocks area.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 908 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 5.]

### **PETITION - LAND**

#### *Balcatta Senior High School*

**MR KOBELKE** (Nollamara) [2.15 pm]: I present the following petition -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned oppose the sale of land forming part of the Balcatta Senior High School and which is currently parkland and open space.

This is a significant part of the open space available to our community and its value to the local community is greater than any short term financial gain from the sale of this land which would result in its permanent loss to the local community.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 70 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 6.]

### **TABLED PAPER - AMENDMENT**

#### *Department of Resources Development Annual Report 1995-96*

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Strickland): A request has been received from the Minister for Resources Development to amend table 3 on page 70 of the annual report of the Department of Resources Development 1995-96, which was tabled in the House on 31 October 1996. Accordingly, under the provisions of Standing Order No 233 I advise the House that I have authorised the necessary amendments to be made.

### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT - PREMIER**

#### *Casuarina, Cost Overruns*

**MR COURT** (Nedlands - Premier) [2.25 pm]: On 19 December 1995 I established a special inquiry under the Public Sector Management Act to examine certain matters relating to the former Department of Corrective Services, particularly in relation to cost overruns in the construction of Casuarina Prison, which opened in 1991. The inquiry was in response to a report by the Director of Public Prosecutions which was tabled in Parliament on 7 December 1995. In his report the DPP was particularly critical of what he referred to as "an almost total disregard for appropriate planning and financial controls . . ." According to the DPP it had been estimated that avoidable cost overruns for Casuarina Prison amounted to at least \$18m. In his report the DPP highlighted concerns about the significant lack of project programming and budgetary planning, inadequate cost reporting, tenders not called, the apparent favoured status of some contractors and the almost constant abuse of obligations under the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1985, Treasurer's Instructions and the use of local purchase orders.

In light of the adverse nature of the DPP's comments, the Government resolved to set up an independent inquiry to review the conduct of the persons concerned and to recommend what further action, if any, should be taken. Mr Jeremy Allanson, a member of the Independent Bar with experience of the public sector, was commissioned to undertake the task. Mr Allanson has now completed a comprehensive examination of the facts. He has concluded that no further action against any government employee is warranted. I quote his conclusion -

In the end, while I am conscious that others have reported critically on the management of the Casuarina project and suggested a disturbing degree of mismanagement, I am of the view that the available evidence does not support a finding that the cost increases in that project were as a result of financial mismanagement and I do not recommend the taking of further action against any members of the public sector who were involved in it.

The Government accepts the finding and does not propose to further pursue this particular matter. However, it is continuing to look at ways of strengthening the framework for financial management and accountability. I table the report.

[See paper No 269.]

**[Questions without notice taken.]**

**SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE**

*Days and Hours*

**MR BARNETT** (Cottesloe - Leader of the House) [2.57 pm]: I move -

That unless otherwise ordered, the House shall meet on Tuesdays at 2.00 pm, Wednesdays at 11.00 am and Thursdays at 10.00 am.

These are the same starting times as have been practised for the past four years.

Question put and passed.

**NOTICE OF MOTION No 2**

*Postponed*

**MR BARNETT** (Cottesloe - Leader of the House) [2.58 pm]: Notice of motion No 2 relates to private members' business. The wording of the motion is predicated on there being a one hour dinner recess. That issue is not resolved in the House; therefore, until further informal discussion can be held, I move -

That notice of motion No 2 be postponed.

Question put and passed.

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND EXPENDITURE REVIEW COMMITTEE - MEMBERSHIP**

On motion by Mr Barnett (Leader of the House), resolved -

That for the present Parliament the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee shall consist of the member for Avon, the member for Bunbury, the member for Southern River, the member for Armadale and the member for Pilbara.

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

*Motion*

Resumed from 6 March.

**DR GALLOP** (Victoria Park - Leader of the Opposition) [3.01 pm]: I will begin my speech by referring to the recent state election. First, I congratulate all of those elected to serve in the Parliament for the first time. I hope that those members enjoy a fruitful parliamentary career. In the case of some, I do not wish them any ill will, but indicate that at the next election they will be subject to the real test of accountability.

I also take this opportunity to express my commiserations to those who lost their seats at the election. On this side of politics, three members were with us last year who are no longer with us. I refer to the former member for Balcatta, who contested the seat of Yokine, Mr Nick Catania; the former member for Kenwick, who contested the seat of Southern Rivers, Dr Judyth Watson; and the former member for Northern Rivers, who contested the seat of Ningaloo, Mr Kevin Leahy. I take this opportunity to record my thanks to these former members for the contribution

that they made to the Parliament. Of course, other members retired from Parliament at the end of last year, and we had an opportunity to express our thanks to them for the contribution they made. However, at the time we were not aware of who would be here and who would not after the election. The three former members to whom I have referred contributed in a significant way to the working of our Parliament and political system. Mr Nick Catania was a tremendous advocate for both the ethnic community and the small business community. Members will remember many of the passionate speeches that he made in this Parliament on behalf of those who came to live in Australia from overseas - of course, his own family had that experience. He felt very passionately about equal opportunities for those who came to live and work here, and he was a great advocate for their cause. He also had a small business background, and he put his knowledge and background in that area to good use in advocating on behalf of the small business sector in this Parliament. I am pleased to note that he is continuing his work with that sector even though he is no longer a member of this place.

Dr Judyth Watson made a significant contribution to the Parliament in two areas. Of course, her initial involvement in the political processes of this Parliament was very much focused on occupational health and safety issues, to which she brought an enormous amount of knowledge and a great deal of commitment. Indeed, the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Western Australia is in no small measure due to the work she did prior to coming to Parliament, and she maintained her interest in that issue after being elected. She was also a great campaigner for the rights of women; in fact, she was a principled campaigner in that area. On many occasions she took a position that was not necessarily popular with the majority in our community. However, she always approached these issues in a principled way and did not allow the criticism levelled at her to deflect her from the cause. Many women throughout Western Australia have reason to thank her for the contribution she has made.

When taking up a cause members get many calls from people who see them as the spokesperson in that area. As a result of her work, particularly in relation to domestic violence, Judyth Watson was contacted by people from throughout the State at any hour of the day, and she was always available to help people with their problems. That is perhaps not very well known by members of Parliament or the public, but it is worth recording. She was a great campaigner for the rights of women and we should all be grateful for the role that she played.

Mr Kevin Leahy was the Opposition Whip and a very keen spokesman in this Parliament for the interests of people who live in non-metropolitan Western Australia. His successor made mention in his maiden speech of the role that Kevin Leahy played. He was a very strong advocate of the rights and interests of people who live outside Perth, and he took up that interest within the Caucus of the Labor Party and on many occasions on the floor of this House. He is a great loss to this side of the House because of the interest and passion he had for non-metropolitan Western Australians. I wish him well in his post-political career and I am pleased to note that he is still resident in Carnarvon. I am sure he will contribute to the life of that town as he did both before becoming a member of Parliament and in the eight years during which he was a member. I also hope that the interest and support that these people showed in our parliamentary and political system will remain despite any setbacks they have experienced as a result of their loss in the election.

Of course, we now have new members on both sides of the House. Those members should prepare themselves for an experience that will have its ups and downs, its triumphs and tragedies, no matter how small. There is no doubt that a political career is one in which predictions are impossible to make and in which there might always be something around the corner that will convert a tragedy into a triumph or a triumph into a tragedy. Those embarking on a political career need to be well aware that all those elements are involved.

The role of a member of Parliament is difficult to define. Indeed, being a member of Parliament is somewhere between having a job and having a vocation. Of course, if one looks at the strict definition of the term "vocation" in the dictionary, one sees reference to "divine purpose". I am sure all members would agree that any reference to divine purpose in respect of the duties that we undertake as members of Parliament may very well be inappropriate. Nevertheless, the strict definition of "job" also misses the mark in its description of the role we play. This career is not easy to define. It very much involves the public interest considerations that exist in most jobs in the community, but those involved in being a member of Parliament are much stronger than those encountered in most other careers and jobs.

One of the most interesting aspects of this career path is that it involves responsibilities to a very wide range of stakeholders. Members of Parliament have a responsibility to their electorate and to the interests and individuals in that electorate, and they also have a responsibility to their political party. If they are not a member of a political party - we have Independents in this House - they have responsibilities to the supporters who helped them get into Parliament. That relationship is not as formal as that between a member and a party, but I am sure the Independents would agree that they have those responsibilities.

We have responsibilities to our parliamentary colleagues in the duties we perform within the party room, within the Parliament itself and within our ministerial or shadow ministerial responsibilities. We also have a responsibility to

the Parliament and its traditions, which, of course, are not inflexible; nevertheless, they provide guidance for us in our conduct.

Finally - although this is perhaps a more difficult part of the job to define - we also have broader community responsibilities. Therefore, we have a very complicated task in considering the electorate, the political party, parliamentary colleagues, the Parliament and the wider community.

Mr Court: All in 10 years in opposition.

Dr GALLOP: We accept the will of the people, Mr Premier. I will talk about that aspect a little later.

Mr Court: I am just saying it is an experience people should go through.

Dr GALLOP: I take the Premier's point.

Following on from the Premier's comment, the experience of a member of Parliament can be on either the government or the opposition benches. To meet those responsibilities we have been given certain resources, powers and privileges of Parliament, and from time to time healthy community debate ensues about the resources we are given and the power and privileges we can exercise. I say to the new members of Parliament that they must use those powers and privileges wisely. Members should never be reluctant to take advice from the staff of Parliament about those responsibilities and duties. I have certainly found in my time in the Parliament that the Clerk and his officers are always available to help as, indeed, are Hansard staff and other staff involved at that level. They have a good deal of experience which is available to members. We should consult staff on those matters when we feel it is necessary to do so.

For a range of reasons public confidence in politicians and the political process has fallen. We can analyse that important question and search for answers. We live in what I call a populist and moralist world in which the processes by which decisions are made are seen by the general public and public opinion to be just as important as the conclusion reached. In other words, if one went back 20 years, those engaged in the political processes would say, "Look, my job in this Parliament is to achieve particular results. How I achieve those results is neither here nor there as a matter for judgment. As long as I have achieved those results, I have met my duty to the electorate." In today's Parliament, the procedure we follow to achieve those results is just as much a matter for public debate and concern as the results themselves. That is the first lesson we must learn in today's world, and there can be no escape from that basic political test. Members of Parliament who believe the end justifies the means are out of sync with public attitude.

We need an improved managerial approach in the Parliament. I hope you, Mr Speaker, will be in a position to assist in upgrading the managerial side of our task as members of Parliament so we can perform our duties in a more effective way.

Secondly, we require proper codes of conduct to guide us in the work we perform. I noticed that the Independent member for South Perth proposed a committee of the Parliament to look into that very issue. From a managerial and professional point of view, the concept of codes of conduct should be further developed.

I say to the new members of Parliament that they should be aware of the world in which we live: It is a world of populism and moralism in which the procedure we follow is just as much the subject for debate as the policies and ends we pursue. I hope that members will take those comments into account in the conduct of their duties.

This leads me back to the election itself: Two lessons come from the election which we all should take on board. The first relates to the performance of the Australian Labor Party in the election. We accept on this side of the House that a lot of work must be done to restore our fortunes with the electorate. We accept that responsibility, and we will be working at it for the next four years. We were beaten in the election and it is incumbent on us to look seriously at the sources of our defeat to put ourselves into a position to convince the electorate to have confidence in us to govern the State in 2001.

However, we take great heart from the fact that electors supported some of the priorities we put forward in the election campaign. The evidence which came to us by way of the election process, and some of the polling conducted in relation to that process, indicated that our priorities were the priorities of the Western Australian people in the areas of health, education, public transport and livable and lively communities, be they in metropolitan Perth or non-metropolitan Western Australia. Opposition members come into the Parliament with great confidence that we can take up those priorities in Parliament in the knowledge that we have community support on those issues.

At the same time, we must recognise the need to assure the electors that we have the ability and commitment to manage our State's finances well. We will do this in the next four years of opposition. We believe that money which passes from the public to the Government is not the Government's money; it is the people's money held in trust by

the Government. This money must be managed wisely and prudently on behalf of the public interest. We must work in the electorate to convince people that we are capable of carrying out that job effectively with a clear commitment to the trust involved. The Labor Party recognises that lesson from the election.

We also recognise another lesson from the election - I cannot say with confidence that the Government of the day has the same recognition - arising from the shift in voting trends towards the minor parties and Independents. Almost one elector in five gave his or her first preference to candidates other than those standing for the Labor, Liberal or National parties. In this sense I refer to the National Party as one of the major parties given its role in the coalition Government. That is a very significant statistic. That voting trend has impacted on the Legislative Council where, from 22 May this year, the Government parties and the non-government parties will be evenly divided.

This message from the electorate was delivered to not only the Labor Party, but also the Government parties. Those of us who live in a democracy have an obligation to listen to electors, to take on board the pressures they place on us as politicians and to find solutions to the questions they pose.

The central reason behind the thrust towards minor parties and Independents in this election was not only some disillusionment with the way the major parties operate and some of their priorities but also in a very large measure a view that the checks and balances we need in a good democratic system of government were not being promoted actively enough by the major parties and that the reforms recommended by both the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters and the Commission on Government were not being pursued actively enough in the Parliament. The only way in which the electors could send that message to the Parliament was to vote for the minor parties and Independents.

The Government is faced with a challenge to which it must respond. It can either accept the fact of life presented to it by the electors and attempt to come to terms with this new thrust for accountability in our system and support for checks and balances or it can attempt to change the rules after the event to make life more comfortable for itself despite the will of the voters. It is not so much an issue in this Chamber but it is certainly an issue in the other place. I remind the Government that there is no mandate from the election process for the proposal to give the President of the Council a deliberative vote, because it was not an issue at the election. It was not debated, nor was it a recommendation of the Commission on Government. The Commission on Government undertook an exhaustive analysis of our political system in great detail. Not only did it deal with the general system but also with the particulars of Parliament and how it operates. Nowhere in the course of its inquiries did the commission take up the issue of the deliberative vote of the President of the Legislative Council. There is no mandate for that proposal. I ask the Premier when he replies to the Address-in-Reply speeches to say whether it is proposed to change the rules for your position, Mr Speaker, as well as for the presidency of the Legislative Council. Currently the rules for both Chambers are the same; that is, there is a casting vote in the event of a tie on the floor of the House but the President or Speaker does not participate in the deliberative voting. That means, of course, that both officers are relatively independent of the processes of politics within the Chambers. It is for that reason that the Commission on Government did not contemplate such a change. Its very argument was that presiding officers should have more independence rather than less. By dragging them into the political process they are bound to have less.

Mr Court: Do you think the Speaker should be opposed at elections?

Dr GALLOP: In a large Parliament like Westminster one can get away with that. Unfortunately we have a very small Parliament.

Mr Court: I thought you might make a commitment to it.

Dr GALLOP: It is too difficult to do. I am confident that the current Speaker will perform his duties in the spirit of the office. I also suggest there is no mandate for rushing through controversial legislation before 22 May. This will be an important test of the Government after what people said to it at the 14 December election. The message that came through was that a check was needed on the executive arm of Government. To use a short term balance of numbers in the Legislative Council to rush through controversial legislation, which was not put to people at the election, would be a very undesirable course of events.

Mr Court: Would you say that the industrial relations legislation had been put to the people on a number of occasions?

Dr GALLOP: Certainly if one looks at the election process, the second wave of legislation was not put at the election as a fundamental commitment of the Government. Indeed, the Government did everything during the election campaign to indicate that it was backing off from that legislation. The Minister for Labour Relations knows that he was muzzled right through that election campaign because the Government was frightened of the impact his presence in the campaign would have on the voting outcome.



Mr Court: You supported it for four hours.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Dr GALLOP: We support the principle of ballots, but the Minister's proposition would not work and he knows that is the case. There is no mandate for rushing through controversial legislation before 22 May. The public expects and deserves better than that. It remains to be seen whether the Government will be big enough to recognise that. It is also important that the Government be held to account for the promises it made during the election campaign. We on this side of the House expect the National Party to honour its commitments to country voters on the gold royalty issue and the uniform tariff issue. Nothing less will be acceptable under our system of Government. Make no mistake, we will be pursuing those issues in this Parliament.

Mr House: All 15 of you!

Dr GALLOP: That sort of arrogance will not get the Minister anywhere. Let him feel free to be arrogant, because as his level of arrogance goes up his level of support will go down. I am quite happy for the Minister to pursue that course.

We on this side of the House also expect full accountability from the member for Greenough in respect of his secret decision to grant an exploration licence in the World Heritage listed Shark Bay area, and from the former Minister for Planning through the current Minister for Planning in respect of the planning decisions made after the election and before the new Minister was sworn in.

Mr Kierath: Tell us about Mr Smith's decision.

Dr GALLOP: The difference was that he was still in this Parliament and could face responsibility for what he had done.

Mr Kierath: You lost the election.

Dr GALLOP: The Minister for Planning was not even a member of this Parliament. We expect the current Minister for Planning to accept full accountability for those decisions and to report to the Parliament in full on each of them. The doctrines of executive power which are implicit in both cases are not acceptable and we will pursue them in this Parliament.

With those preliminary comments on the election and some of the issues that have flowed from the election, I will look at the direction the Government will take in the next four years. Since the election we have had two major statements from the Premier as to the direction in which he wishes to take the State. The most important was set out in the Governor's speech, to which this Address-in-Reply debate applies. I will come to that later. The other was the Premier's agenda as outlined to *The West Australian* newspaper on 3 February. In that article the Premier focused on a number of things to which I will refer. The first was that the Government would be engaging in extensive community consultation about the delivery of core services such as health and education. Indeed, the commitment was made that a unit would be set up within the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet to supervise this community consultation. Reference was also made to community consultation in the Governor's speech last week. The Governor said, "The Government will seek wide public comment and input on a range of issues, including unemployment, crime, drug abuse, education, Aboriginal services and constitutional reform." Interestingly, no reference was made to health, which is the very issue the Premier raised in the article in *The West Australian*. I was struck by what the Premier said on that occasion because the Labor Party believes very strongly that we need new sources of input from the public on major policy delivery. That was the very framework of the health policy we presented to the people at the last election. We support the Premier in his statement that such community consultation is necessary and we will hold him to account to deliver on that commitment. The Premier can expect some questioning about that issue throughout the course of this Parliament. We as a community and as a Parliament need to explore new issues through which the public can participate in the planning process. I will refer later to a research institute I visited in the United Kingdom only a few weeks ago which advocates the use of citizen juries to consider matters of contention within the community and to give advice to legislators on issues. We have opportunities following what the Premier said to explore some of those innovative ideas. We will also subject to the test the Premier's promise in *The West Australian* article to deliver a "social dividend in core services" when the Budget is delivered later this year. We noted in the election campaign that the forward estimates indicated that in all of those core services there would be real reductions in funding and we will be very interested to know how the Premier will deliver his promise of a social dividend, given those forward estimates which indicate cutbacks in core services. However, the Premier made the promise and we will hold him to account for that promise.

The Premier also put as the backbone of his vision for the State the value adding concept, which has been a long held dream of Western Australian Governments. He defined it in terms of the development of a steel industry and a petrochemical industry in Western Australia so that we can add value to our great stock of mineral resources. We all share those aspirations; the Opposition certainly supports moves to add value to our mineral resources. However, I point out, as did *The West Australian* in its article of 3 February, that these projects are still only "at the planning stage" and are yet to be backed by major investment.

We all know how difficult these issues are and the problems they pose for Governments which have to work out the relevant issues of state support even if the state support is only by way of legislation in a state agreement Act. We are also aware of the huge decisions that must be made by the Government on the future of AlintaGas and its pipeline, and the need for extra capacity to serve the development needs of the State. The Opposition is well aware of how difficult these issues are. The member for Eyre and the member for Cockburn who are the Opposition's chief spokespeople on these issues are considering these matters at the moment. However, I want to say a few things about the Premier's statement on the steel and petrochemical industries. I was struck by the fact that when the Premier spoke about major resource development in this State and value adding, he omitted to mention in his vision for the future any reference to the expansion of the liquefied natural gas industry in the north of this State. If the steel and the petrochemical industries are great challenges, the further expansion of the liquefied natural gas industry is also a great challenge. A window of opportunity is opening in the world market for liquefied natural gas. We are aware that the North West Shelf partners are close to making big decisions about the expansion of their existing capacity. However, we are also aware of the existence of the Gorgon gas field. Continuing discoveries in the Gorgon gas field have kept alive the possibility of either a stand-alone project based on that field or yet another expansion of the North West Shelf project based at Karratha and currently gaining gas from North Rankin and Goodwyn and soon to be joined by gas from the Perseus field. The expansion of that industry is just as important for the future of this State as is the development of the steel and petrochemical industries. In many ways the two are linked. There is a window of opportunity, and although the ultimate determinant of development will be and should be the commercial considerations of those players in the field - we know there are many interesting commercial issues between the North West Shelf partners and those involved in the Gorgon field and that those commercial considerations should prevail - the Government must have full understanding of the issues and be ready and willing to assist where appropriate. Therefore, I was surprised that in the Premier's vision the LNG industry was not mentioned because I believe that in many ways the further expansion of that industry is further down the track of achievement than is expansion of the steel and petrochemicals industries.

Mr Court: Their expansion on the North West Shelf project involves locking into the Japanese market. They are looking at doubling their size in that market. But we have been very sensitive to missing out on the Korean market. There has been this sensitivity in relation to the Japanese. The Gorgon project has gone through a lot of changes. However, if it locks into the North West Shelf project, there is an issue about reserves; but if it is a stand-alone project it will be expensive. Therefore, they will have to reduce costs and build up their reserves further. There are three major American partners in it who all seem to be keen. However, they are competing among themselves on technology and other things. Shell is also involved. We are keen to supply the growth in the Korean market and other markets including China, Taiwan and other countries. Therefore, the decisions that will have to be made about whether it is stand alone or not are critical. The Minister is driving it hard and I have been directly involved for some time assisting in that regard. Towards the end of last year I planned to go to the United States particularly to deal with the members of the consortia. I still hope to go. You are quite right; it is a huge project. It would be terrific to have a second project that enables us to get into those new growth markets.

Dr GALLOP: I thank the Premier for his interjection. This leads me to a specific proposal that I would like to put to the Premier about major projects. I will move a motion to that effect in the next few days of Parliament and hope his Government supports the motion. My proposal will be to establish a standing committee of the Legislative Assembly for major projects. In advocating this particular proposal -

Mr Court: To stop them or to encourage them?

Dr GALLOP: No. I will go through the background of the proposal. One of the major problems with the development of policy in this area is there is a huge gap between the executive arm of Government and Parliament on the information relating to these issues and the understanding of the issues. Only when in government do we fully appreciate the complexity of the issues involved, the wide range of interests at play, the international ramifications of the decisions made, and the commercial realities involved. Those of us who have had ministerial experience are grateful for the lessons that we have learned on those issues. However, most of the issues are taken up by Parliament only at the end of process; that is, by way of a state agreement Act. By that stage the decision tends to be a fait accompli and the processes at that point are such that there is never really a significant debate in the Parliament.

In proposing a standing committee for major projects it is certainly not my intention to create a situation where these projects would be held up. In fact, I am proposing the reverse; that is, to set up formal mechanisms by which members on all sides of Parliament can be better apprised of the challenges that face government when dealing with these issues. Those challenges relate to infrastructure requirements, the nature of state agreements and the sorts of comforts that many of the international corporations require when they enter into these arrangements. We need a better understanding of that process through the Parliament. I see a real benefit in members of Parliament being involved in the proposed steel, petrochemical and liquefied natural gas proposals, not in a deliberative capacity but in an informative capacity to build up the support required by the Parliament to understand the realities of the very competitive marketplace. Given the complexity of the challenges, I certainly hope members of Parliament could be more fully involved.

It is partly a case of looking at the public interest considerations through a parliamentary committee. More importantly, it is a means of getting the information and the understanding onto the floor of Parliament. With major resource projects in the past the tendency has been for Governments to make decisions from which some people win and some people lose. Inevitably some people lose out as a result of a government decision and the commercial interests which are affected tend to go to the Opposition, which takes up their case in the Parliament. Obviously the Government takes up the case it made and the result is a roundabout in politics. If members consider the major projects which have taken place in Western Australia, they will recognise the circular process which has occurred. These major projects are too important for the roundabouts of party politics and we should be able to treat them with the seriousness they deserve. I propose involving the Parliament in a meaningful way by setting up a standing committee on major projects. I will seek the Premier's support for that proposal. Perhaps we can have some dialogue on that in the course of this debate.

Mr Court: It is important that members are fully briefed. In opposition I went to great trouble to keep up to speed on these projects. Before the PICL project became highly controversial I went to the United States with the member for Peel and in a very professional way we examined petrochemical industries. It is interesting that the work I did then is now proving helpful as I try to learn the latest trends in petrochemical operations. It is important for members to be fully briefed. I do not know that it requires a standing committee.

Dr GALLOP: A standing committee would formalise the process and it could look at the general issues involved in infrastructure with respect to state support, without looking at particular projects - that is the role of the Executive and we must accept that. There are many general issues on which a group of parliamentarians could offer sensible suggestions. I will leave it with the Premier and perhaps we can continue a dialogue on that question.

I turn to the Governor's speech and the direction it indicates this State will take in the next four years. The State has not been given a clear sense of the Government's priorities, nor are the priorities indicated in the paper strong enough to deal with the major issues currently facing this State. I will refer to some of the priorities. I am adding to the two issues I mentioned regarding the Premier's statement of 3 February, the first of which was his commitment to the social dividend and public consultation on health, education and core services and, second, the need to add value to mineral resources and to promote major projects. These are major priorities for the Government and I have dealt with them in the context of the 3 February statement. I turn to the Governor's speech because there are a number of issues which should be added to the equation. The first is the question of open and accountable government and the provision of proper checks and balances. I will give two examples from the Governor's speech of where the Government is not giving a clear sense of direction on these important issues.

First, I refer to the people's convention. The Governor's speech states -

During this term the Government will begin the process for a People's Convention -

It is very important to look at the words that are used in a major speech like this. I note the Premier says, through the Governor, that he will begin the process. I understand that to mean the process may commence, but there is no guarantee it will be completed by the end of the four year term. Those words are so vague that they require the Opposition to request of the Premier a clear statement of his objectives.

Mr Court: We will be opening the new constitutional centre in a couple of months. If you have the time in next couple of weeks, I suggest we do a quick trip there because it is coming together very well. A number of functions can work out of there. When we say "commence" we have every intention of allowing people to have a say on both the state and federal Constitutions. We do not have the answers to the most effective way of doing it. You put forward a motion to this House in which I am interested. I want to fully brief you on what we do with the constitutional centre and we want to try to work out in a bipartisan way how we can have a convention - work has to be done before we get to that stage. The committee headed by Malcolm McCusker was a start. We got more interest from the community than we thought. We thought people would be bored with that subject. We do not have the answers. The constitutional centre will be a focus for how we can allow the people to have a say on what changes

they would like to both Constitutions. With the changes to the federal Constitution, the republican issue will be high profile but there are other issues. If we are to have a dash at it, this is a unique opportunity to do so. In answer to your query, we do not have a firm position but I would like to discuss some possibilities.

