



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

THIRTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
THIRD SESSION
1999

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 28 October 1999

Legislative Assembly

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THE SPEAKER (Mr Strickland) took the Chair at 9.00 am, and read prayers.

PANGEA RESOURCES LTD, HIGH LEVEL NUCLEAR WASTE DUMP

Petition

Dr Edwards presented the following petition bearing the signatures of 43 persons -

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

We, the undersigned residents of Western Australia are totally opposed to the Pangea proposal to locate a high level nuclear waste dump in Western Australia.

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

[See petition No 60.]

GUILDERTON REGIONAL PARK

Petition

Mrs Holmes presented the following petition bearing the signatures of 45 persons -

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

We the undersigned respectfully request that the Government establish a Regional Park immediately to the south of Guilderton in order to protect the mouth and lower reaches of the Moore River and the significant dunes and coastal heathland south of the mouth of the Moore River.

We request that the Government take urgent action to acquire this and before it is further rezoned or developed, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See petition No 61.]

POLICE AIRCRAFT, KALGOORLIE, SALE

Grievance

MS ANWYL (Kalgoorlie) [9.06 am]: I have a grievance for the Minister for Police of which some notice has been given. I have raised this matter with the minister privately over the past few weeks. I refer to the sale of a Beechcraft Baron aeroplane which was based at the Kalgoorlie-Boulder airport and was the property of the Police Service of Western Australia. The goldfields region of the police district is the largest in the world. I know the boundaries of that pre-Delta and post-Delta intimately because I have chaired a domestic violence prevention committee which is based on those boundaries. The basis of my grievance is that I have yet to be provided with a cogent reason for the sale of this aircraft. The sale was completed recently and \$103 000 was raised. The police in Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the whole goldfields district must now rely on commercial aircraft. I cannot see any good reason for that. Effectively, the \$103 000 has gone straight back into consolidated revenue and I understand it will not be going to the goldfields in any shape or form.

When this sale was first mooted, the rationale within the Police Service was that a further police helicopter would be purchased in Perth. I do not know whether that is correct. However, the police in the goldfields district are disturbed by the loss of that police aircraft. The fact is, as it was a confiscated proceed of crime, it did not cost the Western Australia Government 1¢ to acquire that plane. Because of the tyranny of distance and the very disparate types of communities and community problems across that goldfields region, it is a huge challenge for the police to cover it.

I recently attend a two-day conference in Laverton which discussed police and communities working together to prevent domestic violence. There was a fantastic complement of police there, and I commend the police for that. One of the principal issues raised was that there is not enough backup for police, particularly for those who have to go on back to driving patrols into the desert. The police have to confront incredibly difficult issues such as tribal law competing with European law and often the police have to confront very dangerous situations. My concern is that that resource - the plane - has been lost to the police. A dedicated, specialised police pilot who was based in Kalgoorlie-Boulder has also been lost to the service. When he was not flying he was occupied with general duties. He has been transferred to Perth. I am not sure where he will be working, but I hope his pilot skills will not be lost to the Police Service. He was he was an extremely experienced pilot.

Another matter raised at the conference was the issue of search and rescue. Because of the size of this police region, police will always be required to be involved in search and rescue and other emergencies, for which there is an absolute need for backup. The most powerful argument put to me was that by a senior officer who had been involved in a life-threatening situation in the north west of the State. He said that if it was not for the dedication of the police pilot, who flew his plane at incredibly low levels to distract an armed gunman who had already killed, he may not be alive today. That is an incredibly

powerful argument for the retention of this aircraft and the pilot. I am not attacking the skills of commercial pilots. I am sure they are extremely good. I fly from time to time on light aircraft, as do most of the country members of Parliament. However, a dedicated pilot who is a police officer will go that extra distance to protect other police officers. He will have an incredible sense of duty and obligation for his fellow officers. A commercial pilot would probably do what he was taught as a pilot to do and may not be prepared to fly his plane at dangerous levels to distract an armed gunman, and who could blame him. I am extremely disturbed about this.

There has been a resurgence in exploration in the goldfields. I recently travelled on a privately hired plane from Kalgoorlie to Laverton and discussed with the pilot how busy that service was. While we were flying between Kalgoorlie and Laverton he received a call asking him to do another job at a remote mine site after he had dropped us off at Laverton. Although that did not eventuate, it demonstrated the potential uses for these services. There was a review of police air support services earlier this year. I was told that this decision was made in between former Commissioner of Police Falconer leaving and Commissioner of Police Matthews starting. That disturbs me. I do not know who sanctioned this. I would like to know whether the minister knew. I would also like to know what financial benefit can possibly be gained from this decision. It costs about \$1 500 just to hire a plane for half a day, without including the cost of the pilot.

I note that is the cost of the minister's media training from Howard Sattler so far this year. Perhaps it does not seem like a lot of money to him. However, the Police Service budget in the goldfields region is stretched. Members opposite know that the Police Service budget is generally stretched. I would like the minister to table the review of air services, at least the part that relates to the goldfields. I would also like the minister to assure serving police officers in the goldfields region that they will not be placed in jeopardy in any way and assure goldfields residents that they will not be disadvantaged by this decision. I challenge the minister because I will be surprised if he can do that and explain the benefit of this decision for people in the goldfields, the Police Service and the State of Western Australia.

MR PRINCE (Albany - Minister for Police) [9.10 am]: Although the member for Kalgoorlie has not said it, she implied that this is a sudden decision that was thrust upon the Police Service in Kalgoorlie by the central office. She implied the officers were surprised about it because there was little forewarning. She also implied that it is a dreadful conspiracy and plot. The 1997 Western Australia Police Service Annual Report - which was tabled in this Parliament - states under the heading "Air Support Review" -

Following external and internal reviews of services provided by the Police Air Support Unit at Jandakot, Kalgoorlie and Karratha it was decided that all fixed-wing transport operations would be contracted out. The review found that a significant proportion of the air support services were transport-related and were therefore not considered to be core business. An Implementation Committee has been established to review the most cost-effective means of meeting the Western Australia Police Service's air support requirements.

It then goes on to talk about the police helicopter. That report was released in 1997. The member has asked two questions on notice about that matter. They were questions without notice 483 and 484 of 7 and 8 September 1999. The answers are available for anybody to look at. The answers mentioned the Beechcraft Baron in Kalgoorlie, the number of flights, the number of passengers and so forth. The answer stated that the Western Australia Police Service obtained the 1973 aircraft after it was forfeited under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

I knew this issue would arise. I thought the member would ask a question about it earlier in the week. This aircraft was used in two search and rescue flights totalling 7.4 hours and carried six people during the period April to September this year. The aircraft was used for eight flights during training totalling 9.3 hours, and carried 11 passengers. It was also used for transport for 67.9 hours and carried 60 passengers. The Police Service also hired aircraft during this period, once for a drug search, when it carried one person for 0.7 of an hour and for five transport flights totalling 11.9 hours and carrying 18 passengers. I do not make these decisions. Police Service command made the decision in 1997 and put in place an implementation committee. The aircraft was sent to Victoria for repairs. It has been sold for \$103 000, which is apparently what it is worth. It was estimated to be worth about \$140 000 but the sale price was \$103 000. Even recently the aircraft has been used overwhelmingly for transport. As a result of the reviews carried out by the Police Service in 1996 and 1997, the command concluded that transporting people is not a core business of the police air wing. The member said many general aviation carriers offer a good service and are capable of transporting people. It is good to hear that exploration is beginning to pick up in the goldfields because that attracts more general aviation firms into the area, providing greater flexibility. The Police Service command has informed me that the core requirements of the police air wing will not be affected by the sale of the aircraft. Transport will be carried out by hiring civilian aircraft that are available all the time. The police air wing is more than capable of carrying out other requirements that arise from time to time related to the operational use of the aircraft, either search and rescue or investigation of criminality, with their resources.

I am delighted to hear what the member said about police representation at the domestic violence conference. I will pass on that compliment. The police becoming involved, particularly in the member's electorate, is worthy of praise.

Ms Anwyl: They need extra backup in the desert.

Mr PRINCE: We are all aware of the under-reporting of domestic violence, especially among Aboriginal people. However, the aircraft has been sold. Police Service command decided to do that because the aircraft was predominately used for transport. That is not a core business of the police air wing.