Dr GALLOP: Another issue I would like to raise is one the Opposition has been raising for many years; that is, electoral reform. Major electoral reform was recommended, firstly, by the royal commission and, secondly, by the Commission on Government. The Governor's speech states that the Government will consider the issue of electoral reform. That is not good enough. The time has come for clarity of purpose and real commitment to electoral reform. It is not good enough for this Government not to be in a position to put a concrete proposal to Parliament on this issue after the enormous debate that has taken place.

Mr Court: We put one to you before the election. You know the discussion that took place.

Dr GALLOP: I am not sure a particular proposal came to the Opposition. It might have come from the current Speaker, but it did not come from the Government to the Opposition.

The time has come for some clarity on this issue. Unless we move quickly, we will not have time to implement major reforms. The Government must deliver on electoral reform. The Government's vagueness in the areas of electoral reform, checks and balances and political convention indicates that it has not given them serious attention. The Government is happy to speak about those issues in general but it has not made a commitment within its structures to ensure that it has specific proposals to bring to the Parliament.

The second priority dealt with in the Governor's speech to which we wish to make a significant contribution is community safety or, as it is known, the law and order debate in our community. That debate should be raised a level. So far, all members in this Parliament have supported moves to increase the penalties attached to crimes. We have generally agreed that a clear message must be sent to the community that responsibilities go with rights and obligations go with entitlements. On this side, we have argued strongly that crime should be tackled at its sources and programs established in schools and communities - say, in relation to truancy - to ensure that crime is dealt with early and systematically. Much more needs to be done about that issue. However, the debate must shift to policing, as well as to the causes of crime and the penalties attached to them.

During the last term of Parliament, debate occurred about policing and the Delta program which was introduced by the Government. Essentially the Delta program is a managerial device, and we do not quibble with it. We have supported the Delta program. However, more public debate is needed about policing and its effectiveness in tackling crime. That is why Delta has been established, or rather the Government tells us it has established that program to give the police in the regions the power to tackle crime more effectively, to deal with the problems that occur, and to have the flexibility to tackle the problems, which was not allowed for in the hierarchical structure which previously existed in the Police Department.

The distinction between operational matters and policy matters has gone too far. As members of Parliament we should take an active interest in the conduct of policing from the point of view of whether it combats crime in our communities. Information we receive from briefings on the Delta program indicates that performance criteria have been built in, and that means we are in a position to judge whether the police are carrying out their duties. Overseas experience indicates that policing can have a big impact on crime. We have debates in Western Australia about penalties and about coming to grips with the sources of crime. The Labor Party has led that latter debate and has supported the former debate. However, we have not had enough debate about policing. Overseas experience indicates that forms of policing which establish the principle that crime is not acceptable in our towns and suburbs can be effective. Zero tolerance policing can be an effective instrument for combating crime.

Mr Court: Are you talking about the New York example?

Dr GALLOP: The New York-type model.

Mr Court: The Commissioner of Police has a similar approach. He said that you can be accused of being petty for stopping people for small offences, but if you do not start there, you do not move down the chain.

Dr GALLOP: Some of the alternative and more comprehensive approaches to policing must be used to combat crime in our communities. To back up those alternatives, the police will need mobile anticrime squads, and the resources and ability to move around the State to come to grips with crime in problem areas. We will be subjecting the Government's budget priorities to the scrutiny that the public expects, and that includes whether the Police Force is dealing with the problem of crime. The time has come to raise the standard of debate about the crime problem, to put some accountability in the whole police operation so that the styles and approaches to policing become part of the debate as well as penalties, in an effort to come to grips with the causes of crime. We will hold the Government

to account on that issue. Therefore, we will have accountability, checks and balances, policing and a reduction in crime in our communities.

I now refer to the two crucial environmental issues of our time; namely, salinity in rural Western Australia and air quality in metropolitan Perth. Current trends indicate that between 25 per cent and 50 per cent of the south west will be salt affected within the next century. Does the Deputy Premier agree?

Mr Cowan: No.

Dr GALLOP: It is an existing trend. It includes vast tracts of agricultural areas, virtually all remnants of native vegetation, streams and wetlands on private property, and community and national assets such as forests and rivers. The Government failed to deliver on its extravagant promises during the 1993 state election. The then Minister, Hon Peter Foss' excuse was that most people lived in the city and did not rate salinity as an important issue. All members must realise that salinity is an important issue for people who live in the city, just as it is for people who live in the country. Statistics show that the level of awareness of issues related to land care has risen from 19 per cent in 1991 to 70.6 per cent in 1995. We should hear no more excuses from the Government on this issue. We expect a comprehensive and integrated program to tackle salinity, and we will hold the Government to account during this term of Parliament.

Mr Cowan: Have you read the documentation?

Dr GALLOP: We read it before the state election in 1993 but nothing has been done.

Mr Cowan: Have you read the salinity action plan?

Dr GALLOP: Of course we have, and we want the plan delivered. We will be making constructive suggestions on that.

Mr Cowan: I do not think you have read the plan.

Dr GALLOP: Yes, I have. I read it in the context of the 1993 state election. The plan came out in a rush before the election. We have read it all, Mr Deputy Premier, do not worry about that! The same could be said regarding the Government's commitments on air quality and pollution in Perth.

Mr Wiese interjected.

Dr GALLOP: The member has missed the point. The people of Western Australia want the Government to deliver on salinity. They are not interested in glossy plans -

Mr Wiese: Are you aware of what has been done? More has been done in the past four years than in any time before.

Dr GALLOP: We will support the Government's actions; we will support the Landcare movement and its actions. We want results from the Government. It has had four years, and it now has another four years. We want to see an obvious and verifiable reduction in the rates of salinity expansion.

Mr Cowan: Can you correct that? Talk about salinity reduction!

Dr GALLOP: That is what we are after, but it is currently expanding. We must reverse that situation.

The same can be said about air quality and pollution in the City of Perth. We are on the threshold of two major crises in our quality of life. One is related to photochemical smog and the other is related to haze. Given our population growth, these problems will need to be addressed if Perth is not to become another Los Angeles. We are all aware that Perth has exceeded World Health Organisation pollution limits for ozone on numerous occasions. One of the solutions is a comprehensive and integrated public transport system. The Government took a long time to realise that this is a political issue. In a belated move, just before the last state election, the Government put out a strategy which was not comprehensive enough and which will be undermined by the privatisation process it has set in train.

On this very issue, along with the others I have mentioned, we will hold the Government to account. At the end of this decade the poor performance of the Government will be judged on the results in salinity and air pollution, and any attempt to slide out of accountability by the presentation of more glossy plans will inevitably fail. On these major issues the Government will be held to account to the people of Western Australia. They are important issues about which we should hear from the Government in terms of their priority. It is certainly our view that those major economic issues, political issues, social issues and environmental issues will be the basis upon which we will judge this Government during this Parliament.

I mention very briefly my trip to the United Kingdom two weeks ago; the first week as part of the Australian Political Exchange Council and the second as part of an itinerary I organised. I will say one thing about this trip: When we

take a serious look at the British political system, the most obvious conclusion that we reach is that in Australia we are light years ahead in the democratic process, and I give three very important reasons for this. The first encompasses our system of compulsory voting - our alternative voting system which allows people to express their preferences and means that any member who is elected from a constituency has the support of a majority in that constituency, and our independent Electoral Commissions which have been established in recent years which mean that our system is much more capable of involving people, of ensuring consensus throughout the community and also ensuring a result that is more democratic in its implications.

In Australia elections are negotiations with the individual constituency where candidates negotiate amongst themselves about preferences, through to a national negotiation about preferences for the Senate or for the other upper Houses that are elected on the basis of proportional representation. In Britain it is winner take all: There is no independent electoral commission; there is voluntary voting; and there is a very unprofessional approach to the registration and electoral system compared with that in Australia.

Secondly, we have the federal system which is guaranteed by the Constitution and results in a real form of devolution and provides some checks and balances for the central government. In the United Kingdom the winner takes all - if people win in Westminster, they have the ability to do anything. Through federalism, with the checks and balances in our system of Government, that would be impossible. In Australia today, where all States bar one are governed by the coalition parties, the Labor Government in New South Wales is acting as a voice for Labor interests within the federal system. In the British system discussion of devolution is on the agenda, but very much opposed by significant forces that want to preserve centralism within that country.

Thirdly, our Senate is a much better Chamber, as are our upper Houses generally, than the House of Lords which is still based upon an hereditary element and has the ability only to delay legislation. We should take great pride in the strength of our democracy, even though many areas need improvement, some of which I have already mentioned. There are strengths in our system that we should build upon, admire and propagate as examples to the rest of the world. However, there is one area of British political life that is ahead of ours; that is, the role that ideas and research play in the conduct of government and politics generally. We do not take ideas seriously enough in our political system and our political process.

Let us look to the United Kingdom in the late 1970s and early 1980s. A plethora of think-tanks were set up advocating the free market and, indeed, proposing radical changes in the way the economic and social systems should be organised in that country. Many of those ideas were taken up by the then Thatcher Government and have been continued by the Major Government. There was a different tendency in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Now the think-tanks that are cropping up are of the centre and left of centre and they are looking at ways in which society in Britain can be improved by means of more fairness, more democracy, more involvement and by improved definitions of the quality of life - all of which are questioning the tendencies that have prevailed in Britain over the past two decades. The role that these research foundations have played and the ideas that they have generated have been part of a political process. In Australia we could encourage more of a relationship between research foundations and Parliament and between universities and Parliament in terms of the ideas and research that is undertaken. We can learn.

One institute I visited was the Demos Research Foundation which was established in 1992. It is looking at a whole range of issues: Local communities and how to fight crime; new definitions of the quality of life; and political cultures and general cultures and how they influence policy making. I will give an example. In Britain, as in Australia, there is a big push to increase the level of savings. This requires legislation, policy and incentives. It is difficult to influence people in that area. The Demos Research Foundation is looking at the cultures that prevail within the community in respect of the way people earn, spend and save their money, so that when it comes to looking at policy, these issues will have an impact.

Here is another example: Obviously there has been a push within our communities to reduce the level of smoking and drug use generally. It has been very difficult for governments to influence patterns of behaviour in these areas. This foundation is looking at the cultures that prevail. In many ways governments can say what they like about these issues; however, if they are not speaking to the cultures that are involved, their policies will have no impact. This research institute has taken up the idea of culture and is looking at how we can influence behaviour in a direction we generally agree with and approve of in an effective way. Rather than just making pronouncements from Parliament and expecting everybody to go along with them, it is seeking to have policies implemented that will have an impact and create positive results. Earlier I mentioned the example of citizens' juries to help the Government in what it does. That concept has been taken up in the universities and has been used quite effectively for policy making.

We can develop new ideas and we should be open to such new ideas because there is a hunger in the community for some new direction in politics, for politics to go down a new path and to set up new institutions. If we do not accept that that hunger exists, the trend I mentioned earlier where the major parties miss out vis-a-vis the Independents and

the minor parties will continue. Members of the public want new ideas canvassed; they want some new solutions to some old problems. They are not convinced that the traditional way in which we have been doing things works. Therefore, in Australia, we should open our thinking and our processes to some of these new ideas and the research that has been conducted.

I know there is no provision under the standing orders for me to table a report on my trip to Great Britain; however, I table my report for the remainder of this day's sitting with the intention that that report will then be placed in the Parliamentary Library.

[The paper was tabled for the information of members.]

**MR MARSHALL** (Dawesville - Parliamentary Secretary) [4.09 pm]: At 6.00 pm on Easter Sunday, 30 March - just a few weeks away - a historical football match will be played at Rushton Park in Mandurah. The importance of this match should be recorded in *Hansard* because this is an epic event for Western Australia. This game between South Fremantle and Peel Thunder in Westar Rules - formally the WA Football League - heralds a new era.

Mr Cowan: Do you know what they are saying about you down there?

Mr MARSHALL: What are they saying about me?

Mr Cowan: They want you to hand in your life membership.

Mr MARSHALL: When one is a life member of East Fremantle Football Club and one has been part of creating history in Western Australian football by getting a new side into the competition - after 100 years - it puts one in a dilemma. I assure the Deputy Premier that when East Fremantle plays Peel Thunder, I will barrack for East Fremantle, but for every other match I will be right behind this new side. This new side is exciting for football and it is not something which everyone gets the opportunity to be a part of.

The match between South Fremantle and Peel Thunder will be the first time in the history of Western Australian football that a country side has competed in a metropolitan competition. The game will be played under lights and is expected to attract around 8 000 spectators. In the past the spectator-attraction games have been the Fremantle derbies. The matches between East Fremantle and South Fremantle have been spectacular exhibitions of skill and strength and sheer bravery. However, I predict that the Peel Thunder-South Fremantle clashes in the future will become just as entertaining.

The rivalry between East Fremantle and South Fremantle developed when those teams trained and played on the same ground - Fremantle Oval. Their change rooms were at opposite ends of the stadium and they each trained on half a ground. Most of the players worked together on the wharf. When the home match derbies were played there was tremendous rivalry. That rivalry was developed over a period; however, the rivalry between Peel Thunder and South Fremantle does not need to be developed - it already exists.

South Fremantle vigorously opposed Mandurah Football Club's submission for a new football licence, but Mandurah succeeded. South Fremantle lost its junior development area in the rezoning when Peel Thunder was given the Mandurah-Rockingham area and the south west, on which South Fremantle strongly relied. On Easter Sunday there will be no holds barred when the ball is bounced for the first time. A top crowd is assured. People in Mandurah and the Peel region are avid football lovers. The Peel Football League, with its eight sides, draws 4 000 or 5 000 spectators every Sunday. All those supporters will follow their new side. Supporters of South Fremantle - the Bulldogs - will come in busloads to witness that epic match because it will be fairly close to their home ground, as will people from the south west, particularly Busselton, Bunbury and Margaret River.

Let us not forget the timing of this historic match: It will be held on Easter Sunday, which is a major weekend for Mandurah - the number one, one day holiday destination in Western Australia. Thousands of tourists will be looking for something to do there. Not only has the West Australian Football Commission been futuristic in its thinking by giving, in its wisdom, the ninth licence to Mandurah, but the agenda for this first match is revolutionary. I have no doubt that the new Peel Thunder team will revitalise the Westar competition and that its home games will boast the best attendance in that competition.

How did this licence eventuate? For at least eight years football authorities have toyed with the idea of taking football to the country. A few of the country sides also thought that should happen. Kalgoorlie and Bunbury both applied for licences, but, whether because of distance or a lack of money to get sponsorship, they failed. This caused the Peel Development Commission to think that it should put together a submission and let the Football Commission know just what was happening in Mandurah - right on its doorstep. Often we are inclined to look further afield and not see what is next door to us. The submission was so good that it kindled the interest of the Football Commission. Mandurah had gone unnoticed. The commission was surprised that Mandurah could provide a well-lit, well-manicured football ground, such as Rushton Park. It was surprised that Mandurah's population had grown to 40 000.

It was surprised also that there were more junior footballers registered in the Mandurah area than in at least half the sides of its other teams' competitions.

Everyone knows that East Fremantle leads the way in junior membership. However, clubs such as Subiaco and Claremont are battling because the areas are defunct. They have not followed West Perth's idea of relocating. The Football Commission asked what it could do for the youngsters who were playing football. It considered a new licence. It was expected that South Fremantle would follow West Perth and relocate. In hindsight, it should have done that. South Fremantle should have sold Fremantle Oval to the Dockers, which would have fitted in well with the Football Commission's plans, and relocated to the fastest growing area in Western Australia - Mandurah. If it had done that, South Fremantle would have had the chance to be a great football club. However, it let it slide.

An idea was also put forward to amalgamate two football sides - perhaps Perth and East Perth - to get a new licence. That proposal was considered for some time; however, it did not eventuate. Finally, the Football Commission had to make a bold decision: It gave the ninth football licence to Peel Thunder. History will prove that that decision will provide a great boost to the game of Australian Rules football in Western Australia.

Mr Marlborough: They walk in on derby day, half in blue and half in red. They wouldn't know where they were! Who will you barrack for?

Mr MARSHALL: I originally wanted to take no interjections because they would be reported in *Hansard*, and I thought they would affect this very important document. However, I must ask the member for Peel what he knows about allegiance. He came to Australia as a soccer player, he tried to switch to football, and now he thinks he is a rugby player - but I think he will finish up playing lacrosse! He keeps changing his hat. He is like Houdini: He does not stand still in one place and he changes direction quicker than a flash.

I return to the announcement that Mandurah Football Club should have the licence. The club had only six months to put together a side. All the other clubs have a history behind them; they have had recruiting grounds. Mandurah was given the challenge of a lifetime. It costs approximately \$650 000 a year to put together a football side. Players, coaches, footballs, jumpers, the hire of grounds, and junior development amount to around \$330 000. Administration costs, including staff wages, insurance, legal fees, printing and stationery, power, advertising, and repairs and maintenance total around \$300 000. How can a small city like Mandurah get together \$650 000? It budgeted on \$125 000 from sponsorship, hoping that the same would happen to that club as occurred when the Falcons went to Joondalup and many new business houses wanted to be involved in sponsorship - and that is exactly what occurred. The club has doubled the \$125 000 sponsorship figure in its budget and it is looking pretty good. Western Underwriters Insurance Ltd and the Swan Brewery Co Pty Ltd are the major sponsors, and the club has been bombarded by local business houses and shopkeepers wanting to be part of the action.

The advertising was a complete surprise. Arena advertising is difficult to sell. However, in one month 50 arena advertising signs - the signs around the fence and the lollipop signs at the back of the ground - were sold. At \$1 500 a sign and with another \$400 for the sign writing, local businesses were up for around \$2 000. The club is looking for extra ground to erect more signs for this country team that is about to show metropolitan sides how to make money through sponsorship and survive financially.

Membership is also expected to be a big winner. East Fremantle leads in junior development and membership numbers in this State. East Fremantle Football Club has 2 000 members, which does not sound like a big number; in bygone days WAFL clubs had 8 000 or 10 000 members, but the competition has faded a little. A membership of 2 000 is a big number for local WAFL sides, and I am told that clubs like Subiaco and Claremont may not have 1 000 members on their roll. Peel Thunder has acquired 1 300-plus members!

I now relay to members an anecdote to give an idea about how easy it is to promote the club in the area. I attended a radio auction on Sunday with Max Kay, who told me that he changed from soccer to become a football follower. He is living in Ravenswood part time these days so I said to him, "Why not give me \$50?" He asked what for, and I said, "To join Peel Thunder." He said, "Here's your \$50." It was as simple as that. People in the area realise how great it is to get behind a home-grown side. At the end of this season the club will have the largest membership of any of the WAFL clubs.

Merchandising at the club is flat out with the sale of hats, caps and shirts. In fact, the shirts have sold out. Kids, fishermen and everyone else in the area want to wear a Peel Thunder cap or shirt. The emotion is fantastic. I have not experienced this emotion since the first East Fremantle premiership I followed. I was aged about 12 years - after about 15 premierships, one gets used to them!

Each WAFL side receives about \$150 000 annually from the West Australian Football Commission, and the clubs rely on that money to survive, along with revenue from gate takings, auctions, raffles and the usual activities of



football clubs. Peel Thunder will be able to generate an income to make it financially independent and the envy of most of the metropolitan clubs.

A football club needs two other things - namely, good administration and players. I am pleased to tell the House that the board and administration for Peel Thunder is second to none. I, as chairman of the steering committee, met the WA Football Commission, which queried whether the club could field a board with football knowledge. Our board chairman is a gentleman named Neil Stedman, who also heads the Mandurah Forum. He is the head of 160 businesses in the area and what he does not know about marketing and commercialism is not worth knowing.

Matt Thomas is one of the directors and he operates as the link between the Mandurah City Council and the football club. Matt is 35 years of age, is doing a degree in administration and is a little livewire. It is important that the football club works with the council as local government must provide some infrastructure, such as grounds, toilet facilities and extra scoreboards. The link is working.

John Styants is on the board; he also heads up the Peel Development Commission. He is the gentleman in town running a huge government organisation which has contact with the business community. He is a former football umpire, has a great interest in the game and is well-known and respected.

David Burges, our treasurer, is a chartered accountant with most of the leading accounts in Mandurah. He knows how to make things balance and, like most accountants, he does not like to spend money so he ensures nothing is wasted at the club.

Some members may have heard of Jamie Clement who plays for the Dockers, but no-one knows that he came from Mandurah. South Fremantle claimed him. Sadly, just as the Victorians used to claim our state footballers and forget they came from Western Australia, metropolitan clubs have had a similar approach with country players for years. Jamie Clement's father is Brett Clement, who is the leading solicitor in town. His involvement at the club is invaluable in signing up players and taking care of contractual agreements.

Ted O'Conner is on the board, and he was the President of the Perth Football Club for four years. His football administration knowledge is second to none.

Ray Bull heads up the Peel league and is the head of Western Underwriters Insurance in town. He is a busy person involved in management.

Therefore, the administration of Peel Thunder is more solid than that of most of the metropolitan clubs. Also four directors come to the board from the Mandurah Football and Sporting Club. It should be noted that this club has its own identity, and the licence has gone to that sporting club. However, Peel Thunder is one limb of the tree of that organisation so the Mandurah Football and Sporting Club is part of the board.

With such administration, the club is in a sound position. What about the football administration staff - the key to the club? The administration manager for the football side of the club is Harold Harper, a life member of South Fremantle Football Club. He played with South Fremantle and was the club's manager for about eight years. He is at Peel Thunder. The person in charge of recruiting footballers is Haydn Bunton. Which other side in the country could pick up a legend like Haydn Bunton? Haydn lives in South Yunderup and he immediately offered his services. He is on the payroll. He has been picking up a lot of players from around Australia.

No club is worth its while without its champions. A hundred-odd players tried out for Peel Thunder in readiness for the match at Easter, and the squad has been reduced to 52 players. Phil Gilbert has come down from the Dockers and Claremont to play for the Thunder, and could become captain. Jeff Hilton has been recruited from Melbourne Football Club. Members should write down the name of Jonathan Ross, as he will be one of the champions of the WAFL this season. We recruited this talented young footballer from the Adelaide Crows.

With a bit of luck we will get five of the Eagles' cast-offs. This week nine Eagles must be allocated to a metropolitan side, and we hope to recruit five such players. The Peel Thunder league coach is Geoff Miles, who was a premiership player for the Eagles and Claremont. He played for Geelong in an AFL final, and he knows football backwards. Mick Malthouse will want to send his players to people who know his way of coaching and discipline. With a little luck, we will get those Eagles players.

Troy Wilson, Geoff Miles' assistant, played for South Fremantle and he has been a dynamic country coach. Geoff could not have a better assistant. The Thunder's reserve coach is Mark Bayliss, who played for Collingwood and South Fremantle. How come we have these players at little old Mandurah, yet the senior metropolitan clubs did not know they were around? It is the magic of Mandurah. People want to be a part of history and want to join a club which in four years could be the premiers of Western Australia.

The colts coach is David Stedman, and the chairman of selectors and ruck coach is Paul Harding, a former premiership Eagles and East Fremantle player, as well as a St Kilda and Hawthorn player. He played over 200 games in top competition. When we got the licence, he rang up and asked whether we could use him! He is a life member of East Fremantle, yet he wants to come down to Mandurah. This is the type of club which has been put together in only six months. It is revolutionary. How it has happened is amazing.

I do not expect Peel Thunder to win a premiership in its first year, although one never knows! However, I predict that they will be favourite for the flag in four years. The juniors in the area are raring to go. All the primary and secondary schoolboys think about when they go to bed is playing for Peel Thunder. South Fremantle, when it realised that it would miss out on the licence and lose its zone, signed up our seven best 16-year-old footballers. It takes three or four years to regroup more youngsters to achieve that class. These young players signed to South Fremantle were Teal Cup and potential AFL players.

Mr Omodei: Does this mean you will not be supporting East Fremantle any more?

Mr MARSHALL: We have already been through that exercise!

The whole thing about a new country side is that the youngsters will have the chance to reach their full potential. Country football breeds the stars - they are tough. When Claremont footballers played with a silver spoon in their mouths, they were average. However, when country players went to Claremont and toughened them up, they started to look like players. When we sent Conway and Neesham, former East Fremantle footballers, to Claremont and showed them how to play, they became premiership players. We have the talent down there, but it is raw. I expect coaches like Geoff Miles and Paul Harding to show these youngsters how to play professional football and then Peel Thunder will really roar.

The professionalism of the board was apparent when it employed a graphic designer, Steve Castledine, to design the guernsey around a community newspaper competition to name the side. A 12 year old lass named the team Peel Thunder, and rightly so, because one of the conditions of the competition was to get away from the animal mascots of the other teams - the tigers, the sharks and the lions - and move to the modern era by having something new. Peel Thunder was the name decided upon. Incidentally, the team's colours are navy blue, green and white because, as the designer said, navy represents thunder, blue represents the sea and the estuary and green represents the land - colours which are unique to the Peel side. That was very inventive. Fancy designing colours around the area from which the teams comes! I do not think any of the other sides can boast that. The word "thunder" was chosen for its strength and its suggestion of impending power; a force to be reckoned with. A representation of Thor's hammer, the club's logo, also represents the strength of thunder and the hardworking virtues of the people in the Peel region. If that does not get members going, I do not know what will. Look out South Fremantle on the opening match!

Fremantle has always been the home of football. It created everything for the other sides to follow. As I said, it sent Conway and Neesham to Claremont to get it a premiership, it sent John Todd to Swan Districts to teach that team how to get a premiership, and it sent Jack Sheedy to East Perth to teach that team how to get a premiership. Jack Sheedy then taught Polly Farmer and Mal Atwell, who got their teams premierships under the East Fremantle guidelines. I can honestly say that Fremantle has been the essence of everything brilliant that has happened in football in Western Australia.

How does this relate to Mandurah? Only a handful - 5 per cent - of Fremantle people ever go north. They go south. They are parochial. They know who they are, unlike the member for Peel. When they go south they go to Rockingham, Mandurah and maybe a little further south, but they always go south. It is obvious, therefore, why so much excitement has been generated by Mandurah having its own team. The Fremantle football identity is now moving south. The bloodline is moving through the football aorta to the Mandurah area. The Football Commission's decision to grant this new licence to the Peel region was a wise decision for the growth of football. The licence will increase the tourism potential of the Mandurah area. Can members imagine the effect that 10 000 people who will attend the game in Mandurah on Easter Sunday will have on the Peel area? If they decide to stay overnight, they will be accommodated in the 5 000 rooms that are available for tourists. Restaurants will be packed and the printers will do well because they will have to print the programs. Therefore, as well as giving our youngsters the opportunity to attain the highest level in sport, this opportunity will provide the highest level of entertainment in sport.

Claremont played Peel Thunder a couple of weeks ago in a scratch match. Only about 1 500 people attend the main WAFL games and only grandmothers and their pet dogs go to scratch matches. However, there were 3 000 people at the Claremont-Peel Thunder scratch match. I went only for a quarter and a half. However, I was amazed by the young parents holding toddlers by the hand who attended that match. That is how it used to be in Fremantle and all over Western Australia. It will be magnificent for everybody, including teenagers who people say have nothing to do. They will be kept occupied by the entertainment provided by Peel Thunder. It will also generate employment.

On Easter Sunday night when the first ball is bounced in Mandurah, there will be a crowd roar never before heard in Mandurah. It will be the roar for Peel Thunder and I will be part of it!