NORTH BEACH JETTY

Grievance

MRS HODSON-THOMAS (Carine) [9.15 am]: My grievance is directed to the Minister for Fisheries. I wish to illustrate

the plight of a number of people in my community who are actively campaigning for the extension and restoration of the North Beach jetty. The North Beach jetty is situated along a pristine stretch of coastline in my electorate and was popular with the residents and anglers of yesteryear. No-one is certain when the jetty was first built, although a historical source says it was constructed early this century, possibly as early as 1905. It was initially a platform extending from the cliff head mounted upon three large concrete piles. The decking was made of jarrah planking, with rails on the north and south sides crisscrossed with timbers topped with a rail of Oregon pine planks. The structure was extended and modified on several occasions until the 1960s. Unfortunately the jetty was severely damaged in repeated storms and the City of Stirling dismantled it around 1965 in the interests of public safety. All that remains of this historic landmark is a short platform from which fishing is possible only at high tide and in favourable weather. I am sure the minister can appreciate that walking along the coastline is a popular pastime in the area. However, there is limited scope for people to gain enjoyment by strolling along the truncated jetty. Fishing from the rocks immediately surrounding the site is perilous and fraught with dangers because of the ruggedness of the coastline. Anglers perch precariously on rocky outcrops, exposing themselves to danger, especially if they are not as sure-footed as they were in their youth. The site is unique because it would provide safe access for disabled and elderly anglers. I am sure the minister is aware of the growing support within the local community for the jetty to be extended and restored. The City of Stirling commissioned a feasibility study into the extension by consultants Halpern Glick Maunsell Pty Ltd. The report contained a design of a proposed model which featured a T-shaped platform at the end to accommodate a maximum number of anglers. At that time, the estimated cost of construction was about \$280 000. A number of proposals have been made over the past two years. The possibility that the State Government and the City of Stirling jointly fund the project was raised. Regrettably, none of these proposals have come to fruition. Local residents Laurie Birchall and Phil Allchin have been the driving force behind a petition calling upon the Government to restore the North Beach jetty. I presented to this House a petition bearing the signatures of 588 people in support of the restoration. A similar petition calling upon the City of Stirling to take action is currently circulating. The Hamersley Apex Club of Western Australia also supports the restoration of the jetty and a general upgrade of the area to include wheelchair access to the beach. The club has an association with the area; it once held meetings in the hall next to the jetty. The hall has since been demolished. A group called the North Beach Jetty Restoration Action Group was formed to further the restoration cause. The group comprises keen anglers, many of whom are senior citizens. Mr Ron Mettam, from the Oldies Fishing Group, has taken an active interest in the cause.

The site is located on West Coast Drive, relatively close to the Marmion Angling and Aquatic Club. The club's members have an active interest in fishing and marine conservation. An extended jetty would complement the club's activities by adding to the different types of fishing available.

In addition, the nearby Trigg Island Surf Life Saving Club has written to the City of Stirling also in support of the restoration, citing that the works would be advantageous to both local residents and the general public and, as a historic landmark, would encourage a greater number of visitors to the area. Situated on West Coast Drive, renowned for its panoramic ocean scenery and designated as a tourist route, the proposed jetty restoration would certainly attract visitors to the area. The many local businesses such as cafes, shops and restaurants would derive benefits from increased patronage. Restoration of the jetty is likely to yield many benefits to the community in providing a recreational facility for use by a diverse range of people including families, senior citizens, the disabled and youth. Fishing is a positive, constructive and very family-orientated recreational activity to be enjoyed by people of all ages. Apart from North Beach jetty there are no other opportunities in the north metropolitan area which could provide recreational anglers with such a suitable fishing venue. There is ample parking space in the public car park adjacent to the jetty which could accommodate the increased traffic brought about by an increase in the number of people visiting the area. The issue continues to be one of immense community interest. Clearly the restoration will provide a facility which is both appropriate for the area and which will be well utilised by residents and visitors to the area. The thousands of people who indicated their support by signing the recent petition would be most appreciative of a government commitment to restore the North Beach jetty. I understand that at one time the Recreational Fishing Advisory Council approved in principle funds for the extension but it did not come to fruition. I would appreciate if the minister would listen to one paragraph in a letter from the Minister for Transport to me, given there is some debate about whose portfolio the issue falls within. The letter states -

While Transport is addressing the question of disabled access to jetties under its control, it has no management or funding involvement for recreational fishing platforms other than the issue of a jetty licence where the structures extend into the water.

In closing I seek the minister's support and trust that the members of the North Beach Jetty Restoration Group will be given the opportunity to meet with the minister to discuss the matter further.

The SPEAKER: I would be very interested in a positive response, minister.

MR HOUSE (Stirling - Minister for Fisheries) [9.22 am]: I thought I was always positive. I thank the member for her grievance and for providing me with a copy of the grievance prior to her presenting it to the Parliament. The member has written to me on a number of occasions about the issue. Obviously, it is of great concern to her and her constituents and I commend her for the work she has done in bringing the matter to the attention of the Parliament and to those who make funding decisions about such issues.

I sympathise entirely with the grievance and the way it has been presented. There are a number of areas in Western Australia which would benefit from increased funding for recreational fishers to access the ocean in a number of ways, with jetties and boat ramps. There are a number of examples across the State to which we are deficient in providing those facilities and we have been trying to address the deficiencies. These matters are a matter for the budget and for the budget management committee of Cabinet and are matters about which Cabinet will have to make a final decision. I assure the member that I

will carry her message to the budget management committee and to Cabinet in a positive way because I sympathise with her case and also the case for more boat ramps and jetties to be constructed so that people can enjoy what is a good pastime in Western Australia. I was at Cottesloe Beach this morning at 7.00 am launching the new recreational fishing season. It is pertinent that we are discussing this issue today in the Parliament. There were not a lot of people at Cottesloe this morning. I had help from a gentleman called John who was reeling in herring quicker than I could take them off the hook. He caught them and I unhooked them.

There is no funding in the Fisheries budget for the building of jetties and there never has been. I understand why the member has raised the grievance with me as Minister for Fisheries. The Minister for Transport who has responsibility for the marine and harbours area is not in the House. I give the member an assurance that as well as raising the matter with the cabinet budget committee, I will raise it with the Minister for Transport. However, it must be clear that the Fisheries budget does not have funds for the building of these types of structures and never has had. I do not imagine that marine and harbours will pass this responsibility on to Fisheries WA. If it wants to, I am prepared to accept responsibility for it. However, it probably will not. I will carry the message to the Minister for Transport who has responsibility for this matter. It is not an area for which Fisheries WA is funded.

KARRATHA TELEVISION RECEPTION

Grievance

MR RIEBELING (Burrup) [9.26 am]: My grievance is to the Premier and is about television reception in the Karratha area. This matter has been raised previously and commented on by the Deputy Premier. On Monday, 25 October on the Howard Sattler radio show the Premier was asked a question about what was happening about extending the SBS television service to Karratha and the rectifying of the poor reception in the area of Bateman, which is a new suburb. Bateman is in the shadow of surrounding hills which means that the caravan park and residential area do not receive a proper TV reception. A shadow also extends into the suburb of Nickol.

I was told on a number of occasions that the problem would be fixed by June 1999. We have now been told that with the sale of the second phase of Telstra and the privatisation of the national transmission network in May it would be possible for the private sector to clear up the black spots and extend SBS to an extra million viewers in regional areas. Positive press releases were sent from my office about the expected improvements. As a result of that, expectations grew. The Premier made a commitment on Monday that the problems would be fixed and I was hoping that he would tell the House what the solution would be. I wait with bated breath for the matter to be resolved. It is unfortunate that the Karratha reception problems will not be fixed until June 2000. That is a long time to wait for the people who want to watch SBS as there is a relatively large ethnic population in the Karratha-Dampier area. There is also a problem in the communities of Roebourne and Dampier as it appears that under the SBS transmission extension program they are not mentioned at all.

There are no plans to extend the service to Dampier and Roebourne, and that is of great concern to those people. There are three concerns: One is that the extension of SBS transmission will be delayed for about a year from the date first given; the second is that the two major population centres in my area will not get SBS coverage; the third relates to the funding for the black spot program, which was to come from the one-third, or 12 per cent, sale of Telstra. That funding also appears to be some considerable distance away. These people are living in a modern town of Karratha where the shire, when it saw the announcement that the Federal Government would provide funding once the sale of Telstra went through, contacted Senator Alston and made an offer that if the money were to flow from the sale of Telstra, it would pre-empt that, put in the infrastructure to fix the problem and then take whatever amount would be reimbursed from the Commonwealth. In that way, the problem could be fixed a year before it would be under the commonwealth program. That seems to me to be a reasonable and generous offer from the shire. We are talking about a program of \$186 000 for the new aerial and relay station. The response from the Commonwealth has been absolute silence; there has been no response from it, despite a number of verbal inquiries from the shire.