**MS MacTIERNAN** (Armadale) [4.34 pm]: Now for something completely different. I have just conferred with the member for Kalgoorlie and we will do a piece later on netball! However, for the time being I am delighted to have this opportunity to add my comments to the Address-in-Reply. It is important that all members who are not part of the Executive take the opportunity to mark out their ground for the forthcoming Parliament as did the Government through the Governor's address.

This is the first chance I have had to address the Parliament as the new member for Armadale thanks to the confidence placed in me and in the Labor Party by the good people of Armadale. I have moved from the Legislative Council to the Legislative Assembly, or should I say in the words of Sir Humphrey Appleby, from the vegetables to the animals. Although I enjoyed my time in the vegie patch, I am looking forward to the greater opportunities for animation that I am told this place permits. Of course, with the revolutionary new composition of the upper House and with the very real prospect of my good friend, Hon Ross Lightfoot, serving as President, conventional wisdom might be turned on its head and I might have been in the right place at the wrong time.

At the risk of being labelled contrary, I have to concede that when I was elected to the Legislative Council, I called for its abolition in my maiden speech. However, now having got a guernsey in this place, I see a role for the Council. I am profoundly influenced in this by the fact that for the first time in over 100 years, that Chamber may just be able to match the rhetoric that it so often pronounced in its favour and operate as a check and balance on a conservative Government. However, I still have an attachment to the view that a single mixed House as favoured by the German state Parliaments might be an improvement to our system.

I thank members on both sides of the House who have been very gracious in welcoming me here and I hope, notwithstanding the inevitably very necessary combat that will take place in this arena over the next four years, that we will retain that personal civility. We might not all share the same world view; however, I have the firm view that the majority of us are here for the good of the community as each of us sees it.

I understand it is customary for a new member to speak at some length about his or her electorate. I will do this today only briefly because I want to focus on a single more general issue, but one which I believe is of profound importance to my electorate as it is to a handful of electorates in this State. Over the next four years I will be talking a great deal about the strengths of the Armadale region and its potential to offer, with its idyllic setting beneath the escarpment and its open spaces and its trees, city living with a bush flavour. I will also be making known the tremendous work that has been undertaken by many in Armadale to improve the quality of life of our community. In following in the tradition of my great friends and supporters, Kay Hallahan and Bob Pearce, my predecessors in this place, I will take even more time over the next four years to talk about my electorate's needs; its urgent need for a decent and modern hospital; its need for an extension of the Tonkin Highway to ease the unacceptable burden of heavy haulage and the transportation of dangerous goods through our suburban streets; and its need for an extension to the public transport system. These are but a few of the urgent priorities for our community. However, today I want to focus on one issue that has a claim to be perhaps the single most important issue for the people of Armadale and the people of Western Australia generally. It is not a new subject. In fact, it is a well worn and hackneyed subject so often accompanied by pontification and cliché that the very mention of it today will, unfortunately, cause at least half of my audience to yawn and seek refuge, to put it politely, in private thought.

That issue is unemployment. I will use this opportunity to propose some more radical responses to this question in order to promote, at this early stage in the term of this Parliament, some real community debate.

Every person in public life expresses concern and, indeed, alarm at the level of unemployment in our society. There is a great deal of breast beating, accompanied by some genuine and some not so genuine attempts to rectify the problem of seemingly intractable unemployment, but to what extent have we internalised these public expressions of anxiety? Deep down, do we really believe that it is absolutely fundamental that everyone who is ready, willing and able to work should be given the opportunity to do so? Do we really care that the self-esteem of many young people has been shattered because they have never been able to find a job? Do we really care that these young people become parents and pass on their alienation and hopelessness to their children? Do we really care that this alienation is manifesting itself in violence and crime that is reaching epidemic proportions in our cities and towns? Do we understand that the denial of opportunity is causing our youth to switch off from the political process and that this in turn is a threat to our democracy, the basic building block of our society?

If we do care, why have we been so manifestly unable to deliver full employment? Is it because we are not prepared to share the financial burden that would enable this problem to be addressed? Is it because we have been browbeaten by vested economic interests into paralysis? Have those vested interests frightened us with their threats to label as economically irresponsible any concerted attempts to radically intervene in the labour market? That many of these

exponents of economic responsibility should be treated with some scepticism is evident from the brutally self-interested reaction of the stock markets to improvements in employment. The response to such good news is the flight of capital and a plunge in prices, making it clear beyond doubt that the interests of the markets are not synonymous with the interests of the community as a whole.

The problem of unemployment has persisted in Australia for around 22 years, and during 13 years of federal Labor Government and 10 years of state Labor Government, despite a plethora of programs, unemployment remained relatively high. I would be the first to acknowledge the achievement of the Labor Governments in reducing unemployment from 9 per cent in 1982 to 6 per cent in 1989, notwithstanding a steadily increasing participation rate. We must also acknowledge the role of the Working Nation program in pulling unemployment back from 11.2 per cent in 1993 to 8.1 per cent in 1995. However, even after two years of Working Nation, unemployment was still in excess of 8 per cent. We were trying hard, but it was not enough.

The conservative response to unemployment will achieve even less. If anything, the new conservatives in power at both state and federal level seem hell-bent on making the problem even worse: They have abandoned most labour market programs, and they have reduced training opportunities and access to higher education. Their avowed strategy is industrial relations reform, and the rhetoric is as follows: The resultant flexibility - and flexibility is the code word for reduction in wages and conditions - will enhance competitiveness, and that will in turn stimulate employment. It is a textbook solution that has been proved time and time again not to work in the real world. To paraphrase the famous economist John Galbraith, if slashing wages and conditions was the solution to our economic woes, Haiti and Gabon would be the world's economic powerhouses. At the same time, this industrial relations reform results in the lowest paid and least powerful workers receiving less, exacerbating the contrast between rich and poor and, therefore, further undermining the stability of our social fabric. Not only will these new flexibilities not create employment, but also evidence exists that they are reducing employment.

The research commissioned by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia and the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations, produced in October 1995 and tabled in this place, found that employers who used workplace agreements actually reduced their work force significantly - in fact, by 6.1 per cent - while other employers in the sample group increased their employment by 1.6 per cent. Equally culpable is the aggressive downsizing being embraced by conservative State and Federal Governments. No-one wants to support featherbedding, but we are seeing today not just the adoption of real efficiencies but a deliberate abandonment of services to some members of the public and the gross compromise of the quality of services to many others.

Labor has traditionally focused on stimulating the economy and providing improved training opportunities. While these are necessary measures, it is clear that they are not sufficient. A recent Labor Party discussion paper stated that it simply cannot be assumed that economic progress will automatically convert to employment. We need to go a lot further than this. The experience over the past 20 years shows us that it can now be pretty well taken for granted that economic growth on its own will not provide employment. Economic growth in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries has outstripped employment growth by a factor of almost 300 per cent in the past 10 years.

Currently, Western Australia is supposed to be experiencing growth of over 6 per cent per annum, but unemployment is barely moving. This disparity between the rate of growth of employment and the rate of growth in the economy is contributed to by a number of factors. The first is the greater concentration of work; that is, the employed are working longer hours. For much of this century, the central focus of industrial activity was to reduce the length of the working week and day. That campaign was quite successful, and we saw steady reductions. However, in the 1980s that focus seemed to come to a halt. It was said that we now needed to compete internationally, particularly with the low wage developing nations, and that did not permit any further reduction in hours. We are now finding that far from a reduction in hours, there is real evidence that the number of hours that are being worked by individual workers is increasing.

Figures produced by the Economic Planning Advisory Council last year showed that 40 per cent of employees now work more than 40 hours a week. They also showed, quite frighteningly, that more than 20 per cent of workers put in more than 49 hours a week, which was up from 14 per cent who did so in 1975, and is clear evidence of the concentration of work. We could seek to ration the number of hours worked by wages employees, but this is a vexed issue. We must be careful not to make the burden of unemployment fall most heavily on those who are least able to endure it. Many workers are working longer hours simply to keep pace with declining real wages. A graphic example of this is the situation with the MetroBus drivers who accepted a transfer to private companies which were taking over the public sector operation. In order for those drivers to maintain the quite modest income of \$611 per week and to cover their financial commitments, they were required to increase their hours from 40 to 47 per week. Other workers, particularly in the construction industry and in other seasonal jobs, want to work long hours when the

work is available to tide them over those periods when there is no work. However, many workers would gladly trade some pay to spend more time with their families and pursue their private interests.

I hear from women who come to see me that in the retail sector they are being pressured to sign workplace agreements that compel them to be available for shifts of up to 12 hours a day, and up to six shifts a week. At the very least we should take a leaf out of the Conyers Bill that was introduced in the US Congress a decade ago that bans an employer imposing compulsory overtime on employees. We should also recognise that the collapse of overtime rates, which has been a key component of many of the flexibilities of enterprise bargaining, has also led to the concentration of hours. In that process we obviously forgot that the penalty for overtime was originally designed not simply to provide a windfall for the employed, but also to act as a rationing mechanism. It is appropriate that we allow trading on other penalties; however, we must look seriously at ensuring a general restoration of penalties for overtime, so we provide business with a real incentive to employ more labour and not simply to extend the working hours of those who are already employed.

It has been said time and again that we should abolish payroll tax. I suggest that we replace that tax with what could be called an employment levy that could be discharged by showing that one has a particular employment-to-turnover ratio. Those who generate wealth without creating employment would bear the burden of this tax rather than those who create the employment.

Taking employment offshore has no doubt also contributed to this phenomenon; this is particularly evident in infrastructure development. The construction phase of resource projects is traditionally the biggest generator of employment in these projects. However, the local content of these projects has fallen steadily, particularly over the past four years. Some union research suggests that it has fallen from around 80 per cent to 50 per cent, which is a massive direct loss not only of work for local companies but also of opportunity to tool up and enhance skills that would add to our manufacturing capacity generally. In allowing this to happen we are putting the interests of shareholders - often foreign shareholders - of multinational companies before the interests of Australian workers and industry. Evan James, an economist from the University of Sydney, said that Australian commercial activity is still pervaded by remnants of cultural cringe reflected in the arrogance and management of resource projects and the ignorance and weakness of the relevant economic bureaucracy. He points out that even the so-called *laissez faire* British required companies involved in North Sea projects to comply with procedures that ensured long term industrial spin offs. Western Australia has had phenomenal growth in mineral extraction and processing which has led to economic growth but not to a great or comparable increase in Australian jobs.

Perhaps the most profound contribution to this increasing disjunction of economic and employment growth has been largely ignored: I refer to the role that is played by technological change. Those who raise the issue of technological change and say that it requires some serious thought and attention are generally dismissed on both sides of politics as Luddites or doomsayers. The recognition of the threat of automation has come in and out of fashion. It was raised in the 1950s and it received a guernsey again briefly in the 1970s. In 1979 I was working with the Commonwealth Department of Employment. I could not help noticing the impact of that early introduction of word processing in the financial sector and in government departments. They were clearly drastically reducing the number of staff who had been engaged traditionally as typists. A group in the Labor Party under the leadership of Michael Beahan produced WA's first ALP policy document on how we should deal with technological change. In the excitement of the 1980s, and the renewed focus on productivity and competition, the whole question of dealing with the employment consequences of technological change became distinctly unfashionable.

Technological change has always been with us, as the proponents of technology like to say. Certainly it has been with us since we discovered the wheel and worked out how to make fire. In more modern times in the eighteenth century in Yorkshire the Luddites argued that machines of the new industrial age would lead to the demise of their skills and to their unemployment. They were only half right. The massive expansion of the textile industry created huge numbers of low skilled jobs and the Luddites were given the opportunity to move out of their cottages, and to slave in quite appalling conditions in crowded, filthy mill towns.

True believers of technology will tell us that this will continue to be the case: As one door closes another opens and massive increases in productivity have enabled us to create millions of jobs in the service industry and new industries have emerged. This has occurred. However, it is increasingly apparent, with the pace of technological change being increasingly exponential, that we simply will not be able to mop up all of those who have been replaced by technology.

Service jobs, long considered to be the panacea, are contracting as computer capacity accelerates. I will give members one small example. In Perth, a leading law firm which some three years ago employed a secretary for every two senior solicitors, now employs one for every six. I note also that the charge out rate for those solicitors remains unaltered. One can assume only that the widespread introduction of voice sensitive word processors will affect this even further.

Technological displacement is touching virtually every sector in the economy. Perhaps, cleaning toilets for international tourists is one of the few areas that has not been affected. Proof of what I am saying is contained in the unemployment statistics. According to national accounts figures, Australia has experienced 18 successive quarters of economic growth, yet 800 000 Australians are out of work. Wages and salaries paid to labour are the most important mechanism for distributing wealth in our community. As more wealth is created with less labour wealth becomes more concentrated.

It is a pretty easy formula to understand. That is what is happening in Australia and throughout the industrialised world. I can provide further statistical proof: The share of national product going to company profits has steadily increased from 12.1 per cent in 1982 to 16.6 per cent in 1995-96, and the share of wages has reduced from 63.3 per cent to 57 per cent. We cannot turn our back on technology. For this reason alone we must acknowledge that labour saving technology frees us for other work and leisure. It enables us to achieve outcomes that enhance our material standard of living.

I will touch on an approach I saw during a trade mission to Surabaya in the company of the Deputy Premier. We visited a highly mechanised paper manufacturing operation. The different processes were operated by half a dozen staff, yet at the final stage of that process some four times that number of staff were engaged in a process which had been deliberately left unmechanised, so large numbers of people were folding cardboard boxes. I do not think that is the solution for Australia. It does not add to the overall benefit. It seemed that it would have been better to allow the manufacturer to completely mechanise and then to tax them on the additional profit, using that tax to employ labour to improve the sewerage systems or public spaces, or to employ more teachers. That is what we must do. We must accept that unemployment is not simply a question of training or of stimulating economic growth; it is a question of redistributing the benefits of economic growth. We must ensure that those who benefit most from economic growth contribute part of that profit to provide government with money to create jobs - real jobs that will enhance the individual and the community as a whole.

Job creation must now be embraced as a long-term strategy, not just as a short-term measure adopted for one year and dropped the next. It could make a substantial contribution to the reduction of unemployment. I suggest we adopt a joint national and state approach to do just that and establish an initial national target of 50 000 ongoing positions. Young people from 16 to 20 could be guaranteed two years full-time employment on a variety of government sponsored projects. We all know there is no shortage of work and that a vast amount of work is required to be done in rectifying environmental damage, building community facilities, providing assistance to the aged in their homes or providing additional support for teachers, particularly in areas such as remedial education. There is no limit to the nature of projects that could be undertaken.

This guarantee of jobs must be subject to performance standards. Other economies indicate that where jobs are guaranteed with a requirement to simply show up and sign on, very little is gained by either the economy or the individual. This work must be real work subject to the usual disciplines of the workplace. The advantage of this proposal is that during the two years of employment every young person would have an opportunity to develop a work history and work ethic. They would establish skills, their confidence would be built and independence and maturity assisted. In addition, the community would have the benefit of that labour.

At present approximately 100 000 young Australians between the ages of 15 and 20 are out of work. The injection of an additional 50 000 jobs could mean that over four years all those unemployed would have an opportunity to be employed for a substantial period. Importantly, it would mean that no young person would go into adulthood without ever having had the opportunity of full-time employment.

I recognise that, in the current climate, we will be required to say how we can fund and deliver this when we are trying to cut our budget deficit. Clearly we need to cut our budget deficit and expand our revenue base if we are to fund a proposal such as this. We must then be careful that the expansion in the revenue base in itself does not have a dampening effect on the economy. The obvious and fairest way of funding this is through death duties or, to be more specific, state duties imposed on the transfer of assets from deceased estates together with a complementary gift tax that would be essential to contain avoidance mechanisms.

We must recognise that the wealthiest 1 per cent of the Australian population now own 23 per cent of our nation's private wealth and that the top 10 per cent own more than 50 per cent. The bottom 50 per cent own just 3 per cent. This increasing concentration of wealth is being amplified by the inheritance of vast wealth. Along with Canada, we are the only country within the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development that does not have a death duty. Many countries also have an annual wealth tax. Even during the height of the Reagan and Thatcher Governments no move was made to abolish death duties in the United Kingdom or the United States. I have just done some back-of-the-envelope calculations - and I will flesh out these at a later stage. We could raise at least \$1000m through death duties which could be used adequately, together with tax savings, to create the number of jobs I have set out.

*Amendment to Motion*

Ms MacTIERNAN: I move -

That the following words be added to the motion -

but regret to inform Your Excellency that the Deputy Premier and the Leader of the National Party has failed in his responsibility as a political leader by agreeing to consider a gold royalty despite commitments given during the recent state elections, including a commitment to leave the coalition should the issue be placed on the Government's agenda.

**DR GALLOP** (Victoria Park - Leader of the Opposition) [5.05 pm]: I support the amendment moved by the member for Armadale. We are dealing here with a fundamental question of parliamentary accountability that relates to the credibility of the Deputy Premier of the State of Western Australia. It is interesting that on the opening day of this session of Parliament the Deputy Premier and Leader of the National Party opened his own book on non-core promises. We remember that the Prime Minister, John Howard, made non-core promises famous when he started backing away from the undertakings he gave to electors before the last federal election. The Deputy Premier and Leader of the National Party has now joined the Prime Minister in making this distinction between core promises that he will keep and non-core promises that are not important.

With scant regard for the industry, electors and his own party, the Deputy Premier has demolished one of the most important promises he made during the recent state election campaign in the goldfields region. We must remember the context of this promise. The National Party chose in the recent state election to contest mining and pastoral seats in the State of Western Australia. It was a deliberate tactic used by the coalition to attempt to increase the vote for the Liberal Party in this State. The Deputy Premier acted according to the interests of the Liberal Party on this matter, contested those seats and gave promises that had an impact on the outcome in those seats. When the heat came on after the election he backed off on the promises.

Let us be absolutely clear on what he said. He gave an unequivocal, unqualified guarantee on 6 December not to introduce a gold royalty. That guarantee played a major role in leading electors to support a conservative candidate for the previously held Labor seat of Ningaloo. I will talk a little about Ningaloo today. It is a very important seat in relation to the issue on the agenda. The Deputy Premier has betrayed the electors of Ningaloo - I emphasise the word "betrayed".

The new member for Ningaloo has an honourable course of action that he could take on this issue; that is, resign his seat and give the electors of Ningaloo the opportunity of casting their votes on the basis of the true policies of the Liberal and National Parties in Western Australia. Let me remind the Deputy Premier of the undertaking he gave in the goldfields on 7 December 1996 just one week before the state election. Massive publicity was given to his statement on the front page of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*. It said - "No gold royalty, Cowan pledges". Under this heading the *Kalgoorlie Miner* reported -

Deputy Premier and National Party leader Hendy Cowan has vowed that the Coalition Government will not introduce a gold royalty during its next term if re-elected on December 14.

He reinforced that commitment by saying in Kalgoorlie-Boulder yesterday that he would not be a part of any government which went back on such a clear guarantee.

He stated -

"I just want everyone to understand that and put it beyond any doubt whatsoever because it does seem to me that people want to continually raise that issue when it is not an issue.

In the same report, the *Kalgoorlie Miner* notes -

Both the National Party Lower House candidates in the region - Doug Daws and Kath Finlayson - have campaigned against a royalty and previously were not convinced that the Government had ruled it out.

The Miner quotes the Deputy Premier as saying "I want people to understand very clearly there is a difference in the perceptions as they are uttered or written by the media and what I have actually said.

"The other thing that is very important is that if on the one hand there is going to be a clear statement as there has been that a gold royalty is not on the agenda, then very clearly I am not going to be part of any government (which) having said that then breaks that commitment."

It is very important to note that that was reported not only in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* but also by other media outlets, and it was broadcast far and wide throughout Western Australia. It was an important issue in the election campaign.

The Deputy Premier's comments were relayed by conservative candidates to electors while doorknocking from the goldfields to the Murchison. This issue concerned not only those in the eastern goldfields but also those in the Murchison. We have confirmed that people doorknocking in Ningaloo were guaranteeing that the coalition would not introduce a gold tax. Of course, they had the authority of the Deputy Premier - it was front page headlines in the *Kalgoorlie Miner*.

I will remind the Deputy Premier of his credibility on this issue and its impact on the real life fortunes of people in this State who were contesting the election. We are not talking about theory but about the destiny of people in an election. We are talking about the present member for Ningaloo, and the former member for Northern Rivers, Mr Kevin Leahy. We are talking about a real election, real voters and the real impact of a decision made and a commitment given. Ningaloo was lost to the Labor Party and the Liberal Party candidate, despite being 600 votes behind Kevin Leahy on the primary count, was able to capture the seat with the assistance of preferences from the National Party candidate, Margaret Day.

Ironically, a gold tax could savage the five Murchison towns that rely on goldmining - Yalgoo, Mt Magnet, Meekatharra, Sandstone and Cue. The population of Mt Magnet could easily be halved over the next few years if a gold tax were introduced. Western Mining would be unable to attract a buyer for its Hill 50 goldmine at Mt Magnet if the tax were introduced. We are not talking about theory here: We are talking about a real election in Kalgoorlie, Eyre and Ningaloo. We are talking about an election where the National Party preferences proved to be decisive. I wonder how the people in those towns would feel about the Deputy Premier's betrayal of their interests with his comments in this place. He said the following in this place last week -

I am on record as saying that a gold royalty was not on the agenda during the last election campaign. The Leader of the Opposition would acknowledge the fact that had it remained a case for Western Australia alone, it still would not have been on the agenda. However, given that it has been made clear to us by the Commonwealth that there is a need for the State to look at its revenue raising capacity, the issue of a royalty on gold has been put back on the agenda.

He also stated -

I have no intention of taking the National Party out of the coalition unless it is over an issue that is far more serious than a gold royalty.

I wonder what the response would be if we were to take that statement to those towns to which a clear commitment was given that might very well have influenced the outcome of the election.

This is not an important issue now, but it was before the election. In fact, it was so important that the Deputy Premier needed to make his position clear to the people of Western Australia; it was so important that he clarified his position in the *Kalgoorlie Miner*; it was so important that all of his candidates went to those seats and said that there would be no gold royalty under a coalition Government.

Let us look at the arguments of convenience that the Deputy Premier has used to defend his position, which is the complete reversal of what he said before the election. He sought to justify his position by claiming that a gold royalty is being forced on the State by the Commonwealth. This argument is as fallacious as his election promise. It is true that unfortunately the Grants Commission has recommended a reduction of \$33.5m in the allocation of federal funds to Western Australia. We lament that. Why is it happening? It is a recognition of the fact that the WA mining sector is booming when compared with growth in the other States. That is the relativity we are talking about: The rate of growth in Western Australia and that in the other States. The Federal Government is saying that it must allocate more funds to the other States, which are growing more slowly than Western Australia. *The Australian* presented the situation correctly in an article dated 26 February entitled "Slow growers win bigger slice of the pie", which states -

The commission's recommendations about funding relativities for Queensland and Western Australia effectively penalise these States for their faster pace of economic activity than the national average, which has underwritten an increased capacity to raise their own government revenues.

It is this change in relativities that is the basis for the Grants Commission's new recommendations in relation to the allocation of the national cake of federal funds.

The gold royalty and the impact that it has on the tax raising potential of this State has been the same for many years, and the Deputy Premier knows that. The Grants Commission has been using the same principles and methods to determine the States' needs for commonwealth assistance since 1933, and it has used the same methods to calculate the States' revenue raising capacity in relation to mining since 1993. The 1993 review made no great changes to the methods used; it simply took three assessments for mining based on three mining revenue categories and



amalgamated them so that it deals with a whole sector rather than separate categories. Of course, that has had negligible financial impact on the commission's assessment of Western Australia's revenue raising capacity.

The real issue in relation to relativities is not that all of a sudden the Grants Commission has said that Western Australia will get less money because it does not impose a gold royalty: It is saying that Western Australia should receive less money because the rate of growth and expansion in our industry is faster than that in the other States.

The argument used by the Deputy Premier to defend his change of position is a red herring. It has nothing to do with the reality of the situation and therefore cannot be used to defend the position that he has taken. The Deputy Premier has not fooled anyone in the goldmining industry. Of course, opposition members will illustrate very clearly to the Parliament the impact of any decision on the gold royalty on the employment and growth prospects of the industry in Western Australia. The Deputy Premier has not fooled anyone in the mining industry or in the goldfields.

Mr Cowan interjected.

Dr GALLOP: We are dealing with the Deputy Premier's credibility. He made a promise to the people and he cannot now back away from it because it is not convenient after the election. If his promises as Deputy Premier mean as much as he indicates they do, the whole basis of trust in our political system collapses. He has a position of responsibility and authority and time has caught up with him. His complacency oozes through this Parliament. He thinks that he can play these little tricks and get away with them, but his time is up! The Deputy Premier has undermined not only his credibility but also the credibility of his party. How else can he explain the resignation of two prominent National Party members, including Doug Daws, the National Party candidate for the seat of Kalgoorlie in the last election? Mr Daws took the honourable course. The member for Ningaloo should follow suit. The member should go back to the electors and let them choose a member on the basis of what we know to be the real policies, not what was understood to be a promise which collapsed after the election. Mr Daws saw the Deputy Premier for what he was. He said, "I believe . . . a man's word is his bond. Hendy gave his word." Mr Daws said that the Deputy Premier's backflip is a kick in the pants and a slap in the face for the goldfields voters. He also said, "It would not have hurt the National Party to withdraw from the coalition on this issue and sit on the cross benches." The Premier and the Deputy Premier made a promise before the election and they are breaking it after the election.

The secretary of the goldfields branch of the National Party, Mr Graham Thompson, has also resigned over the Deputy Premier's dishonourable backflip, saying that it would have serious ramifications for the National Party throughout the State of Western Australia. Mr Thompson said that the Deputy Premier had forgone the one opportunity to truly represent the bush in this Parliament after the election.

The general proposition the Opposition puts is that the Deputy Premier has failed in his responsibility as a political leader. The responsibility a political leader has in an election campaign is to make a promise which will be kept after the election. The promise was that the gold royalty would not be part of the agenda of a coalition Government and should it become so there would be no coalition because the National Party would leave it. The specific proposition is that, without question, the contest for the seat of Ningaloo would have been very different if the people in that area had known the real intentions of the coalition Government before the last state election. We believe that so serious is the backflip by the Deputy Premier that the voters in that seat deserve the chance to go again to the polls to determine their member on the basis of real, not phoney, promises and commitments. This is a real issue, affecting real people and electors and it is based upon a real test of the credibility of the Deputy Premier. The Deputy Premier has failed. His complacency as a politician has become obvious to everyone. His little verbal tricks and rhetorical twists are no longer taken seriously either by this Parliament or by the public of Western Australia. His credibility will remain in tatters, unless he faces up to the promise he made before the last election.

The facts are clear. We want to see and note where every member stands on the issue of credibility and a promise that was clearly and unequivocally given before the last election.

**MR GRILL** (Eyre) [5.25 pm]: I have thought about this issue for a long time because it impinged to a very great degree on the election in Kalgoorlie and Eyre in December. Having thought for a long time over those events and other events that have occurred during my 20 years in Parliament, I concluded that this act by this Government and this Deputy Premier is probably the most blatant piece of political bastardry that I have seen in all that time. I also thought about those words and wondered whether I should use them.

Mr Cowan: You did not think you could find anything more colourful so you decided to stay with them. Is that right?