I hope the minister may be able to play a more active role on behalf the State Government to ensure that those major problems in relation to television broadcasting are fixed by at least the year 2000. We are talking 1960s transmission and the like. The footprint of the SBS transmission is there. It is beamed in. The Robe River company has paid for a relay station for the people of Wickham. The towns around it do not have SBS radio and television coverage because they are all waiting on the promise of the Commonwealth to be delivered. In the last two election campaigns the Federal Government promised that SBS transmission would be extended to all areas in the shire. I hope the minister representing the Premier can give the answers that I am seeking on behalf of the people of Karratha and Dampier.

MR BOARD (Murdoch - Minister for Works) [9.32 am]: On behalf of the Premier and the Deputy Premier, I say that we appreciate the fact that the member has brought forward this grievance this morning. Television transmission and reception to Karratha is of great concern to the Government, and has been for some time. We are also frustrated by what we feel are delays in the response of the Federal Government in this area. The Deputy Premier and, in particular, the Premier, as the matter has been raised with him, will take this matter forward with the utmost urgency, particularly given the pending Telstra sale, to which the member has referred.

This issue was also raised with me in my capacity as Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests, in relation to not only Karratha but also other parts of Western Australia, as the SBS television station is considered to be first class for those with ethnic origins, many of whom want to take advantage of the programs SBS Radio and Television provide to them.

Mr Riebeling: There are a lot the sporting programs.

Mr BOARD: The size of Western Australia is one of its greatest assets, but in many ways it also provides one of the greatest difficulties in providing access and equity, particularly in the north west communities.

Mr Riebeling: Not with a satellite.

Mr BOARD: In the long term, once we have multimedia transmission with a low-level satellite for television and Internet sound through radio and telecommunications all delivered through a single entry point, there will be equity in transmission in Western Australia. I believe that much of what is happening in cabling in Western Australia and digital roll out is the best proposition, and technology will prove this to be the case. The low-level satellite will deliver -

Mr Riebeling: The SBS footprint is already there.

Mr BOARD: Sure. That equity must be funded. As the member indicated, \$120m is earmarked for the television fund from the proceeds of the second Telstra sale. I believe the Premier and the Deputy Premier will endeavour to make this project a high priority in regard to that funding. I know the Deputy Premier has written to both Senator Alston and to the managing director of NTL Australia, the owner of the recently privatised transmission network, indicating that a major upgrade of facilities to Western Australia, and particularly Karratha, was earmarked as a high priority.

When property sales occur, there is an onus on property developers, particularly in regional areas, to ensure the community is informed about the access to telecommunication, especially when there are black spots. I have not seen a lot of evidence of that in the past. I have just discussed this issue with the Minister for Planning, and it seems there is no problem in the State from that point of view, but there is an onus on local authorities to ensure that happens.

Mr Riebeling: A delegation of councillors from the Shire of Roebourne will be going to Canberra in November. The minister may wish to support their trip in relation to this issue.

Mr BOARD: I am sure the minister would. If some information came forward -

Mr Riebeling: I will get the exact dates.

Mr BOARD: I am sure they could take with them some information about the State's position on this matter. I might also say that in terms of Channel 31, which is currently available in the metropolitan region and seems to be gaining in status - I know there have been some small difficulties with finance - there are opportunities for additional transmission into regional areas. We are hoping to promote that as well. Through the resources of the Department of Contract and Management Services, we are looking at rolling out more education television and services via the links that go through our transmission - I am trying to think of the terminology; the State Government, through CAMS, has a network that the Deputy Premier uses -

Mr Riebeling: I know it will be very good, but we want SBS.