Mr GRILL: I think they fit the bill. What happened during the election campaign and the lead-up to it was an act of political bastardry. It cannot be described in any other way. There were coldly calculated lies and obfuscation on the part of the Premier and the Deputy Premier. They led the public of Western Australia, and in particular the public of the eastern goldfields, to believe that there would not be a gold tax during the current term of the Government. The words the Deputy Premier has been reported as using underline the message that he was endeavouring to get

across at that time. The line was dishonestly put, first by the Premier, and followed up by the Deputy Premier. However, the Deputy Premier went much further than the Premier and that is why the attack today is centred mainly on him. They are both almost equally to blame. It was an act of fraud perpetrated on the people of that area and on the mining industry. The Deputy Premier thinks that he can just walk away from those commitments; that he can make the promises prior to an election and, having been successful in the election but not successful in the object he had in mind of winning the seats of Eyre, Kalgoorlie and Ningaloo, he can simply walk away from those commitments. Let me tell the Deputy Premier that the mining industry will not allow him to walk away from those commitments. I have spoken today to a senior member of the mining industry. He said quite categorically that the members of the industry will not allow the Deputy Premier to walk away from them. People made financial commitments based on statements that the Premier and the Deputy Premier made before the last state election. They are not only the members of the Western Australian mining industry but also people involved in the futures market, and people overseas look on Australia as a stable area in which to invest. All of those people made commitments on the basis of the Deputy Premier's credibility. Even today out of his own mouth his credibility has been destroyed and, therefore, the credibility of Western Australia in the very critical area of mining has been partially destroyed also.

I will give some history of the matter. Many people believe there has never been a royalty on gold in Western Australia. I believed that for a long time. I may have even said it in this House. However, a royalty on gold applied for a long time until 1947. In 1947, in recognition of the parlous state of the industry at the time, the royalty was abolished and, on a bipartisan basis, it has remained so until now and hopefully will continue in the future, although I would not count on that. Prior to the last election, with some honesty, the Minister for Resources Development indicated that he would like to see a gold royalty introduced in Western Australia. With similar honesty at that time the Deputy Premier said that he would like to see such a tax introduced. However, when he was faced with the possibility of bolstering the dwindling position of the National Party in the face of an oncoming one-vote-one-value situation in the country, the Deputy Premier was tempted to make some commitments in respect of a gold tax in the hope of picking up some country seats. It was as coldly calculated as that.

The Premier said a gold tax was not on the agenda and for a long time the media believed him. Many people in the general public believed a gold tax was not on the agenda, and they interpreted that to mean that no gold tax would be imposed in the current term of this Government. Many people in the mining industry - I think somewhat naively - believed the commitments made by the Premier and the Deputy Premier were cast iron and would not be broken. When I told them it could not be taken as a guarantee, they said they were prepared to believe the commitment by the Premier and the Deputy Premier and they accused me of overplaying the issue. The Labor Party was not overplaying the issue. When the member for Kalgoorlie and I were asked what the election issues would be we stated quite freely to the media, including the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, that the major issue would be the gold tax. The National Party and Liberal Party candidates pooh-poohed the idea and said they had a guarantee that such a tax was not on the agenda. They said it would not be an issue at the election. They maintained that position throughout the election campaign. It was certainly bolstered by the statements made at the press conference held by the Deputy Premier. On the basis of the statements made by the Premier and the Deputy Premier, a full page advertisement was run in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* in the last few days leading up to the election stating that the State Government had given a guarantee that no gold tax would be levied. The last thing electors at all polling booths saw as they went to cast their votes was a large poster containing the same statement. It was an exact replica of the full page advertisement in the Press stating that the Government guaranteed there would be no gold tax in the forthcoming period of a coalition Government. It was a lie, commenced by the Premier and continued and fostered by the Deputy Premier.

#### *Points of Order*

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Ainsworth): Order! I heard the member for Eyre use those words earlier in his speech and, having discussed the matter in the interim, I suspect the terminology is inappropriate during debate on an amendment to the motion. In this case those words are not acceptable and I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr GRILL: I think the motion would allow that language. It is a substantive motion and it queries and challenges the credibility of the Deputy Premier with regard to statements he made on the gold tax prior to the last election. It fulfils the criteria for a debate during which the word "lie" can be used. I said that the poster was a lie which commenced with the statements by the Premier.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The motion before the House is that the Address-in-Reply be agreed to. An amendment to that motion is currently being debated, but it does not in itself constitute a substantive motion. I am prepared to take advice to the contrary, but I believe that is the case.

Mr COWAN: I repeat the point made earlier that a substantive motion may contain expressions that imply lies but at no stage is an individual permitted to make that accusation against another member. I am sure the member for Eyre is fully aware of that.

Mrs ROBERTS: A clear differentiation must be made between saying a member of this Parliament has lied and saying political propaganda contains lies. A line should be drawn between the two. The member for Eyre referred to a poster that contained a lie.

Mr Cowan: That is not what he referred to and you know it.

The ACTING SPEAKER: If a member referred to a political advertisement and used the word "lie" in relation to that, as the member has outlined, it would not be a direct reference to another member and I would not rule in the way in which I have. However, I heard the member for Eyre use the word "lie" in direct reference to the Deputy Premier. I did not pull him up at the time and I regret that, but I now warn the member for Eyre that he must be careful about the way in which he uses that word in the context of his speech.

*Debate Resumed*

Mr GRILL: I draw to the attention of the House the consequences of the coalition Government deciding to go down this track. I remind members that the timing of any tax or royalty on gold is absolutely critical. In the past four or five months the real price of gold for Australian producers has decreased by approximately 25 per cent. It has been brought about by a decrease in the spot price of \$US50 from \$US400 to \$US350, together with an appreciation in the value of the Australian dollar by 5 to 7 per cent during the same period. The net effect is a 25 per cent reduction in the real value of the product. In some countries where incomes have depreciated the gold price has increased. In South Africa the price of gold has increased dramatically in the same period because the value of the rand has decreased. That is not the case in Western Australia, and the South Africans are competitors in this market. Also, there would be no gold industry of any consequence in Australia today were it not for hedging and forward sales. Very few mining companies make a profit from the gold won, produced and sold on the spot market. Western Australian producers have been particularly innovative and have taken advantage of hedging and forward markets. The delivered price of gold in Australia has been far higher than the spot price for a long time. That situation is coming to an end very quickly. No longer can the industry command the contango - or forward premiums - it has been able to command in the past. In fact the forward premiums, or the contango, have dropped dramatically in the past few months because of the current low interest rate and low inflation regime in the world and Australia. Futures premiums have been slashed to reflect only the interest rate applicable in a particular country plus the cost of borrowing. Some people who have profited from the futures market believe that in years to come there will be no future in the futures market. They might be right or wrong, but there is a strong expression of that interest at present.

The current situation is that gold producers in Australia are being squeezed by a falling spot price and an appreciating dollar. In addition it is getting harder to make profits from hedging and hedging contracts which were written three to six years ago are coming to an end. Future hedging contracts are not being refurbished. They can be refurbished with futures contracts but there is no longer anything in it unless they are written forward by about six years. In other words a ratio on the basis of future interest rates compounded must be worked out. Very few mining producers in Western Australia are able to do that and they do not have the inclination to do it. If one reads some of the authoritative information around at present one can appreciate why. Not many members in this House would prescribe to *Bell's Weekly Gold Review*, but the gold producers do. The cash price of producing gold in Western Australia today is alarming. If one converts \$US350 an ounce into Australian dollars it comes to approximately \$449. Bell's indicates that many producers in the goldfields in Western Australia and the Eastern States are producing gold on a cash cost basis well above that price. Bellevue, a mine in the north eastern goldfields, is up to \$800 an ounce. Lots of mines are producing gold at well above the spot price. They have been able to do that because the futures market has been healthy and kind to them and they have been sagacious in the way they have played that market.

I am not saying there is not a difference between the delivered price of gold and the spot price because there is still a margin, but it is reducing dramatically almost on a daily basis. At the same time the head grade of gold produced in Western Australia is coming down. Head grades in Western Australia have never been all that high compared with some ore bodies overseas. Western Australia has had efficient miners who have been able to mine deposits which other producers have not been able to profitably mine. The Western Australian head grades have been low. The average head grade is slightly above two grams per tonne. In other words, if one takes out two grams of ore from one tonne it is still profitable. That is a commentary on the efficiency of Australian goldmining. If we bring it into the current situation, all these factors are interplaying in a negative way on the gold price and that places a lot of companies under pressure, especially if they cannot obtain the futures contract. A gold royalty will mean a lot less gold will be mined in Western Australia and that would be a great pity. In addition the head grade will need to go up and that means that the cut off grade in the mines will have to go up. It means a lot more ore will be left in the ground.

Some months ago I made a speech on this issue when rumours were abounding about the possibility of a gold tax and I suggested that the Government do its sums. Instead of looking at the narrow financial budgetary position - \$70m

in and \$70m out - it should look at the net position and work out what will be the ramifications in respect to payroll tax if 300 or 400 workers are put off and downstream another 1 000 are put off, because the multiplier factor is at least three and probably four.

The gold industry is like the goose that lays the golden eggs in this State. It is not the biggest industry but it is close to being the biggest industry. The multiplier factor is higher than in the other industries. The iron ore industry produces in wealth slightly less than the gold industry but it employs less than half the people in the gold industry and much less than half in terms of spinoff in downstream processing and value adding. That might change in the future, but the local content involved in the goldmining operation is far higher than it is in those other industries.

We must look not at whether a 2.5 or 5 per cent ad valorem duty will help the Budget at the end of day, but at whether that level of taxation will produce a bottom line benefit, taking into account all the variables - I have mentioned some of them - and whether the net bottom line will be better. Until the Government has done its sums, talked to the industry and inquired into these matters it simply does not know. To obfuscate the matter in the way the Deputy Premier has by referring to \$70m lost because of the Grants Commission considerations is to oversimplify the situation to such an extent that it distorts it. He does not understand the true situation. The bottom line might well be that the Government is worse off by bringing in a gold royalty. I challenge the Government to do those sums, consult the people, and have a wide ranging inquiry before it goes down this path. It is an important industry to this State. It has produced a financial market in the State. There is capital raising in the State, but not in respect of most industries. It applies to gold, nickel and a few others, but by and large there is no capital raising in this instance. The gold industry brings a lot to the State. The Government should look at the ultimate bottom line, not the simplistic bottom line which might be brought about by looking at federal-state finances and what ultimately might be the prognostications of the Grants Commission.

At the end of the day the truth is that the Deputy Premier misled the people of the goldfields, the mining industry and people in Western Australia generally. It was a blatant piece of political bastardry and he should be condemned for it and hang his head in shame over it.

**MS ANWYL** (Kalgoorlie) [5.49 pm]: I support the amendment. There are two important aspects to the debate. The first is the flippancy with which the issue of a gold tax is being treated by members opposite. I shall spend time pursuing one aspect of the importance of a gold tax to the future of the industry. A very significant aspect of the debate is accountability, and the cynicism with which the Deputy Premier has treated the electors of Western Australia, particularly in regions such as the goldfields. Although the member for Eyre and I are still here to argue the point, as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out the former member for Northern Rivers or "would have been member for Ningaloo" is not here. When one considers the close result in an extremely marginal seat such as that, it is not simply an academic argument to suggest misleading advertisements which were placed in the Press around rural Western Australia had an effect. I will return to that shortly.

First, I wish to make a point regarding the gold tax debate. Although there has been much debate over the past year in this place, it seems that members opposite are missing the point about the future of the gold industry. Certainly the gold industry is flourishing at the moment. Recent statistics suggest that in 1996 exports amounted to approximately \$5b, and if one factors in a quotient for future sales and allows \$0.8b for that, sales of \$4.2b last calendar year suggest that gold is flourishing as production has exceeded that in past years. My concern is the failure of certain members opposite to note the ramifications of the introduction of a tax not only in relation to shortened mine lives and low grade prospects, as pointed out by many debates in this place. I do not seek to labour that point. I note that the Minister for Resources Development is shaking his head, and I presume that is because we will be told in due course during this debate that small producers and marginal operations will be protected.

That is the Premier's line, but we are yet to see any detail about the effect of a production tax. Perhaps we will be enlightened today. I certainly hope that will be the case. However, I detect a note of complacency by members opposite with respect to the future of the industry. I refer specifically to investment in exploration and the current culture of the mining industry, particularly among medium and large producers but also some small producers, which is looking offshore to spend exploration budgets. It is easy to be complacent on the surface because the figures do not look all that bad. If one compares the 1995-96 exploration dollars spent in this State, one sees there has been a slight increase of about 2 per cent. However, given that in 1995 roughly 83 per cent of the exploration dollar was spent in the gold industry in this State, there is room for tremendous expansion. I suggest that an increase of 2 per cent does not reflect the tremendous potential for the industry in this State.

Mr Barnett: Would you agree that the expansion of geological mapping services is more important to the industry? That is what you are talking about.

Ms ANWYL: That is not a gold tax.

Mr Barnett: There is no gold tax. To encourage exploration, extending the geological mapping surveys is worthwhile.

Ms ANWYL: It is another issue, Minister, with respect. I would support that.

Mr Barnett: You seem to be leading to the conclusion that a gold royalty will devastate the industry. Many factors affect exploration. That is one example. Native title is another.

Ms ANWYL: I have been on my feet for four minutes. If the Minister will allow me to develop my speech, I will refer to those matters.

Many companies are choosing to spend their exploration dollars offshore. I have raised that matter previously, and I think the Minister for Resources Development ended up calling me a silly woman. Although it is healthy to spend dollars offshore, it is not the case if it is to the detriment of dollars spent in this State. Gold production hit a record level last year; it was up about 15 per cent on the 1995 statistics. However, one can cite many examples of companies shifting their exploration bases out of Western Australia. The type of philosophy I am talking about, and which I urge members opposite to consider when being complacent about the effect of the introduction of a royalty on the industry, is epitomised to some extent by comments in the February 1997 editorial of the mining magazine *Pay Dirt*. The editor notes that he recently attended a mining investment conference in Cape Town, South Africa, and that at least 150 of the 900 delegates were Australians. A further 400 came from North America. He states that what must be remembered is that many of the millions of dollars to be spent in Africa in the next year could have been invested in Australia. I accept that it is very easy to make general statements like that, and that should be backed up with some detail.

Mr Barnett: Is it your understanding that there is a royalty in South Africa?

Ms ANWYL: That is not the issue. The issue is changing rules. The effect on the industry is one of sovereign risk.

Mr Barnett: Effectively there is a royalty structure in South Africa and North America.

Ms ANWYL: That is irrelevant, with respect. The issue is one of changing rules, and if the Minister cannot comprehend that increasing sovereign risk is driving investment out of the State, we have a serious problem in this Parliament.

The variety of delegates at the recent gold conference in Kalgoorlie, which I was lucky enough to attend, raised certain issues. This is not a new matter, as the Minister well knows. Mabo was one issue. The ongoing uncertainty about the diesel fuel rebate is another. The issue of changing excises and taxes is yet another. A speaker at the conference, Dr Chris Baker, had conducted a survey, to which 15 of the 20 major gold producers responded. Of that number of large producers, 73 per cent saw the future of their companies' exploration acquisition being outside Australia. I recognise that is not mutually exclusive from expansion within Australia, but it underlines the point I am trying to make: The ongoing uncertainty about the royalty is leading to some very real rethinking by major and medium producers of their level of investment in this State. The member for Eyre and I often hear that premiums on sovereign risk insurance are much more reasonable in what I term politically unstable countries than they are in Australia. As the Minister pointed out, that is for a variety of reasons. My point is that the ongoing uncertainty regarding the issue is contributing to that rethink by producers.

It was pointed out in the survey conducted by Dr Baker that two of the major issues raised by the 15 major producers included political stability in countries such as Indonesia, many African countries and South America, and frequent mention was made of a lack of political support for the gold industry in Australia. That is not my perception. It is the perception of 15 major producers. I urge the Minister to look at the paper, which urges against complacency on the issue, and refers to the importance of the gold royalty within that plethora of other issues confronting the industry currently.

Mr Barnett: When was the paper presented?

Ms ANWYL: Last week at the gold conference in Kalgoorlie.

I have taken 10 minutes to try to talk about the exploration ramifications. Another major aspect which I seek to cover in the time available to me is the total political fudging by the coalition Government on this issue. The Premier has at least consistently fudged. He has said throughout that the issue is not on the agenda; if it were on the agenda he would tell us about it; and further, whatever the Government does it will not hurt the small producers or the marginal operations. In that context, no detail has been provided by the Premier or the Minister for Resources Development. On 17 or 18 September my colleague the member for Eyre asked the Minister for Resources Development how a figure of \$150m was being bandied around. Some attempt was made at least to get an estimate of the percentage of

royalty being mooted by the relevant departments. That met with obfuscation. To this day I am no wiser about what is anticipated.

*Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 pm*

Ms ANWYL: Before the dinner suspension I said that a very alarming aspect to the debate this evening is the effect, which cannot be calculated, that this issue may have on some voters, in particular those in the marginal electorate of Ningaloo. I also said that the Premier has fudged completely on this issue. I will try to be brief. As I see it, the history of the matter is that at least the Minister for Resources Development has been fairly up-front about his views. He has no doubt that a gold royalty should be imposed. In the March 1996 by-election campaign in Kalgoorlie, he made that point, much to the chagrin of my Liberal opponent.

A further development of this scenario last year was that the Minister for Resources Development continually made reference in this place to the support for a gold royalty by certain major players in the industry. I found that a little difficult to believe and made constant inquiry of those larger companies and the medium to small producers in my electorate and I was unable to get any substantiation of the Minister's claims.

In June 1996 the state Parliamentary Labor Party categorically ruled out a gold royalty, once and for all. The issue was placed very firmly on the agenda by the Australian Labor Party at that time. We maintain our opposition to a gold royalty for a variety of reasons which I do not have time now to outline. A further development of this matter occurred in September 1996 when the Deputy Premier was addressing a forum in Karratha. He was reported in *The West Australian* newspaper on 11 September as backing the push by the Minister for Resources Development for a Western Australian gold production tax. At the time the Deputy Premier did not resile from the comments that were attributed to him at that conference -

We have to get the (gold) industry to recognise their privileged position is something that we can no longer afford.

The Deputy Premier said that there was a growing level of acceptance in the gold mining industry that a royalty was inevitable. Following that, a number of times in this place the Premier was asked what was his position on the matter. I raised a number of questions without notice in this place in September, the most important of which was that on 17 September when I asked -

When will the Premier make the Government's policy position clear on this matter, and will it be prior to the next election?

The Premier replied -

The Government's taxation policies will be made clear prior to the next election, which is what it did before the last election.

That never occurred. The transcript of the interview, not the media report, with the Deputy Premier at a press conference on 6 December, one week out from the last state election when he came to Kalgoorlie, states -

It has been stated time and time again by me that there is no reference to a gold royalty in any policy we have as a coalition. It is not an election issue and as it is not an election issue, it is not something that is going to be raised in the term of the Government so I just wanted everyone to understand that and put it beyond any doubt whatsoever because it does seem to me that people want to continually raise that issue when it is not an issue . . .

He goes on about that matter not being on the agenda and states -

. . . I mean it's not on the agenda for the full term of the next government.

When pressed, he said very clearly -

. . . I am not going to be part of any Government that having said that then breaks that commitment, I won't be party to that so the issue is not on the agenda for the full term of the Government.

It was not very long before the matter was back on the agenda. It is utter garbage for the Deputy Premier to claim in this place that it has been put back on the agenda by commonwealth decisions. That is just a total and utter falsehood, in my view. The fact is that the Grants Commission has made its position clear many times in the past to both the Commonwealth and the State. There is nothing new in its denying some revenue to the State for its failure to impose a royalty. As I say, it is total and utter garbage on behalf of not only the Deputy Premier but also the Premier. In my view, the Premier deserves just as strong condemnation as the Deputy Premier in terms of his total misleading of the electorate in this matter.

The Deputy Premier did nothing to scotch the media reports that were made. My colleague the member for Eyre has referred to some of the statements that were being made. I have a transcript of the ABC Radio report the day after the press conference. The headline stated -

Premier Richard Court has refused to give the same commitment as his deputy Hendy Cowan to ruling out a gold royalty.

The report goes on to say -

. . . Hendy Cowan travelled to Kalgoorlie to rule it out for the full term of the next government.

The Deputy Premier may like it or not, but that is how it was reported. As the member for Eyre has said, large, full page advertisements were placed in the local media saying, "There will not be a gold royalty; this is not an issue." The fact is that shortly after the Kalgoorlie by-election campaign, the Deputy Premier has relied on what I suggest is an utter garbage proposition, saying that the agenda has been changed by the Commonwealth. That is not the case - and the Deputy Premier knows it. The reality is that members on both sides of the House have some concern about it.

We are talking about a cynical electorate comprising voters who go to the polls expecting politicians to break promises. That may be the way certain members in this House choose to conduct election campaigns, but I do not endorse it. As a member of Parliament I object to being tarred with the cynicism brush of these voters. Time and time again the Howard Government has talked about core and non-core promises. We have had this backflip on the gold tax issue. In September the Deputy Premier supported a royalty. In December, a week out from the state election, he said that he was opposed to it. Now here we are a short time after the election and the agenda is well and truly set, as was always the case; however, there has been a deliberate misleading of the electorate on this issue.

**MR RIPPER** (Belmont - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [7.38 pm]: I support this amendment. I recall when this Parliament was debating the prospect of an early election. People on this side of the House asked why the Government wanted an early election. We asked what the Government knew that the rest of us in the community did not know. It is fair to say now that the Government knew the reality of the policies it proposed to introduce after the election, policies about which it was not prepared to be open and honest with the electorate. We have seen the backflip on a gold royalty by the Deputy Premier as well as the Minister for Education contemplating a massive school rationalisation and closures under the euphemism of local area planning that he was not prepared to discuss before the last election. The Deputy Premier's sin is the more important for two reasons. First, the Deputy Premier has a reputation for integrity in politics.

Dr Gallop: Did have.

Mr RIPPER: As the Leader of the Opposition says, perhaps he did have a reputation for integrity in politics. When someone who has a reputation for integrity makes a statement, the electorate is all the more inclined to believe it. The betrayal when that statement is shown not to be correct is all the greater.

Mr Trenorden: Are you saying that the electorate does not believe the statements of every other politician?

Mr RIPPER: If one has a reputation for integrity in politics, one has a particular responsibility.

Mr Trenorden: Shouldn't we all have that reputation?

Mr RIPPER: Yes. In the public's mind some members of this place have a higher reputation for integrity than others and those members have a particular responsibility not to disappoint the public because their word is taken at its value.

Mr Trenorden: That is strange logic. You would think that those who had no credibility would be the ones who needed to lift their game.

Mr RIPPER: Everybody should lift their game. What is the meaning of an election if people are not prepared to tell the truth? What is the meaning of asking the public to judge which party should form the Government if the parties are not honest about their plans? What is the meaning of accountability to the electorate if people are not prepared to be open and honest with the electorate? What is the meaning of democracy if people just tell lies in election campaigns? There is no meaning in that. There is no point to the vote if people cannot take for granted that politicians intend to do what say they will do if they are elected to government.

There is a second reason the Deputy Premier's sin is the greater: He had a particular role in the debate on a gold royalty. Throughout the last couple of years of its term the Government did two things which, at first, seemed contradictory. On the one hand, the Government sought to promote the political acceptability of a gold royalty. The Minister for Resources Development promoted arguments for a gold royalty. On the other hand, every time he did

that the Opposition and others asked whether the Government had any intention of introducing a gold royalty in light of the Minister's comments, and the Premier would say that the Government had given a commitment not to introduce a gold royalty in that term of government and that it was not on the agenda for the next term of government. It was a double strategy: The Minister for Resources Development promoting the argument; the Premier denying that the Government had any definite plans. At one and the same time the Government was seeking to create the political circumstances where a gold royalty would be acceptable, while seeking to avoid the political costs of that course of action.

The Deputy Premier played his part in that two-handed strategy because he was one of those who indicated that strong arguments existed for a gold royalty. When he said before the election that there would not be a gold royalty in this State if the coalition Government were re-elected, he was speaking as someone who was known to be an advocate of a gold royalty; as someone who was known to have a reputation for integrity in politics; and as the deputy leader of the coalition and as the leader of a political party. The public was entitled to believe he meant what he said.

A few short months after the election this Government, contrary to the Deputy Premier's solemn assurance, is now considering a gold royalty. What excuse is given? The excuse is that the Commonwealth has placed the matter on the agenda. How has the Commonwealth done that? The Grants Commission has drawn attention to Western Australia's failure to, in its view, collect revenue from a gold royalty. However, the Grants Commission has been doing that for decades. The Commonwealth has done nothing in recent days or months to justify the Government now considering a gold royalty when just before the election its deputy leader said explicitly in electorates where the gold royalty was an important issue that a gold royalty would not be on the agenda if this Government were returned to office.

The Leader of the Opposition has drawn attention to the way that statement affected the results in certain electorates, such as Ningaloo. Perhaps the member for Ningaloo is here under false pretences. His electors, and those who allocated their preferences to him, voted for him on the basis of a statement that there would not be a gold royalty if this Government were elected.

Mr Shave: Why don't you stop picking on the newcomers? Why don't you pick on someone your own size?

Mr RIPPER: Perhaps he cannot defend himself?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members, as you know, it is the practice in this place to allow a moderate number of interjections; however, we cannot have a barrage to and fro.

Mr RIPPER: Even before the member for Ningaloo took up his seat in this place the Government that he was elected to support was moving to introduce a gold royalty. The Opposition gives the member an opportunity today to support the interests of his electors and to vote for this amendment to express the point of view that he supported in his inaugural speech. It will be interesting to see how the member votes on this amendment. Perhaps we might arrange for his voting record on this motion to be distributed in his electorate. Did the member for Ningaloo campaign on the question of a gold royalty? Did his campaign material make any statement on that question?

Mr Sweetman: My electorate believed it was a fait accompli. I campaigned on that basis, and still won.

Mr RIPPER: I do not think that was the basis on which the campaign was conducted. My information is that the Deputy Premier's resolute renunciation of a gold royalty played its part in a very narrow election victory in Ningaloo.

Mr Shave: Get on to the substance of your speech.

Mr RIPPER: Does the member for Alfred Cove know what the substance of my speech is?

Mr Shave: Tell us. You've been talking in circles.

Mr RIPPER: The substance is this: People should be honest with the electorate. People should not make a statement to the electorate that a policy will not be adopted and then a few short months after they are elected completely change direction and do the opposite to what they promised the electorate they would do.

Mr Shave: Why are you picking on the member for Ningaloo? He didn't make a statement.

Mr RIPPER: He was the winner of a seat as a result of a commitment by the Deputy Premier. The Liberal Party stole a seat in the last election as a result of the deceit perpetrated by the Deputy Premier.

It is interesting to see what the impact of that has been on the Deputy Premier's party. While he was in regional areas promoting the National Party, and while he was selling his integrity in the interests of the Liberal Party, he was



helping to elect more Liberals. The election of more Liberals has deprived one of his colleagues of a seat in the Cabinet. Perhaps he might like to think about the wisdom of his actions. He has compromised his integrity, assisted the Liberal Party, and deprived his own party of a seat in Cabinet as a result of the regrettable success of this political strategy he has adopted.

Mr Bloffwitch: It's a team effort - something you would not understand.

Mr RIPPER: The National Party's role in this team effort has been to sell off its integrity in the interests of Liberal members of Parliament being elected. I think enough of the Deputy Premier to believe he must be embarrassed by this turn of events and is now acting out of loyalty to the coalition Government, of which he is a part.

Nevertheless, the Deputy Premier has done the wrong thing. He was known as an advocate of a gold royalty, and for him in particular to make a statement that a gold royalty was not to be introduced was seen to be of significance, not only in the electorate I have mentioned but also in the overall campaign. The gold industry could have entered that campaign in a significant way. Had the gold industry concluded that a gold royalty was a strong likelihood if this coalition Government were re-elected, it could well have entered the campaign and taken a stand advertising this issue in a direct and public way. The industry did not do that because it was led astray by the Deputy Premier's assurance. The industry was betrayed. It trusted that assurance because the Deputy Premier had previously been both an advocate of a gold royalty and a person with a reputation for integrity in politics.

The Deputy Premier has not honoured his political responsibilities and done what a leader of a political party should do. He has not shown the right approach to the electorate and deserves to have this amendment passed by the House.

**MR RIEBELING** (Ashburton) [7.52 pm]: I support this amendment. We have witnessed in this place over the last week an exercise in back-peddalling, the like of which I have never seen in my five years in this place. The Leader of the National Party is so good at it that he will probably be a back-peddaller in a circus after he leaves politics.

Mr Cowan: Very droll.

Mr RIEBELING: I thank the member.

Mr Trenorden: You should make a lot of speeches in this term because it is your last.

Mr RIEBELING: Is that right? Excellent. We will see where we sit after the next election. I do not know where the National Party will be sitting because this whole exercise in relation to the gold tax related to the likely amendments to the Electoral Act.

Mr Trenorden: What is your margin?

Mr RIEBELING: Enough. I won 309 more votes than I needed.

The scenario prior to the last election was that everyone in this place knew that the Liberal Party was considering amendments to the electoral system which would see the Nationals disappear or be much fewer than the current group. It was a deliberate ploy by the Nationals, with some collusion from the Liberals, to make an effort in the Mining and Pastoral Region. Clearly, the National Party thought it had a chance of winning an upper House seat in the Mining and Pastoral Region, and it ran candidates in each of the lower House seats - that was probably sensible. However, the problem is that the mining and pastoral area does not contain the Nationals' traditional support base. The region does not have a huge number of farmers and the like. In fact, the region is predominantly a mining area.

The Nationals looked around for an issue on which to hang their cap. Also, they did not want to be seen to be part of the Liberal Party by toeing the line. A gold tax was chosen as the issue to show their true independence from the Liberals and to indicate the strength of the coalition.

Mr Ripper: They tried to show that they were not economic rationalists.

Mr RIEBELING: They tried to show they did not favour a gold tax. At the launch of the Liberal-National Party campaign it was said that members opposite would basically open up the books of the State, outline the tax situation and indicate how much money could be spent. They outlined their obligations and claimed that their promises were fully funded. However, just 12 weeks after the election the Deputy Premier said that he did not know about a big financial gap prior to the election, so now he must support the gold tax. That is absolutely unbelievable. The Deputy Premier is not really serious about that explanation. He knows full well that his comments to the *Kalgoorlie Miner* just days before the electorate -

Mr Cowan: The sincerity of the man is just fantasy.

Mr RIEBELING: What is insincere about that? The Deputy Premier told untruths to the electorate so people would vote for the National Party as it did not support a gold tax. The Deputy Premier knew it. Everybody in the State

knows about it now; everyone knows what sort of a person is the Deputy Premier. He will say anything to remain in that seat.

Mr Cowan: Just go back and practise your sincerity lines - you don't have any.

Mr RIEBELING: The Deputy Premier is an amazing person. When a motion is debated in the place about his insincerity, he attacks everyone else. We will hear shortly the Deputy Premier's explanation of why he told deliberate untruths to the electorate in the Mining and Pastoral Region. Those people who voted for the National Party have a right to know why the Deputy Premier has done such a huge backflip in such a small space of time. It appears that it was just a cynical political ploy, which was played very well. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition was right: Many people in this State think the Deputy Premier is an honest politician and rely on what he says to be fact. However, 12 weeks after the election, he has done the biggest backflip of all time: He said that if a gold tax were introduced by the coalition Government, he would withdraw from that Government. He now claims that that issue is not big enough for him to take that action in the party context. He did not say that before the election. He did not say, "If in the next couple of years the gold tax issue comes up, it might not be a big enough issue for the party to leave the coalition." He said the opposite. He said it was such a big issue that, in those circumstances, the National Party would withdraw from the coalition. The Deputy Premier said that, not I.

This action had an impact on the voters in the Mining and Pastoral Region. I have spoken to Kevin Leahy, the former member for Northern Rivers, and he is convinced that the Deputy Premier's comments had some impact on the election result, although he did not know the extent of that impact. When considering only 100-odd voters in an electorate the size of Ningaloo, one need not make a huge impact to have a significant effect on the result.

I was interested to hear the member for Ningaloo mention that he did not hide the fact that it was a fait accompli that a gold tax would be put in place. However, I do not think the member campaigned on that, and I am sure in an electorate which rejected a gold tax he did not release pamphlets saying that he would support a gold tax. This issue is very emotive, especially in the goldfields. I can understand why the Nationals, who wanted to build up a supporter base big enough to have an upper House candidate elected, would run that line.

The Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party has been quite open in his support for a gold tax. I am sure that a large number of people in this place would agree that a gold tax should be introduced. I do not happen to be one of those. I think that not having a gold tax in place has benefited the gold industry and the State for many years. I hope that, after the coalition Government considers the impact of a gold tax on the industry, it will not go down that trail.

In my electorate, the gold tax was used to show the National Party's independence from the Liberal Party's line. It was used to demonstrate that the Nationals have country people at heart, no matter whether they were in the Mining and Pastoral Region or the Agricultural Region; they were going to stand up to the Liberals, no matter what the Liberals said. They were going to run this fiercely independent line and that came through in all of their advertising. It was used in that way. It was not used in the Pilbara to whip up hysteria on the gold tax; it was used as a demonstration of independence. The National Party member in my electorate did quite well. He got 12 per cent of the primary vote, which is higher than I and many people expected. Basically, that was the line that the National Party ran. It proudly stated wherever it could that it was the party that stood up for the little fellow - the battler. It would not stand for a gold tax or electoral reform and would make sure that things started happening in certain areas. Along the same line the Minister for Transport lobbied into Karratha before the election and promised \$180m to seal the road between Karratha and Tom Price in two years. Many people would be cynical about that announcement now.

Mr Trenorden: Try doorknocking Tom Price.

Mr RIEBELING: I have.

Mr Trenorden: I have too and they did not believe you would ever put that road in. They never believed it for a second.

Mr RIEBELING: We will see whether there is a road there at the end of 1999. I will bet there is not because I do not think the \$180m project was ever funded. The member does not know whether it was. Has the Deputy Premier heard of it?

Mr Cowan: Yes.

Mr RIEBELING: Funded?

Mr Cowan: Sure.

Mr RIEBELING: Excellent. We will look for that road in two years and perhaps the Deputy Premier will regain some of the credibility that he has lost in the last two days. However, I doubt it will happen in the goldfields or that we will see the National Party run candidates in all those seats at the next state election because it has lost credibility through the actions of its leader in being a little too cute with the truth, as he sometimes is. He comes in here and laughs and sneers at people and tries to run people down, but forgets that he is the one who did not tell the people of the Mining and Pastoral Region the truth.

Mr Shave: I will bet no-one has ever said you are cute!

Mr RIEBELING: Not recently. He is the person with whom the electorate has every right to be annoyed because he is the one it believed and he has now done the biggest backflip in the history of this State.

**MR COWAN** (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [8.05 pm]: I am somewhat gratified tonight to learn that so many people, particularly on the other side of the House, have an interest in my integrity. Anyone who has listened to them tonight would believe they care for me much more than I have ever believed!

Opposition members: We do.

Mr COWAN: That is very interesting. I must repeat myself: There is an old Chinese saying that if one says something a thousand times, one might catch two ears once. In this case I have had to say on no fewer than three occasions that at the time of the election the Government had no intention of increasing its revenue stream through a royalty on gold. I am sure, in the course of the campaign, members like the member for Kalgoorlie, who was seeking to shore up a pretty shaky by-election result with an increased majority at a full election, and the member for Eyre, who is known as a political has-been throughout Western Australia seeking to shore up his position, would have said to the ABC and the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, "You had better ask these people about a gold royalty because there has been some discussion about it in a personal sense by a number of Ministers in the current Government." So they asked and I responded and said it was not on the agenda. Everyone agrees that is what I said. They went back to their advisers and their advisers told them to ask whether it was on the agenda after the election. They asked me that question and I said it was not to my knowledge. I would not want to be party to something that has not been raised in the course of the State's management of its affairs.

Unfortunately for Western Australia, we are again being subjected to undue influences from our colleagues in the federal arena. It was the Leader of the Opposition who said that Western Australia is being penalised because of its growing economy and that growth is predominantly in the mining and resources sector. That is exactly why Western Australia is being penalised. We are being penalised because of our economic growth, which is being led by the resources sector. There is no question about that. The unfortunate fact of life is that, in framing our Budget, we have committed ourselves to a balanced Budget. We will have difficulty with that because the Commonwealth has cut off funds to the extent of \$208m a year for the last four years. Most people would also acknowledge that in this State there has been, in very recent times, a flattening of the domestic economy. No-one would argue with that. The punishment that Canberra is inflicting on Western Australia and the associated flattening of the State's economy is causing the State to examine its revenue stream. I do not deny that. However, at the time of the election that was not the case.

I am proud of the fact that so many people on the other side have spoken about my integrity; some of those who have spoken have none at all. Nevertheless, I am pleased they referred to mine. I acknowledge that, given our budgetary situation, in this case I may be wrong about what I said. I will cop that. I have been around the traps for long enough to know that every now and again one has to take a beating. I also know that one can get up at another stage. However, I will deny vehemently at all times that there was some plot in this issue. There was no plot.

That was the picture as I saw it. People need to understand the position, and I hope the member for Burrup will listen carefully to this so that in future when he speaks - I hope he does not, because he is one of the most boring people I have ever heard - he can distinguish between a royalty and a tax. A royalty can be applied by the State, should it wish to do so, but the tax exempt status of companies was withdrawn a long time ago by the member for Eyre's colleagues when they were in government. The people in Canberra who made that decision - Dawkins, Walsh, Cook and Beazley - were all senior members of the Labor Party Ministry, who went along for the ride and made it very clear that the tax exempt status of companies which generated their income from gold would not continue. The member for Eyre should remember that when he talks about credibility, and he should remind some of his newer colleagues about that issue. I draw no distinction other than that a royalty is the province of the State and the tax exempt status of goldmining companies is the responsibility of Canberra, and Canberra removed that status a long time ago.

If the member for Eyre wanted to say that a royalty was a tax, I would not be uncomfortable with that, but I want him to understand that he has made his contribution to lowering the profitability of goldmining companies, and he should never stand in this place and say that he has not, because he did that a long time ago.

Mr Grill: Are you not taking any interjections?

Mr COWAN: Only if they are worth it.

Mr Grill: You are a bit prickly tonight!

Mr COWAN: I thank members opposite for having my welfare at heart. I find it interesting that *The West Australian* keeps telling everybody that the National Party is insignificant and uninfluential, yet tonight all I have heard is how influential the National Party is and how people are reporting about the integrity of the party and how wonderfully well we are doing. I wish it was true and that members opposite would let *The West Australian* know so that we can get some of that good press to which members opposite referred.

Mr Grill: Were you aware of the one page ads that were put in the paper leading up to the election, guaranteeing no gold tax, and of the posters - the last thing that people saw before they went into the polling booth - guaranteeing no gold tax, all with the National Party's name emblazoned on them?

Mr COWAN: Not until after the event.

Mr Grill: Would you have stopped it?

Mr COWAN: No. The Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition sought to entice the member for Ningaloo into this debate, on the basis that he had something to defend. All members who at some time or another find themselves on this side of the House, on either the front bench or the back bench, always have a dilemma: To what extent do they represent their constituencies as opposed to solidarity within government? That test always applies more particularly to the conservative parties, for the simple reason that the caucus system binds members of the Labor Party to do what they have to do; they have no choice. However, for some reason or another, because members opposite are denied the right to make decisions for themselves and have to act like sheep, they seem to think that gives them the right to challenge people on this side who exercise their right to choose, which they often do.

The member for Ningaloo made a clear statement in his maiden speech about what he does and does not support for his constituency. That is his right, and I am sure he will make a significant contribution to this place and will not fall into the first trap that is laid for him by people as inept as is the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy in trying to get him to vote in favour of this motion.

Mr Ripper: You must think we are naïve.

Mr COWAN: This debate has been targeted at me and it has been said that, for some reason, my integrity is at stake. I do not mind admitting that what I said immediately prior to the election campaign was said in the context of the State managing its affairs, and that because of outside influences, mainly from the Commonwealth, a range of things must now be considered. I hope members opposite will think seriously about the record of the Labor Party when it comes to integrity, because members opposite have none.

Mr Marlborough: You are like the old bull that has been gelded; you look like a bull, but you cannot perform any more!

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Peel, the seating plan in front of me indicates that you are out of your seat; that being the case, your interjection is highly disorderly, apart from other matters.

Mr Marlborough: I would like to be able to say it again, so I will grab my seat.

Mr COWAN: I am sure that at some stage or another, members opposite will be able to sort out where they are sitting and from where they can engage in the highly disorderly conduct of interjecting. The member for Peel is a classic case in point. He was encouraged not just by his then leader but also by his entire party to pursue the great cause that became known as Wanneroo Inc. What happened? That man's integrity is now in shreds. Every time he gets to his feet, he will undoubtedly bear in mind that he took his entire party, probably with its encouragement and full support, down a path that did nothing for its integrity. When they talk about integrity some members of the Labor Party should remember where they have been. More importantly, they should start to think about where they are going. Let us hope that on that path they will start to think very seriously about restoring some integrity to their party.

**MR BARNETT** (Cottesloe - Leader of the House) [8.21 pm]: I make the observation that on the first full day of a four year term we have witnessed a pathetic effort by the Opposition. I would have assumed that, having lost three

seats in the last election, on average the quality of the Opposition would rise. If I were generous to the new members of the Parliament on the other side, I would expect some rise in quality.

Dr Gallop: You exude arrogance. Your intellect is not too smart, my boy; do not talk about intellect. The Leader of the House is just another bully boy.

Mr BARNETT: It did not take long to flush them out.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have allowed a large number of interjections. However, I remind the Leader of the Opposition that the member on his feet has the right to be heard. In fact, he has had only about half a minute and there have been incessant interjections.

Dr Gallop: The Leader of the House is coming up with arrogant nonsense. He should show a bit of grace and debate the issue: The betrayal by the Deputy Premier of the people of Western Australia.

The SPEAKER: Order! I formally call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

Mr BARNETT: The new image of Leader of the Opposition has not lasted the first day of this Parliament: The nice guy, the conciliator, the intellectual. It is the first debate, and the Leader of the Opposition has lost it already. It did not take long.

I do not propose to debate the gold royalty. There will be time enough to do that, and I will be happy to at any time, on any day of the week. I support the gold royalty. I did so long before I came into this Parliament. It has not made me popular in many sections of the Liberal Party or in many parts of the State. I do not need to reiterate my reasons for supporting it. They relate to equity in the mining industry, and to returns to the people of Western Australia for an asset that is owned by the people of Western Australia. I can go on with other arguments.

Mr Ripper: Will you take an interjection?

Mr BARNETT: I have one observation first. I find it incredible that, on the first day of this Parliament, the Opposition thinks it will create some division between the National and Liberal Parties on a point against the Leader of the National Party. What a trite issue for the first day of this Parliament. What a pathetic attempt by the Opposition. I do not profess to understand fully the origins of the Labor Party. However, given the Labor Party's history, if any party were to stand up and argue about a fair return for the people of this State, equality in the distribution of the wealth of this State and returns to health and education, it would be a Labor "socialist" democrat party. What do we see but cheap opportunism.

The member for Kalgoorlie and other members on the opposition side are sensitively affected in their electorates on the gold royalty - as are members on this side. It is not an issue that divides one party or individual members against each other. What does the Opposition choose to do? It has no principle about the conservation of a finite resource, the return to the people of Western Australia, or equity within the mining industry. The Opposition ignores the facts of the issue - we will debate that another time. On day one the Opposition wants to have a go at my friend. I would love to say, "Pick on someone your own size", but it does not seem appropriate because the Deputy Premier can look after himself. The Opposition has been pathetic.

Dr Gallop: Your arrogance has not changed.

Mr BARNETT: The Leader of the Opposition may say that I am arrogant. However if he has spent the first couple of months after the election thinking about how he will start the Parliament and then tries to attack the Deputy Premier about a campaign in Kalgoorlie, the Leader of the Opposition has not lost the plot; he has not even started. It has been a trite and inept attempt.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Debate has degenerated. One interjection here and there is acceptable. However, several people are trying to interject at once. We cannot continue with that. I bring that to members' attention as it is a new tendency this session.

Mr BARNETT: I will be brief in my comments.

Mr Ripper: Do you believe in a gold royalty?

Mr BARNETT: Yes, I do.

Mr Ripper: What did you say and do when the Deputy Premier said there would not be a gold royalty in the next term of government?

Mr BARNETT: I will recount my position. I have always supported a gold royalty. I have also had some particular views about the way in which any royalty might be introduced and how it might impact on smaller marginal producers. I have talked about that formally and informally with the gold industry over the past three years. My position is no secret. I must be honest, I was not winning a great deal of support among my colleagues for a gold royalty. I, along with others, have largely won the argument in the community. However, I do not in any way dismiss the implications in goldmining areas, and particularly the political implications for members of Parliament on both sides of the House.

Mr Ripper: Do you believe in telling the truth in your electorate of Cottesloe?

Mr BARNETT: The member for Belmont can ask me that in Cottesloe. The reality was that it was suggested many times last year that I had taken papers and proposals to Cabinet on a gold royalty. That was not the case. The gold royalty issue did not go to Cabinet last year, and, as the Deputy Premier has indicated, there was no proposal for a gold royalty. Perhaps one or two other members in the Liberal Party and I supported a gold royalty. There is probably broader support for it now.

Dr Gallop: The Minister is avoiding the issue.

Mr BARNETT: No, I am not. I categorically state that the gold royalty was not formally on the agenda of the Government prior to the election. As we draft the Budget for 1997-98 the gold royalty is an issue. I can assure you, Mr Speaker, and members, that as probably the strongest advocate within Government for a gold royalty, it is only now that the gold royalty issue is formally on the agenda. It has not gone to Cabinet, even now! However, in the budget discussions and the finalisation of the Budget the gold royalty issue is on the agenda.

In conclusion, the member for Merredin, the Leader of the National Party is a person of high integrity.

Dr Gallop: He has no integrity on this issue - none at all.

Mr BARNETT: He has been an outstanding leader in public debate in this State for 20 years. This attempt to try to denigrate his reputation has failed for two reasons: First, the argument is weak; and, second, when the Leader of the Opposition takes on a man of high standing in the community he must be very sure of his ground to succeed, and the Leader of the Opposition has failed: Hendy Cowan rides high in all matters.

Mr Marlborough interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I formally call to order the member for Peel for the first time. It is highly disorderly to interject while I am on my feet.

**MR TRENORDEN** (Avon) [8.29 pm]: I am interested in this debate. I have been a member of this House for 11 years. I have never seen the Opposition lead its thrust for a new sitting of Parliament against the National Party. It is a great honour. It means that the National Party has finally made it. It is the first bout of the football season and the Opposition has lined up against our ruckman! It will get a hiding. Members opposite have attacked the Leader of the National Party with a wet, white feather. The result has been a mash. Is this the best they can do on day one of the Thirty-fifth Parliament? Is this the best argument the Opposition can use to display its prowess for the next four years? I think it is a good thing.

Mr Marlborough interjected.

Mr TRENORDEN: It does not matter what the member for Peel says; he has no credibility whatsoever in this place. The Leader of the National Party made a good point when he said that at least this debate has raised the profile of the National Party. This debate is driven by the fact that the Australian Labor Party vote in rural Western Australian fell through the floor. I was amazed when I did some doorknocking in Tom Price.

Mrs Roberts interjected.

Mr TRENORDEN: I was watching some videos the other day which were more entertaining than "Yes Minister". A constituent taped the whole of the WA Inc series. I have 30-odd tapes of television reporting, many of them done by the new member opposite. Viewing them is like watching a comedy. The member for Midland is highlighted in some of those reports in connection with allegations of rigging votes for the Perth City Council. I did not realise she was such a famous person.

Mrs Roberts: What a load of rot.

Mr TRENORDEN: I was watching it and I think the member behind her was doing the interview.

Mrs Roberts: That is rubbish; you should substantiate that. It is an outright lie.

Mr TRENORDEN: This issue is about the standing of the National Party in the bush and the lack of standing of members opposite. The vote for the Labor Party at the last election went through the floor.

*Withdrawal of Remark*

The SPEAKER: Order! I heard the member for Midland say something that is unparliamentary and cannot be used in this place. I require her to withdraw.

Mr Cunningham: You said a white lie, did you not?

The SPEAKER: Order! I formally call to order the member for Girrawheen for the first time.

Mrs ROBERTS: I withdraw that as it was unparliamentary.

*Debate Resumed*

Mr TRENORDEN: When Premier Burke's Government was riding at the high water mark of the ALP it held my seat with better than 60 per cent of the primary vote. It now gets 27 per cent. The electorate has shrunk since those days and several shires that were strong National Party areas have gone from the seat of Avon. The ALP electors throughout Western Australia have declined everywhere. They have vanished from the south west and have been decimated in the north. The only place they exist is in the metropolitan area. Kalgoorlie, the premier seat and the starting place of the ALP in Western Australia, is now a marginal seat. The ALP does not have a single representative in the south west of Western Australia. This is what this debate is about. Members of the ALP know that they have taken a hiding, particularly from the National Party. The ALP's voters are deserting it and moving to the National Party because it has some sense.

Mr Cunningham: You were rubbed out by a mile in Kalgoorlie.

Mr TRENORDEN: It will be interesting to see what happens in Kalgoorlie and Eyre and it will be very interesting in Burrup. I was pleased to support Paul Ausborn in Burrup, who was a fantastic National Party candidate. I think he will be the next member for Burrup. The Deputy Premier is the father of this House; although that status is bestowed by time, no-one in this Chamber has greater credibility than he does. The lack of credibility of the Leader of the Opposition has been mentioned much more in print than it has regarding the Leader of the National Party. He is a great performer in the tapes I watch. Perhaps I should repeat some of the statements he made in the early 1990s.

In the past four years it has also been a standard tactic of opposition members to drag everyone down to their level. Their credibility has dropped to rock bottom. The repercussions of WA Inc bit harder at this election than at the previous election because the people of Western Australia have had time to digest them. Their vote was very much driven by WA Inc and the fact that the ALP's credibility at a state and federal level is on the floor. As the television program "Four Corners" pointed out some weeks ago, the supporters of the ALP are from the upper and trendy upper classes.

Dr Gallop: Don't be ridiculous.

Mr TRENORDEN: The front bench of the federal Labor Party said that the ALP supporters now come from the upper class and the trendy side of the upper class. Blue-collar people have deserted the ALP in droves. The true believers are a minority of voters within the ALP system. They are not my words but those of a federal member of the ALP. In desperation members opposite have come into this place and attacked the credibility of the Leader of the National Party in the belief that by dragging down some of our people to their level they will be able to match our performance in the bush. They will not go anywhere near us; they will not even see the dust.

Mr Marlborough: You are so confident that you will support one-vote-one-value.

Mr TRENORDEN: I prayed for the member for Peel to be elected.

Mr Marlborough: You are a coward.

*Withdrawal of Remark*

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Peel has made a comment which to a certain extent impugns the member for Avon.

Mr MARLBOROUGH: I am happy to withdraw. We all know he hangs his spine in the wardrobe at night.

*Debate Resumed*

The SPEAKER: The member for Avon will help the debate if he directs his remarks to the Chair.

Mr Marlborough: Talk about one-vote-one-value and see how courageous you are then.

Mr TRENORDEN: I will not worry about comments by the member for Peel. The truth is that nothing he says ever matters. He has no credibility whatsoever. There are no words he can utter that will make a dent on me. His words are no more than breaking wind in the wind.

Mr Marlborough interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The interjections by the member for Peel are incessant and I formally call him to order for the second time.

Mr TRENORDEN: I will draw this to an end because the last thing we need is a performance by the member for Peel. Now that the ALP vote has been so seriously eroded in the country it will have great difficulty retrieving it. Its method of making an impact on the declining vote is to attack the Leader of the National Party tonight. The ALP is off the mark. Its words are no threat.

Mrs Roberts: Once bitten, twice shy. You are irrelevant.

Mr TRENORDEN: The words are no threat. I agree that the member opposite is irrelevant. If this is the best the ALP can do in opposition on the first day of this Thirty-fifth Parliament, members opposite are in for a desperate four years. Given that that was also the first amendment to the Address-in-Reply, the National Party should thank the ALP.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result -

#### Ayes (16)

Ms Anwyl  
Mr Brown  
Mr Carpenter  
Dr Edwards  
Dr Gallop  
Mr Grill

Mr Kobelke  
Ms MacTiernan  
Mr Marlborough  
Mr McGinty  
Mr McGowan  
Ms McHale

Mr Riebeling  
Mrs Roberts  
Ms Warnock  
Mr Cunningham  
(*Teller*)

#### Noes (29)

Mr Ainsworth  
Mr Barnett  
Mr Board  
Dr Constable  
Mr Court  
Mr Cowan  
Mr Day  
Mrs Edwardes  
Mrs Hodson-Thomas  
Mrs Holmes

Mr House  
Mr Kierath  
Mr MacLean  
Mr Marshall  
Mr Masters  
Mr McNee  
Mr Nicholls  
Mr Omodei  
Mr Osborne  
Mrs Parker

Mr Pandal  
Mr Shave  
Mr Sweetman  
Mr Trenorden  
Mr Tubby  
Dr Turnbull  
Mrs van de Klashorst  
Mr Wiese  
Mr Bloffwitch (*Teller*)

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#### Pairs

Mr Graham  
Mr Thomas  
Mr Ripper

Mr Sullivan  
Mr Bradshaw  
Mr Johnson

Question thus negatived.

#### *Debate (on motion) Resumed*

**MS McHALE** (Thornlie) [8.43 pm]: It is with considerable honour and profound gratitude to the electorate of Thornlie that I stand to deliver my inaugural speech. At the outset I would like to congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your election to the high and honourable office of Speaker and I look forward to your fair and responsible management of the House. My congratulations also to my Labor colleagues, the members for Rockingham and Willagee, and, of course, to the member for Armadale for her transit from the upper House to this House.

I recognise the privilege accorded to members of Parliament in our role as representatives. It is not the associated privileges and trappings of office to which I refer; it is the privilege of working for and assisting ordinary community members who for many reasons feel disadvantaged, dissatisfied or disempowered by our social and bureaucratic systems. It is also the privilege and principle of being accountable to our community that I hold dear.



My victory in the new seat of Thornlie, which comprises the suburbs of Thornlie, Langford, Lynwood, most of Ferndale and parts of Kenwick, Maddington and Canning Vale, was built on months of working with the community and talking to thousands of residents on their doorsteps about their concerns and needs, about their views of government and about politics and politicians. Their viewpoints therefore deserve further attention, and I will return to that issue.

Having been elected by the people of Thornlie to be their representative in this House, I place on public record my dedication to them and I will strive at all times to help them and represent their interests as best I can.

While as every member knows we are the public face of our victory, it is only through the hard work, help and sacrifice of our families, friends and the many volunteers that we are here. To the members of the union movement who supported me, to my friends at St John of God Hospital, whose vision and values for a just society coexisted with and encouraged mine, my sincere thanks are due. The strength and friendship of the Gosnells-Thornlie sub-branch of the Australian Labor Party must also be recorded. There are many who worked tirelessly and selflessly to help me get elected. In particular, I pay tribute to Roger Cook, my campaign manager, and to two special people - Eve Omacini and Les Beech - whose humour, support, hard work and encouragement were outstanding.

To my family for their encouragement, confidence and support; to my mother for encouraging independence and my brother and sister-in-law for the roast dinners nearly every Sunday after weekends of campaigning, my gratitude is due. My unconditional love goes to my 12 year old son, Keir Ralph, who constantly keeps me grounded in reality - he knows what is important in his life. I thank him for his tolerance and insight. Without him my life would be the poorer.

As an aside, I would like to explain Keir's name. He is named after Keir Hardie, who was born in 1856 and died in 1915. He was an eminent British Labour Party politician who was instrumental in establishing the British Labour Party and was the first candidate to enter Parliament in 1892. He founded and edited the *Labour Leader* and was also a strong pacifist. He made his maiden speech over 100 years ago and, like the member for Armadale, in his inaugural speech he talked primarily about unemployment.

I am sure members of Parliament know all of that social and political history, but I recounted it for the benefit of the House so that members will understand the significance of the Labor Party to me.

Hon Yvonne Henderson's decision to retire from political life afforded me the opportunity to be preselected for the Australian Labor Party and ultimately to win the seat. I therefore express my gratitude to her for placing her trust in me and for fully awakening in me the desire to represent our community through the political process. Close to 14 years ago Yvonne made her inaugural speech and her contribution to the community since then has been significant. During her ministerial career she had responsibility for six portfolios and was respected as a tenacious, thorough and dedicated Minister of the Crown. In her first speech she signalled the Labor Government's intention to introduce anti-discrimination legislation. It was fitting therefore that Yvonne introduced and guided the Equal Opportunity Act through the Legislative Assembly. It was also fitting that one of her last efforts at social reform was to introduce amendments to the same Act to include the ground of sexual preference.

As a Labor member entering Parliament a mere three years away from the twenty-first century, my task is to adopt an approach to my parliamentary responsibilities which will reassure the community that there still exists a high order of ethical standards among our members of Parliament. To come back therefore to the viewpoint of the people who elected me, they told me on their doorsteps that what they want in their members of Parliament are the qualities of integrity, hard work and accountability. Those same sentiments were expressed by the Commission on Government in its report No 3 of August 1996 which reinforced the importance of ethical government and principles of conduct and values.

It is interesting and useful to the debate on ethics and values in the political process to look at the types of organisations which are likely to succeed in the future - a future which is experiencing an unprecedented period of change. The model of a successful organisation is now one which is seen as flexible, which is value driven, quality oriented and customer or client focused. I assert that a parallel can be drawn between this model and our responsibilities and behaviour as members of Parliament. The values adopted by customer or client orientated organisations could be applicable to us in managing our electorates. That model is one where we have excellent communication, and knowing what people want, delivering and offering a service.

How can all this be translated into practical effect and what can I do to play my part? If we look at the needs of my electorate, I have already indicated my commitment to my constituents. Thornlie is essentially a residential electorate. The residents want a quality public health system and an accessible education system for their children. Some are desperate for employment for themselves or members of their families. Others, particularly in Langford, need urgent maintenance on their Homeswest properties. Others want to live in a community which appreciates and

acknowledges their cultural diversity. There is an ageing population in parts of my electorate and for them the prospect of growing old with dignity is more at the forefront of their needs. Quality aged care and support for carers will be an ever increasing issue and one for which I want to advocate strongly. I recently had a phone call from the distraught daughter of a constituent who was desperately seeking quality nursing home care for her father. She was understandably angry when she was told she faced a two year waiting list. That is not good enough for a so called caring society. As members will understand, these needs are not typical only of Thornlie. Nevertheless, I shall play my part by listening and advocating on behalf of the Thornlie electorate and by using my skills and knowledge to address their needs whenever I can. I shall take every opportunity to put forward the views of my constituents.

Following on my theme of needing to listen to our constituents or our clients, it is important that we recognise our responsibilities to encourage more women to enter this House. At this stage I would like to acknowledge and welcome the new women members on the government side. On our side of politics, we lost three excellent long serving contributors to Parliament - Yvonne Henderson, whom I have already mentioned, Kay Hallahan and Judyth Watson, all of whom were excellent role models to women considering a political career. We as women must strengthen our presence at the next election so that we do not lose the ground gained during the 1980s and 1990s. Women represent 50 per cent of the population, yet only 21 per cent of this House across all parties are women. That is not good enough for our community and it is not good enough for us. For my part, like many women with dual careers - that is, management of family and full time employment - I am no stranger to hard work, long hours and juggling many responsibilities at once. I have been asked on numerous occasions whether I am tough enough to put up with political life. I honestly do not think toughness is particularly relevant if it means thick skinned. As with most women who make it to Parliament, the quality of strength is most important - the strength to be focused on task and principle, to be flexible and yet resilient, and to have a vision and deliver it. I do not see myself as tough but I do see myself as strong. That strength will be channelled into my parliamentary and electorate responsibilities.

For the remaining part of my speech, I turn my attention to a social problem which has concerned me for some time. It has been referred to in recent months as an epidemic and a black hole in society and by the Australian Medical Association as an Australian public health crisis. I refer to youth suicide. This social issue has been causing many in the social justice field a great deal of concern. In regard to my reference to accountability, the issue is a strong indicator of how well or badly Governments have delivered to our youth in recent years. World Health Organisation statistics reveal that Australia has overtaken most of the world's developed nations in having one of the highest youth suicide rates. Suicides among young males outnumber those of young females by over 6:1. Suicide as a proportion of all male youth deaths between the ages of 15 and 24 years increased from 18 per cent in 1985 to 27 per cent in 1994. The statistics on youth suicide vary, in part due to the difficulties in reporting. However, a recent article in the February 1997 *Australian Nursing Journal* states -

...with more than 16 in every 100,000 young Australians committing suicide each year, this meant that Australian youth are taking their own lives at a rate of one per day.

That article and others suggest that the rate could be much higher because of under reporting. Cultural and religious taboos, denial by family and even the requirements of insurance companies have sometimes resulted in suicides being reported as accidental deaths, not as suicides. This social issue is by no means new: Concern has been expressed for some time. In September 1988, the Labor Minister for Health commissioned a youth suicide working party to investigate the nature and extent of suicide among young people in Western Australia. The following year it set about implementing the recommendations. The work undertaken in Western Australia to date has been within a broadly based public health framework.

To some extent there has been a positive impact as a result of that work. In 1988 the rate of youth suicide in our State exceeded the national average by 30 per cent. Since then, according to Lilburn and Zubrick, the national rate for the 15 to 19 year old range has levelled off, while the rate in this State has declined to some extent. However, they assert that the situation for the 20 to 24 year old age group remains of much greater concern. A recent Western Australian child health survey, called Education, Health and Competence, makes the comment that Australian society has been slow to confront the tragedy of youth suicide. The report argues that this is in part due to the fact that suicide is a perplexing and troubling problem that our society generally avoids discussing. Many adults find it difficult to accept and understand that so many of our youths move into adolescence from childhood feeling sadness, hopelessness and despair that can lead to suicide.

Although the number of youth suicides is low, what is particularly distressing to me is the increase in suicidal behaviour manifested in deliberate self-harm and serious suicidal thoughts. The Western Australian child health survey found that over 15 per cent of adolescent students reported having had suicidal thoughts during the six months prior to the survey. Approximately 30 per cent of those students reporting suicidal thoughts had also tried to deliberately harm or kill themselves. Of huge concern is the reported number of children aged between 12 and 16 years who had deliberately harmed themselves. They are barely out of childhood at the age of 12 and 13 years. Can

you imagine, Mr Speaker, that more than 8 000 of our young adolescents are reported as having deliberately harmed themselves? They, as young adolescents, have such a depressed outlook on their lives, their self-esteem and their future - the future that we are supposed to be providing - that they have considered taking their lives or harming themselves.

At a national level, Professor Pierre Baume, the Director of the Australian Institute of Suicide Research and Prevention, claims that there are up to 250 000 attempted suicides each year. He argues that suicide prevention is a complex social problem which requires an integrated response from a wide range of government services. It is generally recognised that the factors linked to youth suicide are numerous and complex. Research in the area has not been comprehensive, and unravelling causal factors is extremely difficult. Current thinking suggests that individual predisposition and risk factors together determine vulnerability.

Popular opinion among lay and professional people favours the view that adolescents today are under more and different types of stress compared with young people from earlier generations. It is important to remember that because we each have different views about stress. Some of the stresses include: Increased pressures of modern society and technological change; high youth unemployment; denial of educational opportunities; increased social and family disruption; and the isolation of the family unit. Even the culture of violence in the media has been identified as one of the pressures.

The Director of the Victorian Jesuit Social Services made an excellent contribution to the recent debate on youth suicide in January when, in commenting on the Victorian Government's formation of a task force to tackle suicide, he said that the effects of high unemployment as well as education, health and welfare cutbacks must feature prominently.

Another commentator, Dr Jean Lennane, a Sydney psychiatrist, argues along similar lines. She says that youth suicide has been trebling in parallel with profound and rapid changes in our social, economic and political systems, health policies and technology. She believes many of these changes are likely to have had an adverse effect on our young people's outlook.

Economic growth may be up 6.4 per cent; investments may have increased by 11.7 per cent; and authoritative commentators may well predict a bright economic future. However, the environment for many young people is not that of economic boom and abundance. It is more likely to be characterised by the collapse of the teenage job market, and the erosion of the adult job market.

While Governments are anxious to be seen to be addressing youth suicide or the youth issue in general, the reality is that any attempts to do so are shadowed by cutbacks in resources that directly affect the quality of life for young people and their future life opportunities. The youth of our community have experienced in recent years less concern for economic redistribution or compassion, and more concern for the deregulation of the labour market, privatisation of public services, and profitability rather than social need. The responses of our young people to their individual circumstances in society and their lack of power and respect obviously vary considerably. However, I make the point that suicide is the ultimate and most extreme opting out strategy they can think of, with devastating consequences for those left behind.

In my inaugural speech tonight I make a plea for greater consideration, respect and tolerance for our young people. More importantly, I make a plea to Government to refocus on our youth by ensuring that future policies address the alienation of our youth. If unemployment is a factor, I expect the Government to lobby the Federal Government to reintroduce meaningful labour market programs. Work must be done within the education system to strengthen the efforts already in the curriculum which focus on self-esteem and empowerment.

If I understand correctly, the Government has already set up a task force to examine youth suicide. I expect the Government to commit to a comprehensive, fully integrated approach to tackle the real causes of youth disaffection and the multiple causes of youth suicide. Furthermore, if the Government is serious, it will take note of the fact that a disproportionately high number of male youth suicides are gay related. This aspect must be dealt with sensitively, and it will require a considered assessment of support structures and mechanisms for this group of adolescents. In this way we may prevent some of our youth using the ultimate opting out strategy and we may feel that we can be accountable to our young people and our community.

I have also tried tonight to give some insight into the way in which I intend to fulfil my parliamentary responsibilities and duties. I summarise my view of those responsibilities: To represent the community of Thornlie as a Labor member; to act responsibly and professionally as opposition spokesperson for the Arts and Heritage to enhance our cultural, natural, aesthetic and built heritage; and to ensure that the Government is accountable to the community.

In conclusion I assure you, Mr Speaker, that I look forward to the challenges of my honourable position with vigour, humour and a great deal of passion. I conclude with the words of May Holman who, as members will know, was the

first Labor woman to be elected to any Australian Parliament. She said before the 1939 state election "I think you will find women as successful in Parliament as men. But the women are judged by harder standards".

[Applause.]

**MR McGOWAN** (Rockingham) [9.07 pm]: It is appropriate in commencing this address to thank those whose assistance played a major part in my election to Parliament. The person deserving of most praise is my lovely new wife, Sarah, who is in the Public Gallery tonight. Not only did Sarah help me through good times and bad, but also she endured the election campaign with good spirit, knowing that our wedding was to be held the following weekend. No-one should have to endure an election and a wedding within one week. Sarah and I will never forget the month of December 1996.

Sarah's parents, Gwen and Neil Miller, are also here tonight. They provided me with immense support and were willing to accept the burden of worry whenever I needed to transfer it. My mother and father, Dennis and Mary McGowan, provided me with the upbringing and the values which are unmistakably Labor, and played a major role in giving me the opportunities which allow me to be here tonight.

I pay tribute to Kim Beazley, who is not only one of the greatest men I have ever met, but who also provided me with immeasurable assistance to be here tonight. A large number of my parliamentary colleagues have been of immense assistance to me, and I especially thank Hon John Cowdell, Mr Julian Grill, Mr Norm Marlborough and Hon John Halden, as well as my friends in the union movement, Mr Joe Bullock and Mr Kevin Reynolds, for their support, encouragement and assistance over the years.

I also congratulate our leader, Dr Geoff Gallop, for fighting an excellent and outstanding election campaign.

During a very tough campaign Mr Michael Woodhouse, Mr John O'Callaghan, Mrs Barbara Baxter and other friends in the Public Gallery, including Carmel Low, John Baxter, Jack Nicholson and Anne Wood, as well as the Safety Bay-Rockingham branch of the Australian Labor Party, provided me with outstanding voluntary support.

It would be remiss of me if I did not congratulate the *Weekend Courier* and *Sound Telegraph* newspapers in Rockingham for providing a fair and impartial coverage of the election campaign and an outstanding service to the people of Rockingham.

I thank the Rockingham City Council and the staff for the excellent support and assistance they gave me when I was a Rockingham City Councillor and Deputy Mayor.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the first member for Rockingham, Mr Mike Barnett, who overcame a great deal in his life to achieve so much in this Parliament and have a distinguished parliamentary career. I wish him well in his future career and endeavours.

Finally, I thank the people of Rockingham who have vested their confidence in me. I intend to work for them to the best of my ability.

Experience is a great teacher. Having spent the greater part of my youth in relatively small country towns as the son of parents of modest income, I grew to understand the inequality between people and communities. It was a fact of life in the area in which I lived that if one's parents were wealthy, one was afforded opportunities and if they were not, one missed out. It became apparent to me then, as it still is, that it was through the actions of government or representative organisations - for example, the union movement - that ordinary people were afforded opportunities. This overarching principle was true in the 1970s and it is also true in the 1990s. This principle applies in country towns and it is especially the case in expanding urban areas, such as Rockingham, which are on the edge of large cities. It is and always will be a fact of Australian politics that the Australian Labor Party best represents these people and communities. It has been the central theme of the Australian Labor Party over the 106 years of its existence that the guiding goal of society should be the improvement of the lives of all regardless of who they are or from where they come.

In state politics in recent years it has been the accepted view of the public that it is the Labor Party which performs better than its opponents in the areas of health, social services, public transport and education. This is due to its exceptional performance, at both state and federal levels, by world standards in these areas over the last 10 or more years. For Labor to properly achieve its goals of equality of opportunity, guaranteeing the future of the State and a decent life and job for all, it must reassert itself in what will increasingly become the two great domestic issues of the age - industry policy and the environment. If members were to walk into a classroom and ask the students what they thought was the major issue of this age, it is more than likely they would say, "The environment". Their preoccupation with this issue will increase in the future. It must be Labor's goal to ensure that clean air, clean water, the prevention of soil erosion and the protection of endangered species continue to be part of its focus. Members on

this side of politics have the willpower and conviction to legislate, speak out and act on these matters. If they continue to do so, they will guarantee not only their future, but also the future of their children.

Another issue on which the Labor Party can act is industry policy. At present there is unacceptable unemployment and certainly an unacceptable sense of job insecurity in the community. To a large extent the Western Australian economy relies on its mineral and commodity production and not on manufactured goods. The best jobs, the highest paying jobs, are in the mining industry. However, there are not enough of these jobs to go around because they rely heavily on world markets, which can fall sharply and quickly.

Western Australia must have more manufacturing and downstream processing industries as well as the service industries which cater to them. It is at the heart of Labor philosophy that there is a role for government to ensure that these industries are encouraged to establish, not through the discredited technique of excessive protection, but by finding something smarter which is targeted at and sympathetic to industry without pandering to sectional interests. It is no coincidence that the countries which have the highest standard of living are the same countries which spend the most per capita on research and development. Labor's intention is to encourage research and development, build infrastructure and introduce mechanisms to ensure that the great pool of national superannuation savings is invested in Australia.

Environmental and industry policy are two areas of Labor's natural strengths in which it needs to assert its superiority over those opposing it. In comparative terms I am a young member of Parliament. The fact that my wife and I were married in December and purchased our first home last Monday makes us representative of the thousands of people in Perth's southern suburban rim who feel alienated by this Government.

The City of Rockingham is an area in which literally thousands of people are choosing to make their home each year. It is one of the relatively rare areas in urban Australia in which ordinary Australian families can afford to buy a decent home at a fair price in close proximity to a major city and the ocean. In comparison with virtually all other mainland capitals, home prices in Perth are very competitive. This makes an important difference to the quality of life of Western Australians. Rockingham is an area which consistently records massive growth. Between 1986 and 1996 the population increased from 32 845 to 63 815 residents. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics this places Rockingham third in Australia in terms of percentage growth rate, which is close behind two local government areas on Queensland's Sunshine Coast and far in excess of any other local government area in Western Australia. According to Department of Planning figures, the projected population for Rockingham is 105 500 people by the year 2006. According to the City of Rockingham figures, in the 1995-96 financial year the value of building applications totalled \$104m and has been consistently at this level over the past five years. By the year 2021 it is projected that the population in the south western corridor will exceed 400 000. This population increase has been shown to be very marked among residents over the age of 75 years and those in the 15 to 30 age group. Rockingham is very much an area where young couples and retirees choose to settle. The projected growth rate in the over 75 age group in Rockingham is 197 per cent between 1991 and 2001. In the 15 to 24 age group the projected growth rate is 126 per cent over the same period. By contrast, the rest of the population of the Perth metropolitan area is projected to grow at 27 per cent and 10 per cent respectively for these two age groups over the same period.

In addition to the massive population growth there has been a corresponding increase in the wealth produced and the output of the industrial area known as the Kwinana strip. This area is contained partly within the Rockingham electorate and also within the neighbouring electorates of Peel and Cockburn. The strip accounts for \$8b worth of WA industry outputs, including immediate and flow-on effects, and employs 12 500 people directly. Another 12 500 jobs depend indirectly on Kwinana industry. The major employers in this area include Alcoa, with 1 033 employees; Wesfarmers CSBP Limited, 600; BP Refinery (Kwinana) Pty Ltd, 490; and United Construction Pty Ltd, 1 250. These industries are the major centre of downstream processing in Western Australia. It is only through maximising the productive capacities of these downstream processing industries and industries in other areas by providing them with the opportunities to grow and prosper will Western Australia become a truly great economic State.

Additionally, Rockingham is home to one of the four most important military bases in Australia - HMAS *Stirling*. For employment and attitudes *Stirling* is extremely important to Rockingham and has had a positive effect on our community. HMAS *Stirling* plays an important role in our nation's overall security, but I will expand on that later.

Despite the massive population growth in the southern suburbs, particularly in Rockingham; the area's immense contribution to the State's wealth, particularly in downstream processing, and despite Rockingham's contribution to the defence of the State and the nation, there is an appalling lack of state-funded public infrastructure in Rockingham. Furthermore, there appears to be a lack of any sort of commitment by the State Government to rectify this problem, which manifests itself in a large number of ways in the areas of health services, schools, police numbers and facilities, and state government offices.

During this speech I will confine myself to the issue of transport infrastructure. Firstly, a rail line to service the burgeoning suburbs south of Fremantle should be an absolute priority. It is a Labor priority. It is not this Government's priority, and that needs to change. At present the State Government's plans in this area are for a rail service to Rockingham to be completed some time in the next century between the years 2010 and 2020. Until that time, Rockingham will be the only remaining strategic regional centre which is not serviced by a rail line. All the others - Armadale, Fremantle, Midland and Joondalup - are properly serviced by rail. The Government's planned rail service will join the southern corridor via Kenwick to the city of Perth. It will eventually join Mandurah to this service. Both the route selected and the time frame involved are unacceptable to the vast bulk of people in Perth's southern suburbs. The time frame chosen is obviously an attempt to place the burden of construction on some future Government. The route chosen is one which will not meet the needs of the overwhelming majority of the people it is meant to service.

A line via Fremantle would be not only a cheaper proposition but also a much more highly desirable route to the people of Cockburn, Fremantle, Jandakot, Kwinana, Rockingham and Mandurah who contribute much to the nation's economy and security but receive little in return. A rail line via Fremantle would offer much needed employment, and educational and social opportunities to the people of the south west corridor. Every other comparable Australian city has a comprehensive rail service. The southern suburbs of Perth are in the most conspicuous need of such a service.

Road transport is another area where the people of the southern suburbs are not receiving a fair deal. Through Main Roads the State Government has plans to extend the Kwinana Freeway 11 kilometres southwards with completion expected in the year 2005. This extension will involve four sets of traffic lights in addition to the six sets already in existence. The main access point to this freeway extension will be south of the major population centre of Rockingham. This is unacceptable to Rockingham residents. In effect the proposed freeway extension will be of little benefit to the majority of the people it is supposed to serve. The people living in the established areas of Rockingham will use the existing access points to the Kwinana Freeway.

I am convinced that the \$44m allocated to the freeway extension would be better spent on removing the traffic lights from the existing freeway and upgrading current entry points. This approach would have the added advantage of enabling the work to be carried out sooner rather than later. This would also serve as a demonstration by the Government that it is committed to the people of Perth's southern suburbs and that they are not forgotten. Both of these transport issues need addressing urgently to cater for the growth of the southern suburbs.

From 1989 until last year I served as a member of the permanent naval forces. Indeed I resigned only to contest last year's election, and I am now a member of the Navy Reserve. I am extremely proud to have HMAS *Stirling*, Garden Island, and vast numbers of serving and ex-serving military personnel and their families within my electorate. I am also proud to call Kim Beazley my friend. It is commonly accepted within defence circles that Kim Beazley was the best Australian Defence Minister since John Curtin. Labor's defence record is solid gold. It was Labor that successfully led this nation through the darkest days of both World Wars. However, it was during Kim Beazley's tenure as Defence Minister that the Australian Defence Forces were transformed. It was Kim Beazley who determined that the construction of Australia's new service combatants, the ANZAC frigates and our new submarine fleet, the Collins class, would be undertaken in Australia. Australian made by Australian workers is the essence of Labor's policy. Furthermore it was Labor and Kim Beazley who made the biggest commitment to the defence of Western Australia since the Second World War when the strategic decision was made 10 years ago to base half the Navy's fleet in Western Australia. This means that now more than half a billion dollars worth of construction on Garden Island has been completed. Ships and submarines representing more than half the Navy's striking force will be based at HMAS *Stirling*. The concept of two-ocean basing means that the Australian Navy will now be properly dispersed around the nation so that it is available in times of need to defend us.

Some 2 500 defence employees and their families reside in my area, and as a result hundreds of millions of dollars in contracts, purchasing and expenditure now accrue to the Western Australian economy. Whenever one drives past Transfield in Coogee one is likely to see a frigate, destroyer escort or patrol boat being refitted. There has been precious little recognition of these facts by this State Government. There is no appreciation of our strategic location in South East Asia, little understanding of our Navy's role as host operating with other navies in our region, and very little support for the provision of infrastructure to both Garden Island and Rockingham. Major navy bases require infrastructure, especially in the transport area. This is important not only for supply, but also to maintain the morale of our service personnel and their families. Indeed, under this Government the most notable actions in defence have been attempts to allow commercial mining interests to enter Garden Island without consultation with the Navy. Secondly, no attempts have been made to help the Australian Defence Forces to obtain security of title over training areas in Western Australia.

I would like to close my first speech by reiterating these central points: It is time that attention was focused on Perth's expanding southern suburbs. It is clear that the people of Perth's southern suburbs want a better deal. It is no less clear that they deserve a better deal.

[Applause.]

**MRS van de KLASHORST** (Swan Hills - Parliamentary Secretary) [9.29 pm]: I congratulate the new Speaker on his appointment. I know he will be very just. We have seen him in action before, and I feel he will do a great job. As you are in the Chair, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Osborne), I cannot let the opportunity pass without congratulating you as well. I welcome new members on both sides of the House. They have the privilege of being part of this place and of representing their community. It is an honour and a joy to do this work. I hope each and every one of them enjoys the job as much as I have over the past four years.

It is four years since I first came here. I put on the record my thanks to those in the electorate of Swan Hills for giving me the privilege of representing them and for putting their faith in me for a second time to work in their best interests during the next four years. I reiterate that I will work with vigour to make sure their voices are heard in this place and in the community generally. Being a member of Parliament is a wonderful opportunity to assist others, and I think that is the reason most of us choose to come here. It is great to record that we achieve at various levels within our communities. My thanks also go to my husband, Frans, one of the most important people in my life - I have beautiful new twin grand daughters who are becoming very important too - for his total and constant support during the past four years and the election campaign. Without him, I would not be here today. I thank Erica Warren whose unstinting efforts as my campaign chairman led to my winning the seat of Swan Hills, and I also thank my campaign committee. This committee comprised people who were full of fun and laughter. The campaign was enjoyable, especially when we were working with the branches and other helpers whom I also thank. Without members of our party to help us, none of us would be in this place today.

The electorate of Swan Hills has had a few boundary changes since the last election and it now comprises an outer metropolitan electorate, with just one small urban section in Beechboro. It will be a different and special challenge for me to represent constituents effectively due to the diversification of the electorate; however, I look forward to that challenge and to meeting the new people and working with them.

The shire of Swan is the third largest growth area in Western Australia in terms of planning. There has been much controversy about the previous Minister for Planning and planning appeals issues. I strongly support the need for appeals and that the appeal system to the Minister remain as part of the legislation and the planning system. I will give members a few examples of cases I have managed to present to the Minister, to assist people who have put appeals to him. One related to two husbands and wives who were cousins. They bought a rather large block of land in Mt Helena comprising approximately 100 acres. Under the planning scheme for the area, the land could not be subdivided. The two families worked together and built a house at either end of the block.

Two or three years later one couple had a falling out and decided to separate, leaving the other couple and the estranged partner with the land, unable to move or to do anything because the wife in the separated couple wished to retain her half share in their half of the property. Neither party could sell because the signatures of all four were required to do so. The whole thing became a major stalemate. These people appealed to the Minister for Planning after the Planning Commission of Western Australia had rejected the subdivision because the land was in an area that could not be subdivided. On compassionate grounds the Minister upheld their appeal, allowing all parties to get on with their lives. Had that system not been available, both couples would have been left up in the air, being not able to move and suffering financially and mentally.

The Minister also upheld the appeal of an elderly couple who decided to allow their son to build a house on part of their block in Chidlow comprising only about 15 acres.

Mr Bloffwitch: As it was for compassionate reasons, it seemed like a very good thing to do.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Yes. The son and his wife wanted to sell and it meant that the elderly couple had to sell as well. The planning laws would not allow that to happen. The Minister, having taken advice, allowed this appeal. In another case an elderly mother wanted to live on a property with her children and when she died the daughter or son could not keep the property. I look on this appeal system as a way in which people who do not have a lot of money, who cannot go through the court system, and who cannot fight the shires or the Government have an opportunity to go directly to the Minister.

Mr Bloffwitch: If they have a good local member.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: That is right; they come to me as well. We do not win them all. The previous Minister explained to me that he can look at these appeals on a compassionate basis, having had them thoroughly and fully

investigated; however, he used to say that if there was nothing upon which he could hang his hat - that is, if the Water Corporation, the Water and Rivers Commission, the shire or the planning department and any other department all say no - he could not grant the appeal. If there is some way in which he - or she, if we end up with a female Minister for Planning - can do so, that person can work towards helping people on compassionate grounds. It must be remembered that the Minister's office has a group of people investigating every circumstance thoroughly. People can be represented and go directly to the Minister.

It costs approximately \$160 for each appeal, compared with thousands of dollars for legal representation. The turnaround for appeals within the Minister's office is approximately three months. In absolutely desperate situations - for example, where bankruptcy might occur if something is not done with the land - it may take less time. The success rate of appeals to the Minister was over 50 per cent. In the past year 779 people chose to appeal directly to the Minister, compared with 35 who chose to go through the tribunal. This system is working, and working well. In any system mistakes can be made, but in the majority of the cases people are happy and successful and can get on with their lives. I strongly feel that we, as a Government, should not consider taking away the right of people to appeal to the Minister as this would be a social injustice to those who cannot pay.

Another issue in Swan Hills, on which I have spoken many times in this place, is transport links. The two major transport links to Perth funnel into Swan Hills; namely, the north-south link from Darwin and all points north of the State and the east-west link from the Eastern States. I will send the Minister for Transport a copy of this speech because I have a message for him: Swan Hills is in the metropolitan area. Sometimes I feel as though the Minister forgets that. Although my electorate includes the outer areas of Wooroloo and Bullsbrook, both of those suburbs are within the metropolitan boundary. I am cognisant of the fact that transport must move quickly and that time is money with transport, and that road systems throughout the State, especially the major east-west, north-south road links, must allow for transport to move rapidly and smoothly in order to keep the cost of transport down. I commend the transport industry in Australia because it is keeping down transport costs to a level that existed 20 years ago. This is due to larger trucks, fuel economy, better training for drivers, and the way freight is handled. However, when trucks and other modes of transport reach the edge of Swan Hills they are in the outer metropolitan area and major problems exist once the vehicles, especially the heavy haulage transport, reach Swan Hills.

The population in these outer metropolitan areas is increasing gradually. The hills region is growing at about 5 per cent annually. A town planning scheme has been put together for Bullsbrook which allows for an increase in population in the Bullsbrook area. Areas such as Mundaring, Stoneville, Parkerville and Swan Valley are increasing in population also; therefore, local traffic is increasing. For the safety of people in those suburbs, the trucks may have to slow down once they reach those areas.

Great Eastern Highway is the major problem at the moment. The Minister, through Main Roads, has made a decision that there are to be no traffic lights on the corner of Stoneville Road and Great Eastern Highway. I place on record that traffic lights at that intersection, which may slow down the Eastern States trucking, are needed for the local community. I cannot emphasize that too strongly.

I am attempting to persuade the Minister to come to Mundaring to look at the area. The Shire of Mundaring has just built a shopping centre on the north side of Great Eastern Highway; a village of over 300 elderly people is located on the south side; and there is a tourist route to Mundaring Weir on the south side also. The Mundaring townsite is located in the middle of all of that. The trucks are interacting with the normal community traffic. Parents with their children must cross a double lane dual carriage highway carrying Eastern States heavy haulage. The whole area comprises accidents waiting to happen. I do not have the statistics with me, but many major accidents have occurred at that corner involving vehicles turning right. Traffic lights at that intersection are necessary. The community demands them. The Minister, in conjunction with Main Roads, must consider the needs of the community as well as the needs of the transport industry.

I turn to a more positive topic - the centenary next year of the commencement of Mundaring Weir. Construction of the weir commenced in 1898. Mundaring is gearing up for major celebrations of the townsite and the commencement of the weir. The Minister for Water Resources, the Premier and officers from the Water Authority have visited the weir. The Government has agreed to upgrade the weir and to set up gardens and beautify the weir. She is a pretty tired old lady and she has been neglected for some time. Each year 150 000 day visitors travel to Mundaring Weir. Last year the weir overflowed and there were many more visitors.

Two years ago I asked in this place about the walkway over the weir which has been closed for nearly two years. I inform the House with pleasure that the first part of the walkway was lifted off Friday a week ago and will be repaired in time for the overflow this year, which the Water Authority says will occur again after the first significant rains. If members did not see the weir overflow last year, they will have another opportunity.



Another issue in Swan Hills relates to schools. I have 24 schools in my electorate, including the Eastern Hills Senior High School, which has a special need. This school is looking for a new cluster development for its year 8 students. I ask the Minister for this to be included in the Budget. I attended a tour of part of New South Wales and the ACT to look at cluster-type developments for schools and I met people who build these clusters. I returned to Western Australia very enthusiastic about these developments and I suggest that this State consider building all schools under such a system. I have written to the Minister for Education on this matter. When an area begins to grow and develop, usually many children are born and then a primary school is required. As the area ages, perhaps 15 years later, it changes in dynamics as many children leave school and there is no need for the school. Fifteen or 20 years after the schools are built one or more classrooms can be picked up and moved to another area. They can be repainted to fit into any design. Rather than build brick and tile or tin roof buildings over the State, which often become redundant as situations change, it would be prudent for the Government to have these cluster-type buildings that can be moved like Lego.

I spent almost a full day looking at these schools in different circumstances, and they look no different from the schools in Western Australia. The previous speaker spoke about being in the Royal Australian Navy. The Navy uses these buildings when it develops an area, and when it moves on or when the need no longer exists the buildings are moved to another area. They are moved all over Australia at about one-third of the cost of constructing new buildings. The Government should consider this proposal to make more use of its public buildings.

Finally, I was privileged to represent the Premier in Parliament on Ash Wednesday and to receive the banner of the Inter-Church Working Group on Poverty. I will read from its charter of hope. The United Nations set 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. During 1996 people all over the world were asked to think about the problems of poverty and to work towards its eradication forever. It was a very big task and could be achieved only if everybody worked together to do what they could to help each person near them. Therefore, the churches in Western Australia came together in what they call the Inter-Church Working Group on Poverty. This group worked for a year and produced a charter of hope and resources kit to help people to work together on poverty during the next decade.

The group's representatives rang the Premier's office and asked whether they could come to the Parliament to present the charter to the Premier. He was not available at the time, so I met them at Parliament House where the charter was presented. This charter is a document which outlines the right of every person to have food and shelter, to attend school to receive an education, to access hospitals to meet medical needs and to be involved in the community. Also, people have the right to be respected and loved, which is part of being needed. Sometimes the poverty cycle does not allow those needs to be met.

Also, the charter outlines to each and every one of us the responsibilities we share; everyone can do something to care for someone else. The charter also asks us to be responsible citizens and to accept one another's differences.

The theme of the charter of hope is to "act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly." If many of us in Western Australia worked under that theme, a lot of the poverty and social problems would be eradicated. If we as a community acted justly on every issue, most of our crime would be gone; if we loved tenderly and we all cared for each other, many problems would disappear; and if we walked humbly and considered other people, many problems would be solved.

I hold up a beautiful scroll containing text written in calligraphy. The preamble refers to the need to eradicate poverty and to people's right to basic food and other necessities of life in clothing and shelter. It refers to employment, education and health care, and the right to participate in decisions which affect our lives. Also, it refers to expressing our unique cultural heritage and our spirituality. This scroll was brought to the Parliament, and I seek permission to lay it on the table of the House for the rest of this day's sitting.

[The paper was tabled for the information of members.]

Mrs van de KLASHORST: The group asked if the scroll could be displayed in a prominent position in the Parliament, and I intend to follow that request through and see whether it can be displayed. I will be speaking to the President on that issue.

I commend that charter to the House. As a Government, we have a responsibility to work towards the eradication of poverty in Western Australia and the rest of Australia. We must also remember that this is a whole of community concern; it is not only for people here in the Government. We need to look at the causes of poverty which relate to many problems in our society; I refer to family breakdown, the lack of educational facilities for our young people, and young people facing leaving school without the prospect of a job. We must give each young person the opportunity to move forward in life. Much needs to be done. However, if we can work as a Government in a holistic way, acting in an interventionist manner across agencies and government departments to deal with problems at their

beginnings, we can work with these people to eradicate poverty. This approach will also eradicate some other social injustices in our society, including crime.

Finally, I record my thanks to the Premier for giving me the opportunity to be Parliamentary Secretary for Justice. I have been working solidly at this portfolio two days a week since my appointment. I look forward to having a say as we work towards sorting out some of the justice problems in Western Australia.

**MR TRENORDEN** (Avon) [9.56 pm]: My contribution to the Address-in-Reply will not be long, but I wish to place some fundamental issues on the record.

Mr Pandal: All very maidenly.

Mr TRENORDEN: Yes, very ably.

Mr Pandal: Maidenly.

Mr TRENORDEN: I apologise; I have a blocked left ear and I could not quite hear the interjection.

I take on board the earlier points the member for Midland made regarding a matter I raised; I will take her word for it, and that is the end of that matter. However, I will not take lightly interjections from the member for North Toodyay, who intrudes on my patch; I do not appreciate the member for South Perth's political activity in Toodyay.

Mr Barnett interjected.

Mr TRENORDEN: I hope that that is the case, but I understand that the member's habits transgress more down to the Margaret River-type of area.

Mr Pandal: They want to draft me as the new member for Avon. I'm giving them plenty of encouragement.

Mr TRENORDEN: The member has half the necessary attributes - his hair is going blond like mine!

A major event in the seats of Avon and Swan Hills was the Wooroloo fire, which scared the living daylights out of thousands of people. It was a very serious circumstance and was the most fierce urban-rural fire since those in Dwellingup in about 1961-62. It is some time since a fire of that intensity has occurred in this State. It is clear that once a fire gets going, it is beyond the control of the fire brigade and the efficient people who attempt to put it out. The firefighters need luck, circumstance and prior planning to deal with such fires.

I appreciate the efforts of the member for Swan Hills and the federal member for Pearce, Minister Judy Moylan, who met with me and people in my electorate at Wundowie to discuss the fire and many issues of concern to constituents. Overwhelmingly, the message which I deliver to the Parliament was that people were very appreciative of the efforts made by the emergency services. We raised some issues with the Minister for Emergency Services - I appreciate that he met with me and the two other members of Parliament to whom I referred - and took on board the sincere concerns of the affected residents.

The House may be interested to discover that Hon Norm Baxter, a member of another place many years ago, and a former Minister for Education, was greatly affected by that fire. As the fire matters are fairly well under control, I now move to other areas.

Several concerns are felt in my electorate, many of which revolve around the future of the national competition policy, which can be best summed up as user pays. If this formula is applied to the extent outlined in the Hilmer report, and one does not have enough users, one will either pay more or lose the service. Some serious concerns exist on this matter. The Minister for Health is in the Chamber: The areas of obvious concern in rural Western Australia are health and education, the primary ticket issues of any Government.

The issues of education and health will be affected in the next four years. It will be interesting to see how the Federal Government deals with the current crisis, which has been much talked about in the recent Press; namely, the declining numbers of people in private health insurance. I heard today that there has been a further 2 per cent reduction in the membership of private health insurance. There are ever reducing contributions from the Federal Government to the States and therefore the pressure is on. The delivery of emergency services in country towns is absolutely essential. The aged care debate is a fundamental issue for rural people. I favour the method that has been debated on the federal scene that when people choose their institution for aged care that is where they should stay. They should be able to make friends and become comfortable and not have to move from lodges, hostels and aged care to other places.

Mr Prince: If their physical health deteriorates they would need more intensive care than otherwise.

Mr TRENORDEN: That is correct. However, I believe we should attempt to move towards that principle. To be able to deliver in that manner would also suit many institutions in rural Western Australia. The Minister will not be surprised to hear that I have had several dozen inquiries from councils through to private citizens about provider numbers for doctors and obtaining doctors for rural towns. Pingelly has a very competent doctor who is committed to the town. However, the town would like a second doctor to share with the neighbouring town of Brookton. The town believes there is enough business for two doctors in that locality. Some four or five years ago when Pingelly lost its doctor it took a good year to obtain another one. As the Minister will be fully aware, most of the doctors in the wheatbelt have come from overseas. Much of the rhetoric from the federal Minister seems to deny the fact that many doctors in rural Australia come from overseas. If the federal Minister is to play around with provider numbers, it is logical that some of those provider numbers should be attributed to hospitals or community groups. I am sure the Minister is dealing with the question.

Mr Prince: We are encountering problems with competition policy.

Mr TRENORDEN: I understand all that. If the Minister is to be able to raise the question it is logical that he chase it through to its conclusion.

Mr Prince: The federal Minister says it is a state problem.

Mr TRENORDEN: Does he?

One of the real issues in education will be how the Education Department adapts to new technology and the new delivery of education. They will have substantial use in rural communities and certainly in the metropolitan area. We must also talk about the necessary blend in schools between children's academic learning and their social skills. They are a very important part of any school in country areas. That is why so much pressure has been applied about those schools. Parents like to think that children are building friendships and life skills as well as academic learning. I am happy to see that Northam Senior High School is taking on with relish the adaptation of secondary schools to meet applied tasks. It has some \$40 000 supplied to it by federal grant to move into an applied area. This has been lacking at Northam Senior High School and in secondary education throughout Western Australia. I am pleased to see that those associations with TAFE and the secondary schools are growing quickly. Not only is industry calling out for it, as I hear all the time, but also many parents want to know that their children are able to go to skilled areas, especially when they know that children have particular capabilities and want such training to occur.

Another area is transport and roads. In its last period of government this Government increased the money allocated to roads by some \$100m a year. It is still not enough because it does not go anywhere near to maintaining the requirements of country and metropolitan roads. As my electorate is in the country, I will talk about country roads. They are still deteriorating and shires are still under pressure to maintain the existing paved roads. At the moment because of exceptional circumstances there is considerable activity in the towns of York and Northam with very high numbers of trucks carting wheat. Some of them have 50 to 60 tonnes gross weight. They are chopping up the roads. Quite rightly my councils are asking who will pay for the cost of repairs. The councils do not object to the farmers earning extra income but the roads are affected.

There is also a high priority in my electorate on ensuring that rail transport is relevant. The Avon link has been an outstanding success. Consultants are examining the Avon link, the *Prospector* and the *Australind* and other trains. I am sure this will be successful for country passenger movements. I saw the Commissioner of Railways and his new assistant manager for country passenger services. I am delighted that the Minister has taken the initiative to talk to the commissioner about splitting Westrail and creating a section for country passengers and to recognise that bus and rail passenger movement is absolutely essential. Without that division of Westrail, country passenger services were becoming irrelevant, with resources and service delivery spiralling down. I am pleased to see that situation turned around. Members will see a definite change in country passenger services.

I am always amused when I drive to Perth and listen to the metropolitan radio. I hear debates, which I do not say are unfair, concerning the northern freeway with its overpasses and the southern freeway and its traffic lights. Those debates are raging in the metropolitan area. I point out to the people who listen to those debates, that many people in country areas would like merely to have sealed roads. Recently I was driving to Perth and listening to a very emotional debate about power lines; people in the northern suburbs were saying that it was outrageous that they had overhead power lines going through their suburbs. They thought the power lines should be underground. I have people in my constituency paying \$20 000 to try to get power to their house. I just put those arguments into context.

Mr Prince interjected.

Mr TRENORDEN: The Minister is quite rightly saying that from one end of rural Western Australia to the other they are serious matters for families who are trying to establish themselves. To pay \$20 000 in order to connect power is something metropolitan Western Australians do not think about.

Mr Bloffwitch: You reckon that is bad. Try to get water put on!

Mr TRENORDEN: I was about to say that I had a telephone call from a constituent in Toodyay who is trying to run a business. He has been in business for some time and relocated from the metropolitan area to Toodyay. It cost him \$13 000 for a telephone line. Who in the metropolitan area pays \$13 000 for a telephone line? It is not simply a question of paying \$13 000 to have the telephone connected, because it is not connected immediately. People from two businesses in my electorate at the moment are talking about water and power extensions because they wish to increase the size of their businesses. Both face costs in excess of \$25 000 to do what would be done automatically in light industrial areas in suburbs like Osborne Park and Kewdale.

Another question which gets too lightly played over by members opposite is native title, which is very seriously affecting my electorate. Not much of my electorate is unclaimed. The shires have been unable to establish light industrial areas in order to expand industry in their communities because they are planned on crown land. In some cases they cannot obtain crown land for residential blocks. There are concerns also about recreation and other areas within those towns. Native title is seriously blocking the commercial activities of many towns and towns like Beverley are extremely concerned that they are losing employment in the community because of the direct effect of native title claims.

Ms MacTiernan: Not to mention the direct effect from the closing down of Westrail.

Mr TRENORDEN: The Labor Government did that. Northam was the biggest rail centre in Western Australia - bigger than Midland - before the Second World War. The member for Eyre would admit that much of the downsizing in Westrail was done by Labor Governments. I suggest that the greatest percentage of Westrail's Northam employees went while the member for Eyre was Minister for Transport. I am not arguing that he should not have done it because right now the trucks are rolling through York and Northam carting wheat. However, rail is far cheaper than road and road is being used right now only because of the necessity to move 300 000 tonnes more than Westrail has the capacity to carry.

Mr Grill: We did downsize while I was the Minister. However, I tried not to give away the transport tasks. I tried to maintain as many tasks on rail as possible.

Mr TRENORDEN: That was not the interjection by the member for Armadale.

Ms MacTiernan: What has happened to the Northam-York line?

Mr TRENORDEN: That will remain open.

Ms MacTiernan: It is not open now.

Mr TRENORDEN: No, it is not open now.

Ms MacTiernan: Why not?

Mr TRENORDEN: Because it is in need of repair. It is not being used right now. That is where the wheat is being pulled by road at the moment.

Ms MacTiernan: It is not closed; it is just not open!

Mr TRENORDEN: As I said, the rolling stock is being used elsewhere in the State to pull wheat. Wheat is not being pulled on the York-Quairading line because there is a speed limit of 30 kilometres per hour. It is inefficient to pull -

Ms MacTiernan: Why is the speed limit only 30 kmh?

Mr TRENORDEN: Because of the poor condition of the rail. For 10 years the Labor Party did not put any money into it.

Ms MacTiernan: You have had four years and you have destroyed the track maintenance program.

Mr TRENORDEN: That is true; we have had four years. The maintenance on that piece of rail has not been good. I will put my hand up and say that that line has not been maintained as it should have been. A contract was meant to begin on 1 March replacing one in three sleepers along that line. That has not started. However, it has not begun because of the concentration of effort elsewhere. All of Westrail's rolling stock and locomotives are now 100 per cent occupied in pulling grain and they cannot pull the full tonnage required to meet the export requirements of the Wheat Board. That line is not closed but it is not being used either. The member for Armadale's implication that the line needs maintenance work was also right. However, there is a contract to replace one in three sleepers on the line. It is still speed restricted to 30 kmh as it has been for 10 years. As the member would know, because she is far from being a foolish person, a 30 kmh speed limit is not efficient if one is trying to pull as quickly as one can.

Ms MacTiernan: The longer the rail trip the worse that is.

Mr TRENORDEN: Of course it is. That is why that line is not being used. I put a question on notice to the Minister today asking whether that line will be closed, because my constituency has asked me that question, and whether it will receive maintenance, how much and in what time.

Ms MacTiernan: Obviously great minds think alike because I put a similar question on notice.

Mr TRENORDEN: Because my constituents have asked the question it is a fair question to put on notice.

Dozens of people have rung me terrified because their farms and homes have had native title claims placed over them. The Labor Party said that would never happen. It is not easy to tell those people not to worry because it is only a procedure and the Native Title Tribunal will hear the matter. They know that under the current circumstances it will be their resources against the might of Australia through the Native Title Tribunal.

Ms MacTiernan: Do these people have freehold title?

Mr TRENORDEN: No, they are conditional purchase farms. It is still crown land. There are dozens in my electorate. The Pingelly-Brookton area became a strong war service settlement area after the Second World War. Many of those properties have not been paid off.

Ms MacTiernan: However, those are leases of a different nature from that determined in the Wik case.

Mr TRENORDEN: Yes, but these people are still receiving letters from the Native Title Tribunal which scares the living daylights out of them. They are trying to go about their normal lifestyle. They are not lawyers like the member for Armadale. They have received in the mail a very formal, blunt letter informing them that their land is under claim and they must deal with the court. The member for Armadale knows as a lawyer what goes through people's minds when they read those sorts of letters. They ring me and ask me to assure them that they will not be affected. I cannot give them that assurance. Following the recent decisions of the High Court and the debate that is going on currently, I am not prepared to guarantee that their farms and houses are safe from claim. However, I can tell them that the Native Title Tribunal has informed me that that is the case. I advise them to ring such and such a number and the person on the other end of the line will deal with them. However, that does not change the fact that these people are terrified because they believe that they are up against the might of Australia and they have no prospect of winning an extended legal battle. If the member for Armadale is interested, I put another question on notice today asking whether any rural producer in Western Australia has been granted legal aid. I have seen and heard that debate in the media today also. I would be very surprised if any primary producer in Western Australia has been granted legal aid. One or two pastoralists may have been. However, no-one in my electorate has been granted legal aid to secure their position against the might of the Australian Government. There are terrified people out there. I hope this matter is resolved sooner rather than later.

One of the things that must happen in the native title argument is that a decision must be made about who has the right to make a claim. There is no doubt that many of the Aboriginal people who have made claims in this State are not the people entitled to make those claims. In a speech some six months ago the member for Eyre quite correctly pointed out that a few people from South Australia and from the Esperance area had claimed land in the Kalgoorlie region. That should not have been allowed for two reasons: Firstly, they were not entitled to make the claim and, secondly, some of the people in his area who are entitled have not put in claims. They have not been recognised. It is a blackmail process with many people buying rights from mining people and so forth. I wonder about the responsibilities of some corporate people who have given away shareholders' funds on false claims. I wonder how secure those people will be in the future. I think native title is a real mess.

Mr Grill interjected.

Mr TRENORDEN: That is the point. I believe they would be more reasonable to the people who are around them and proceedings would be negotiated a lot better. The people who lodge claims must be able to prove their right to do so. The notion that the court must accept all claims lodged should not prevail. It is a ridiculous notion and should be dispensed with immediately.

I thank the Attorney General for giving me permission to visit the Wooroloo Prison - on, I might add, a temporary basis. It is a minimum security prison which is not in my electorate. It is in the electorate of Swan Hills but only a strip of bitumen separates the prison from my electorate. I visited the prison because the fire I referred to earlier destroyed quite a bit of the accommodation there. Therefore, the number of inmates has been reduced. One of the problems with the prison is that the sword of Damocles has been hanging over its head for some time. In the 11 years I have been in this place there has been the notion that the prison will close. Such a notion should be put to rest because it is ridiculous. All the prisons in this State are necessary if one considers the number of offenders.

The Wooroloo Prison was originally the tuberculosis hospital. It still is the district hospital for the Wooroloo area. It looks like a hospital, not a prison, and it is located in a beautiful valley.

Mr Cowan: Until someone set it alight.

Mr TRENORDEN: That is right. It badly needs some capital. It is a low cost prison system and it costs \$20 000 less to accommodate prisoners at Wooroloo than it does at medium and strict security prisons. The State needs a minimum security prison. Prisoners should be given the opportunity to learn work skills in a non-compulsory way and this could be done at Wooroloo. Prisoners should also be given the opportunity to start small enterprises - for example, making furniture - and become involved in community activities. Members should bear in mind that it is a minimum security prison. Prisoners should be able to develop skills and take them into the community when they return to society.

The average age of the inmates in Wooroloo is in the low twenties and people in that age group should be given as much incentive as possible. Extension programs similar to those in the Northern Territory should be operating in the wheatbelt. The prisoners could be responsible for the infrastructure in tourist areas. When I visited Alice Springs I was made aware that some of the toilet blocks, paths, rails and other infrastructure in the tourist areas have been constructed by prisoners. It is good for both the community and the minimum risk prisoners.

I heard on the news today that another inmate walked out of Wooroloo. As it is a minimum security risk institution the inmates are not locked in at night. It may be of interest to the member for Wagin that I heard the police say that the individual who had escaped was not dangerous. My blood boils when I hear the police say that an escapee from Wooroloo is dangerous. If a prisoner is dangerous he would not be at Wooroloo. The police simply read the details from the individual's record and do not take any notice that if prisoners are at Wooroloo at the end of their sentence they are preparing to go back into the community. The history of prisoners walking out of Wooroloo is that they do so for personal reasons. They do not risk walking out of that institution when they have only a few extra months to serve except for personal reasons. No prisoner in that institution is a serious risk to the community and the announcements by the police raise a false perception in the community. The police should get their act together and cease making such ridiculous pronouncements.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Bloffwitch.

*House adjourned at 10.25 pm*

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## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

### MINISTERS OF THE CROWN - MINISTER REPRESENTING THE MINISTER FOR FINANCE

#### *Portfolio Responsibilities*

38. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister representing the Minister for Finance:

What is the name of each committee, board, tribunal and all other similar bodies within the Minister's portfolio?

Mr COURT replied:

The Minister for Finance has provided the following reply -

Treasury -  
Western Australian EXIM Corporation  
Western Australian Development Corporation

State Revenue Department -  
Land Valuation Tribunal

State Government Insurance Commission -  
Board of directors of the State Government Insurance Commission and  
Board of directors of the State Government Insurance Corporation

Government Employees Superannuation Board -  
Government Employees Superannuation Board

Valuer General's Office -  
Nil

### MINISTERS OF THE CROWN - MINISTER FOR WORKS

#### *Portfolio Responsibilities*

39. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Works; Services; Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs; Youth

What is the name of each committee, board, tribunal and all other similar bodies within the Minister's portfolios?

Mr BOARD replied:

State Supply Commission -  
State Supply Commission Board

Department of Contract and Management Services -  
The Architects Board of Western Australia  
The Building and Construction Advisory Council  
The Fremantle Prison Trust

Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs -  
The portfolio of Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs has no ministerial appointed committees, boards, tribunals or other similar bodies.

Youth -  
Youth Minister's Advisory Council  
Youth Training Scheme Advisory Council  
Youth Coordinating Committee

### MINISTERS OF THE CROWN - MINISTER REPRESENTING THE MINISTER FOR RACING AND GAMING

#### *Portfolio Responsibilities*

40. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister representing the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

What is the name of each committee, board, tribunal and all other similar bodies within the Minister's portfolio?

Mr COWAN replied:

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

Lotteries Commission -  
Lotteries Commission Board

Office of Racing, Gaming and Liquor -  
Betting Control Board  
Burswood Park Board  
Gaming Commission of Western Australia  
Liquor Licensing Court  
Racecourse Development Trust  
Racing Penalties Appeal Tribunal  
Totalisator Agency Board  
Western Australian Greyhound Racing Association Committee  
Charitable Collections Advisory Committee

## MINISTERS OF THE CROWN - MINISTER FOR WORKS

### *Portfolio Responsibilities*

61. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Works; Services; Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs; Youth
- (1) In relation to all real estate (land and buildings) sold within the Minister's portfolios in the 1995-96 and 1996-97 financial years -
- (a) where was the real estate situated (giving the actual address of the land and building);
  - (b) for what amount was the real estate sold;
  - (c) when, if ever, was the most recent valuation of the real estate conducted; and
  - (d) what was the value of the real estate according to the valuation?
- (2) What real estate within your portfolios is currently for sale or in the process of being sold?

Mr BOARD replied:

Office of Multicultural Interests -

- (1)-(2) Not applicable. The Office of Multicultural Interests has no land or buildings.

Department of Contract and Management Services -

- (1) (a) The ex WA Building Management Authority site at 207 Star Street, Welshpool (part only).  
(b) \$470 000.  
(c) April 1995.  
(d) \$470 000.
- (2) Discussions have been occurring with LandCorp with a view to selling the remainder of the Welshpool depot site in the 1997-98 financial year.

State Supply Commission -

- (1)-(2) The State Supply Commission has never had any real estate to sell.

Office of Youth Interests -

- (1)-(2) Not applicable. OYI has no land or buildings.

## TRAFFIC - PEDESTRIANS

### *Dual Use Pathways - Third Party Insurance*

89. Mr RIPPER to the Minister representing the Minister for Finance:
- (1) Does the Government have any plans to give pedestrians injured by cyclists on dual use pathways access to Motor Vehicle Third Party Insurance Scheme benefits?
- (2) If not, why not?

Mr COURT replied:

The Minister for Finance has provided the following response -

- (1) No.



- (2) The Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act 1943 requires owners of motor vehicles while on a road, to be insured against liability in respect of death or bodily injuries directly caused by, or by the driving of, such motor vehicle, where caused on or off a road. The definition of a motor vehicle under this Act does not extend to bicycles. From an administrative aspect such a scheme would be extremely difficult and expensive to regulate because it would mean that all bicycles would need to be registered and comply with licensing requirements before they could be insured. In addition, the issue of insurance for minors would be a further obstacle in establishing negligence. I believe that appropriate policies of insurance for both cyclists and pedestrians are readily available within the general insurance industry, for example, personal accident cover.

#### EDUCATION - SCHOOLS

##### *Cadet Training Scheme - Crime Prevention*

148. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Youth:

- (1) Is the cadet training scheme in schools a crime prevention scheme?
- (2) If so, in what ways does the scheme prevent crime?
- (3) Does the cadet scheme in schools have an element of crime prevention?
- (4) If so, what is that element?
- (5) Does the Government intend to introduce a youth leadership training program or similar program?
- (6) If so, exactly what will that program involve?
- (7) When will the program be introduced?

Mr BOARD replied:

- (1),(3) No.
- (2),(4) Not applicable.
- (5)-(7) The Government is considering a range of youth leadership training initiatives.

#### GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS - EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

##### *Good Start Facilities*

163. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Works; Services:

- (1) Has the Department of Contract Services and Management administered contracts for the construction of Education Department New Start facilities?
- (2) How many such contracts have been let since 1 October 1996?
- (3) What schools will have New Start facilities provided under these contracts?
- (4) Have the contracts been awarded to the tenderer that submitted the lowest price?
- (5) Which tenders were not awarded to the tenderer that submitted the lowest price?
- (6) What was the reason for such contracts not being let to such tenderer/tenderers?

Mr BOARD replied:

- (1) I assume the question refers to contracts for the Good Start program. The Department of Contract and Management Services has established contracts for Good Start.
- (2) Two.
- (3) (i) A contract was let for a preprimary centre at Bruce Rock District High School.  
(ii) A contract was let for siteworks for transportables for 13 metropolitan sites.
- (4) (i) Bruce Rock District High School - yes.

- (ii) The siteworks for metropolitan transportable classrooms contract was not awarded to the lowest tenderer.
- (5) See (4)(ii).
- (6) The contract for transportable classrooms was awarded to the fourth tenderer because the lowest tenderer withdrew its tender and the next two lowest tenderers did not comply with the apprenticeship requirements of the tender documents.

#### YOUTH MINISTER'S ADVISORY COUNCIL - APPOINTMENT

##### *Members*

194. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Youth:

- (1) Has the Government appointed the Youth Advisory Council?
- (2) When was the council appointed?
- (3) What are the names and occupations of the council members?
- (4) How many members of the council are young people as defined in the Government advertisement for council membership?

Mr BOARD replied:

- (1) The Government has established the Youth Minister's Advisory Council.
- (2) March 1997.
- (3)

Mr Ray Della-Polina Chairman, YMAC	Chairman and Managing Director, Marlows Ltd Chairperson, Healthway
Ms Ruth Armstrong	President, Rural Youth Federation of WA
Mr Peter Collier	Tennis Coach
Mr Mel Fialho	Teacher President Australian/Asian Association
Ms Natalie Fuhrmann	Sportswoman and Journalist
Ms Anne Griffiths	Education Services Coordinator, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of WA
Mr Mel Hay	Assistant Commissioner, Traffic and Operations Support, WA Police Service
Ms Kathryn Heaton	Project Engineer, Water Corporation
Mr Jonathan Huston	Director of Development, Aquinas College
Ms Kate Reynolds	President, Youth Australia Development Organisation
Professor Steven Schwartz	Vice Chancellor, Murdoch University
Dr Howard Sercombe	Chairperson, Youth Affairs Council of WA, Lecturer, Edith Cowan University
Mr Sven Silburn	Senior Researcher, Telethon Child Health Research Institute Senior Lecturer, University Department of Paediatrics, University of Western Australia
Mr Jason Walkerton	Broadcaster, 92.9PMFM
Ms Gina Williams	Broadcaster, GWN
Ms Cheryl Vardon	Director General, Education Department of WA
Mr Mike Daube	Executive Director, Office of Youth Affairs
- (4) The YMAC comprises a mix of ages and relevant experience.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### SHARK BAY - OIL EXPLORATION LICENCE

#### *Expressions of Interest*

#### 7. **Dr GALLOP to the Premier:**

Last Thursday the Premier told this House that he knew nothing about an exploration permit for the Shark Bay World Heritage area before he read it in *The West Australian* that week. He also claimed the Minister had no discretion to intervene and refuse that permit.

- (1) How does the Premier reconcile his comments with -
  - (a) the fact that the Government called for expressions of interest for oil and gas exploration in this Shark Bay area and others in November 1995;
  - (b) the subsequent expressions of interest by Moondance Energy Pty Ltd, Tap Oil NL and Omega Oil in March 1996;
  - (c) the offer of a grant to these companies by the Government in October 1996; and
  - (d) the secret approval of the permit on November 1996.
- (2) Was the Premier dealing in half truths when he omitted to tell Parliament that the Minister could have stopped the process more than a year ago and on a number of occasions since then?

#### **Mr COURT replied:**

- (1)-(2) Last week the Leader of the Opposition asked me when I first knew about it and I said that I had read it in the newspaper, and that was correct. I then explained, as the Leader of the Opposition outlined, that the process was that an offer was made, etc. At various stages before the last part of the process, of course different actions could have been taken.

Dr Gallop: It was not a fait accompli!

Mr COURT: The Leader of the Opposition asked me a question and I gave him the answer. In relation to the last approval, he said it was done in secret, and I explained it was the final part of the process and the Minister had no option other than to do that. The Leader of the Opposition is right - at earlier stages in the process the permits can go down different paths. My answer is the same as the answer I gave last week.

### HEALTH MINISTERS' CONFERENCE - OUTCOME

#### 8. **Mr OSBORNE to the Minister for Health:**

Will the Minister advise the House of the outcome of last Friday's Health Ministers' conference?

#### **Mr PRINCE replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The Health Ministers met last Friday in Sydney at an extraordinary meeting, not a scheduled meeting, which was called at the request of the Minister who is currently chairing the Health Ministers' conferences; that is, the Queensland Minister for Health, Mr Horan.

The current Medicare Agreement provides that if there is a drop of 2 per cent, or greater, then subject to statistical proof of that drop, the Commonwealth can be asked to pick up the additional cost that has flowed to the States as a result of having more people in the public hospital system.

A draft report was available last Friday which showed that there had been such a drop. That is the third 2 per cent drop since the current Medicare Agreement was signed. The commonwealth Minister went to some pains to explain that it is not a matter of what he wishes to do but that the commonwealth budgetary position does not enable him to provide any more money. This is the second time the Commonwealth has said that: It was said by the former Labor Government, and it has now been said by the coalition Government. The position is that there is no change in the Commonwealth's stance on this matter. The Commonwealth acknowledges that the number of people who have private health insurance is dropping and that the cost is flowing to the States, but no further money will come to the States to compensate for that additional cost. That is a disappointment, but, in defence of the commonwealth Minister, he did say that he would assist if he was in a position to do so.

We discussed that matter at some length, and also other matters, particularly the renegotiation of the Medicare Agreement, which will expire on 30 June next year. We agreed, as we stated in the communique that we issued on Friday, to begin to renegotiate the Medicare process and to hope to finalise that renegotiation by the end of this calendar year. That will put in place the principles for the new Medicare Agreement to operate from 1 July next year. We also agreed as state and territory Ministers to ask our leaders to seek additional funding from the Commonwealth for both the 1997-98 Budget and, more importantly, the renegotiation of Medicare, because this matter cannot be left; it must be addressed.

I am pleased to say that the Premiers' meeting in Melbourne had independently reached virtually the same conclusion. With your leave, Mr Speaker, I will quote briefly from the leaders' communique, which states -

Public hospital demand growth is exceeding States' and Territories' capacity to fund the system and at the same time private health insurance cover continues to fall. The current situation is unsustainable. Escalating health costs are acknowledged to be a major national problem, not isolated to any one State or Territory. Difficulties are exacerbated by the continuing perception that Australians' contribution to Medicare fully pays for the provision of public health services when in fact it covers only 9 per cent of costs.

Premiers and Chief Ministers agreed that there is a critical need for leadership in relation to fundamental structural reform of health care financing and delivery. Piecemeal approaches that address one aspect of the health system without fundamental reform will not solve long standing problems.

In recognition of the need to address these issues now as a matter of urgency, Leaders agreed that health should be a major issue for discussion at the forthcoming meeting of COAG.

I am delighted, as are all the Health Ministers, that the leaders have taken this view. It is time for a fundamental re-evaluation of the way in which health services are delivered across Australia, which takes into account the most populous and the most sparsely populated States; questions of remoteness and delivery of access; the disastrous drop in private health insurance in the past four to five years; and other matters that have put some pressure on the public hospital system, which, as the leaders have said, cannot be sustained into the future.

#### GOLD ROYALTY - NATIONAL PARTY POLICY

#### 9. Dr GALLOP to the Deputy Premier and Leader of the National Party:

I refer to National Party policy and to the Deputy Premier's amazing backflip last Thursday over a gold royalty, and to his comment that the Commonwealth was pressuring Western Australia to raise more revenues and that he could not place any great value on the accuracy of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, and ask -

Did the Deputy Premier tell the *Kalgoorlie Miner* during the recent election campaign that he would not be part of any Government which, having promised not to introduce a gold royalty, then broke that promise?

#### Mr COWAN replied:

I firstly correct the Leader of the Opposition: I did not talk about the accuracy; I talked about the integrity of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*. The Leader of the Opposition can check that in *Hansard* and he will find that is correct.

Dr Gallop: You said both.

Mr COWAN: As I said last week, the issue of a gold royalty was discussed. It was raised by the *Kalgoorlie Miner* prior to the last election. I said that it was not on the agenda. I was then pushed into a question: "That is what everyone says prior to an election. What will you do immediately after the election?" I said that it was not on the agenda. I said that I did not have any intention of putting it on the agenda. What I said last week still holds. The fact is that the Commonwealth Government, through recommendations made to it by the Grants Commission through the actions of this Government, is constantly hypothecating the revenue stream that States may or may not earn from different sources. One of those is royalties on minerals. That includes a royalty on gold. The State has had its hand forced. No-one can object to that. However, there is always an alternative, and that is to ask the Commonwealth Government again to return some of the tax it imposed eight to 10 years ago when it decided that corporate bodies that mined gold would no longer be exempt from income tax. The member for Eyre would distinctly remember that, because he led the State Labor Party to campaign strongly against the imposition of that measure. Unfortunately for him he failed. We would love to see some of that money directed back to the State, because the State loses something like \$1.4b income every year which goes to the Commonwealth Government.

Mr Grill interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Eyre will come to order!

GOLD ROYALTY - NATIONAL PARTY POLICY

**10. Dr GALLOP to the Deputy Premier:**

Will the Deputy Premier confirm that he stated to the *Kalgoorlie Miner* that he would withdraw the National Party from the coalition should the issue of the gold royalty go onto the agenda of the coalition Government during this term?

**Mr COWAN replied:**

I did say that I would have no part in negotiating a coalition Government if that were to be put back on the agenda. We negotiated the coalition in the clear knowledge that that was not on the agenda. It has subsequently been placed on the agenda -

Dr Gallop: That is ridiculous! Your position has changed.

Mr COWAN: I acknowledge that I have said that a gold royalty was not on the agenda. I acknowledge that I have said that if someone said to me that we would negotiate a coalition based on the reintroduction of the gold royalty, I would not be part of it. That is true. That is what I said, but we have -

Dr Gallop: You cannot get away with this. It is a ridiculous position that you put.

Mr COWAN: I do not see it as ridiculous.

Dr Gallop: You are misusing the English language.

Mr COWAN: I have spent a lot of time castigating -

Mr Grill interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Eyre, I have allowed some interjections from the Leader of the Opposition, who posed the question, and from you because of your interest, but I may have gone too far! The Deputy Premier is entitled to be heard, and you are interjecting too much.

Mr COWAN: I acknowledge that I made the statement regarding a gold royalty not being on the agenda. I also indicated clearly in response to the question that as far as I was concerned the National Party would not reinstate that to the agenda immediately after a successful election. That is what I said. Since that time, we have seen the Commonwealth Grants Commission make a recommendation regarding funding to the States. We must respond to that; we have no choice.

WESTRAIL - SUBURBAN PASSENGER TRAINS

*Security*

**11. Mrs van de KLASHORST to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:**

I refer to violence on suburban trains, and in particular to my constituents' concerns about the Midland line.

- (1) What measures are in place to upgrade security on these trains?
- (2) Is the liaison process between Westrail security officers and the police proving effective in dealing with the problem?

**Mr OMODEI replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The Minister for Transport has supplied the following response -

- (1) Over recent years there has been a marked increase in unlawful behaviour on the suburban railway. The problem is part of a broader social issue which must be addressed across the community. However, in recognition of its responsibility to passengers, over the recent past Westrail has implemented the following initiatives to provide a safe environment for people using its suburban passenger trains. Firstly, all trains departing after 6.00 pm have a security presence on board, and selected stations and train services are strengthened with additional security during special events or at times when it is anticipated trouble could occur. Secondly, Westrail has appointed special constables. Thirdly, it has changed the role of passenger service staff to include customer care and security functions. We now have 97 special constables and 39 customer care and security officers operating on the suburban train system. The publicity about violence on suburban trains of recent days resulted from an incident on the Armadale line on 4 March in which 20 to 30 Aboriginal people were involved in violent behaviour. The Commissioner of Railways is seeking

assistance from the metropolitan Aboriginal community to find a solution to the significant level of antisocial behaviour on suburban passenger services.

- (2) The liaison process between Westrail security officers and the police is proving effective.

#### EDUCATION - SCHOOLS

##### *Rationalisation*

#### **12. Mr RIPPER to the Minister for Education:**

- (1) Can the Minister confirm that the Government is about to embark on a massive program of school rationalisation, closures and amalgamation under the euphemism of "local area planning"?
- (2) Will the Minister guarantee that no school community will have unwelcome change forced on it as a result of this process?
- (3) Will the Minister also guarantee that in the lead-up to the state Budget no school will be victimised by a freeze on capital expenditure?

#### **Mr BARNETT replied:**

- (1)-(3) It is true that the Education Department, with my support, is looking at a more regionally based approach to the administration and planning of education. That is well deserved. The details of that will be made public shortly. They are still being refined. There is no plan for rationalisation.

Mr Ripper: Did you say that before the election?

Mr BARNETT: No, because the policy was not developed before the election.

A lot of merit exists in shifting resources from the central administration to schools, which are closer to children, the teaching function and to local administration. That plan does not involve any wholesale closure of schools, rationalisation or whichever word one chooses to use. In local area planning some decisions on schools will be made at a local level. For example, in the member's electorate of Belmont decisions have been made to close one school, combine it with another and build a new school. I understand that was done with the member's support. Cooke Point and Port Hedland Primary Schools have been combined as one brand new primary school. There are instances in my own electorate. Substantial educational advantages result from combining small schools and replacing them with brand new, state of the art, twenty-first century schools. That will happen under local area planning to the benefit of education and children in this State.

#### EDUCATION - PRIMARY SCHOOL

##### *Burekup - Closure*

#### **13. Mr RIPPER to the Minister for Education:**

Part (3) of my question relates to a freeze on government funding. The ceiling of Burekup Primary School partly collapsed on 6 February, and totally collapsed on 26 February. Will the Minister confirm that -

- (1) Between 6 and 26 February students were instructed to jump under their desks if they heard the ceiling creak?
- (2) Since 26 February, years 5, 6 and 7 have been taught under a pergola, because there is no safe classroom?
- (3) The Minister received faxes from Burekup Primary School on 6 and 10 March requesting help, but he has refused to answer them?
- (4) The Minister is cynically using the ceiling collapse to force the Burekup community to accept the closure of its school?

The SPEAKER: A small paper may need to be circulated on supplementary questions. It appears that the member for Belmont has used the word "education" broadly and asked a further question on that. We will deal with that later. Perhaps the definition should be a little narrower; however, I will allow the question.

#### **Mr BARNETT replied:**

- (1)-(4) The Burekup Primary School has been badly infested with white ants. It is not in a fit state for classes. It is currently being assessed.

Mr Ripper: Like the Liberal Party.

Mr BARNETT: I thought this was a serious question about a school that is in disrepair. Clearly the Opposition has a scant and trivial approach to serious issues of education. This is an old school. It is in disrepair. Currently the students are being bused to Picton Primary School. The future of Burekup Primary School is under review, and that review will be done sensibly and rationally in consultation with the parents and, I might say, the local member.

#### INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS - WAGE DEDUCTIONS

##### 14. Mr JOHNSON to the Minister for Labour Relations:

On the weekend it was claimed that recent legislation had enabled employers unilaterally to deduct money from employees' wages. Is that the case?

Mr KIERATH replied:

On the weekend an official from the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union went public in the *Sunday Times*, I think, and made claims that when we made changes to the industrial relations legislation we repealed laws which "stopped employers from tapping into workers' wages". Not only is that claim incorrect, but the exact opposite is the truth. In the area of labour relations we have come to expect this from some parties. Following the 1995 reforms to the Minimum Conditions of Employment Act, section 17C of part 3A states that the employee is entitled to be paid in full and section 17D states that deductions may be made by the employer only if that person has the written authority of the employee under an award, a workplace agreement or order of a court, either state or commonwealth.

It is totally wrong to imply that employers are free to make any deductions they wish. In fact, the Government felt so strongly that this should be a fundamental right of every employee that when it repealed the Truck Act 1899 it enshrined that condition in the Minimum Conditions of Employment Act, which applies to every worker in Western Australia.

#### POLICE - MULTANOVA FINES

##### *Non-payment*

##### 15. Mrs ROBERTS to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is it true that two of the top 10 worst corporate offenders for non-payment of Multanova fines are government departments and, if so, which departments are they and what is the Government doing about it?
- (2) Is the Government considering following the lead of Victoria, where the cancellation rate of Multanova tickets runs at only 0.04 per cent, and legislating to provide for full owner onus for these fines?

Mr OMODEI replied:

The Minister for Transport has supplied the following answer.

- (1) No; however, as part of an ongoing recovery process, recipients of infringement notices have been contacted with a view to assisting them to improve their policy and procedures.
- (2) Multanova fines, along with a range of counter-measures to enhance road safety, are currently being reviewed.

#### TRANSPORT - BUS

##### *Mandurah-Perth Express*

##### 16. Mr MARSHALL to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

The express Citylink bus service, launched six months ago, between Mandurah and Perth has proved so successful that there is now an urgent need for extra buses. How quickly can the Minister increase the number of buses in the Citylink service?

Mr OMODEI replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The Minister for Transport has provided the following response.

The Citylink Mandurah-Perth express service has been very successful. It is another example of the Government's responding to the transport needs of the public. This service has proved so popular that within the first few months

of operation the Department of Transport has been required to increase the service trips operated by approximately 66 per cent. All trips are well patronised and at one stage passenger demand exceeded the carrying capacity of the coaches utilised.

This situation has now been rectified by the Department of Transport through adding, firstly, an additional five seats to each coach; secondly, an extra TransPerth route service bus to the three coaches used to operate the service; and, thirdly, two extra route service trips, an additional departure from Mandurah at 6.00 am and an additional departure from Perth at 4.20 pm. These services will draw passengers from other trips, spreading the patronage more evenly. In summary, services have been expanded by 66 per cent and the seating capacity of the service has been increased by 46 per cent. As a result of these actions the TransPerth service operator has reported that all passengers are now being picked up from all published bus stops along the route. Other avenues continue to be explored by the Department of Transport, including the addition of further buses.

#### STILLBIRTH AND NEONATAL DEATH SUPPORT GROUP - FUNDING

##### **17. Mr McGINTY to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the request for financial support by the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Support Group to continue its valuable work providing support each year for the 9 000 Western Australian families affected by stillbirth, neonatal deaths and miscarriage. Will the Minister confirm -

- (1) That Jenny Kirkwood, his senior ministerial policy officer, and Bill Simpson, Director of Financial Services at King Edward Memorial Hospital, gave a verbal commitment to fund SANDS in May/June 1996?
- (2) That he has insulted SANDS by demonstrating an indifference to its plight and by proposing to meet this promise by providing the services of a redeployee not needed by the Health Department to coordinate grief management for people affected by the 24 such deaths each day in Western Australian?
- (3) Why will the Minister not provide the \$108 000 requested by SANDS and promised by him before the election to this thoroughly worthwhile group of people?

##### **Mr PRINCE replied:**

I agree entirely that it is a thoroughly worthwhile organisation which does an excellent job. It is accepted by all professionals in the area as being remarkably good because its members have had personal experience in the various areas. No amount of empathy in a counselling situation can replace experience. For 11 or 12 years SANDS has operated in conjunction with King Edward Memorial Hospital; it occupies rooms and uses facilities and equipment there and is assisted from there. It receives a small amount of financial assistance.

Some time ago SANDS came forward seeking a good deal more financial assistance. At the time King Edward Hospital was looking after it; therefore I said that it should seek further assistance from King Edward if the hospital could manage it within its budget. I was not present at any conversation involving my policy officer and the Director of Financial Services at KEMH. As far as I am aware, no such promise was made.

Mr McGinty: They say differently.

Mr PRINCE: I have met representatives of SANDS on many occasions. On two occasions I participated in its awards presentations. I support that group. I would like to see it funded to provide better care and service. That sentiment is shared by other members on this side of the House.

Mr McGinty: It is a matter of what you will do rather than what you wish. You are the Minister.

Mr PRINCE: It is a matter of taking the resources from someone else if SANDS is to be funded. It has some facilities; it wants more and it wants independence from King Edward Memorial Hospital. It wants someone to look after its basic administration and fill out funding applications and so on. An initiative suggested two weeks ago when SANDS last met me in my office was that we could find a suitably competent, qualified and dedicated person who is being redeployed and who will undertake that administration should SANDS wish.

Mr McGinty: That is an insult and SANDS rejected that.

Mr PRINCE: We are trying to find a suitable officer at the moment. If SANDS chooses to reject that proposal, that is unfortunate. In the middle of a budget year it is difficult for KEMH to find \$108 000 when it does not have it.

Mr McGinty: You are not going to help?

Mr PRINCE: I will do everything I can to help. I have said that to SANDS publicly and privately.



## PLANNING - APPEALS

*Procedures***18. Mr TRENORDEN to the Minister for Planning:**

Discussion has occurred in the local Press about the system of appeals to the Minister for Planning and the manner in which these appeals have been handled, particularly towards the end of last year. Will the Minister inform the House whether appeals to the Minister for Planning have been similarly handled in the past?

**Mr KIERATH replied:**

I have watched with some fascination the interest of some members opposite in the controversy associated with ministerial planning appeals, because the system has been in place for 70-odd years. That is more than enough time for scrutiny from all the parties. Any person who is dissatisfied with any planning decision can, of course, appeal to the Town Planning Appeal Tribunal or to the Minister. When an appeal is made to the Minister, a full independent report is obtained and the Minister then considers whether he will uphold or dismiss that appeal. That process usually takes about three months. Under the Labor Government it used to take around four months; however, it has been a little faster than that under this Government.

Serious insinuations were made that the system was misused by the former Minister for Planning, Richard Lewis, with claims that he was acting mainly in a caretaker mode. It is fascinating to consider what happens under a caretaker mode. At least this time the Government was returned to office; therefore, it is the same Administration. Members need go back only a little way into the past to consider what the Labor Government did in its caretaker mode when it lost the election and the coalition came to power. Let us consider what it did when it knew that its days were numbered and it was not simply a matter of swearing in a new Cabinet.

Before Labor was physically thrown out of office, the then Minister for Planning, David Smith, signed 21 appeals. Two others were signed on 9 February, after the election had been held and his party had lost. Eight had no independent reports on them. In effect, the Minister obtained no independent assessment or professional advice on those appeals. He took on the decisions himself. Minister Lewis did not do that: Every decision he made was based on independent advice to him. Of the appeals Minister Smith upheld, the only information he had on which to make a decision on eight of them was a strong representation from an Australian Labor Party member of Parliament. That is, he had a letter of support from a Labor member of Parliament - not a coalition member. I find incredible the hypocrisy of the Labor Party in this State to complain about something that was aboveboard and required by law, that followed the process, and that involved independent reports. When the Labor Party was last in government, it politicised the process and brought the whole system into disrepute. That is the Labor Party's standard, and that is what we have come to expect from it.

## PLANNING - APPEALS

*Former Minister***19. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for Planning:**

I refer to my request in writing to the Minister, dated 5 February 1997.

- (1) Will he table the details and supporting documents of all ministerial appeal decisions made by the former Minister for Planning, Richard Lewis, between the date of the announcement of the election and the swearing-in of the new Ministry?
- (2) Will he include all the recommendations of the Town Planning Appeal Committee to the former Minister?

**Mr KIERATH replied:**

- (1)-(2) I am still considering that request.

## EDUCATION - PRIMARY SCHOOL

*Burekup - Correction*

- 20. Mr BARNETT - by leave:** I take this opportunity to correct an answer I gave earlier. In response to a question concerning Burekup Primary School I said that the students were being bussed to Picton. That is the recommendation of the department; however, that has not commenced at this stage. The students are still at Burekup.