Mr BOARD: I know; however, I am talking about having a variety of other stations available, and Channel 31 is part of that. SBS will become available in Karratha. It is a pity that it has been delayed for over 12 months. Through the pending sale of Telstra, we are looking at that as a high priority area. I know the Premier and Deputy Premier are following this issue closely. We hope that, through the sale, the \$120m to the television fund will see that SBS -

Mr Riebeling: Maybe the guarantee that the shire is looking for from the Commonwealth can be given via the State. The shire is being exceptionally generous in offering to spend its money and get it back later. It is like a loan.

Mr BOARD: There is an opportunity to sit down and discuss that. I am sure the State Government will support the delegation going to Canberra. On behalf of the Deputy Premier, who I think will take this on as a responsibility, I offer an opportunity to meet with these people.

RAINBOW LORIKEETS

Grievance

MR MASTERS (Vasse) [9.40 am]: I direct my grievance to the Minister for the Environment. Human beings are a unique species on this planet and are able to understand the lessons of history and, we hope, not repeat mistakes in the future. Australia, also, is a unique continent; it is special because it was isolated for many millions of years. We have one of the world's greatest array of plants and animals for the enjoyment of and utilisation by all the world's people. However, Australia also has a very bad track record of protecting these plants and animals as we have lost many species, especially mammals, and seen many overseas feral species of plants and animals come to Australia and wreak environmental and other damage.

I direct my grievance against feral birds, particularly the rainbow lorikeet, which is found in the north of Western Australia, throughout the northern part of the country and down through the eastern States. It was first reported in southern Western Australia in the early 1960s, apparently when caged birds escaped on Rottnest Island. By the late 1960s, the rainbow lorikeet was found in the inner suburbs of Perth by spreading to places like Gooseberry Hill, Safety Bay and Rockingham. It did not take long to become established throughout the western suburbs of Perth, to the extent that it is now causing significant problems and is a major threat to the natural environment of Western Australia.

The Agriculture Protection Board estimated in 1984 that only 54 rainbow lorikeets were in Perth. By 1987, the biggest flock reported was 74 birds, but numerous other flocks had been seen by APB officers. By 1990, the APB estimated that 1 000 birds were in Perth, and by 1995 it had increased to 2 000 birds. The current estimate is that as many as 4 000 birds could be in the Perth area by the year 2000, with the potential to spread well beyond the Perth metropolitan area.

The authors of an article which appeared in the spring 1996 edition of *Landscape* state -

Rainbow lorikeets have traditionally been considered to be nectar and pollen feeders, but recent observations in Perth and elsewhere have indicated that their diet is much more general than this. Flower parts are a major part of their diet . . . Fruits are important at times, and insects and seeds are occasionally taken.

The birds reproduce rapidly, and nest in local as well as exotic trees. Cotton palms are found outside the parliamentary building, and members need only stand on the balcony on the second floor to see large numbers of rainbow lorikeets either nesting or using the cotton palms for hollows. Rainbow lorikeets nest in large trees, the hollows of which are used by other species. Twenty-eight parrots, galahs, kookaburras and other species use those hollows, but the rainbow lorikeet is a particularly aggressive bird. It is likely that the rainbow lorikeet will out-compete the natural species and cause them significant disadvantage. I am particularly concerned about a unique species to Western Australia; namely, the western rosella. The lorikeet is only a little larger than the western rosella, and the species overlap in food, in potentially their geographical location and in their nesting requirements; therefore, I fear that the western rosella will become threatened with extinction in years to come or will become extinct.

Mr Wiese: Not down our way.

Mr MASTERS: I can guarantee that they will. Rainbow lorikeets have been recorded at Kalgoorlie, so, member for Wagin, please do not be complacent.

Importantly, reports are coming in of rainbow lorikeets becoming a serious pest in orchards. Computer models conducted by the Department of Conservation and Land Management indicate that the potential nest sites to which the rainbow lorikeet could move extend to Bunbury, right through to Albany and potentially to lower rainfall areas inland.

New Zealand recently had to come to grips with the rainbow lorikeet, a large number of which are found in suburbs of Auckland. New Zealand conservation authorities are putting in place an eradication program to try to control the species.

One reason CALM and the conservation movement in general have not been prepared to move decidedly to control or eradicate the rainbow lorikeet is that people see it as too difficult a task. However, a recent edition of *Science* gave two examples of plans to try to control exotic species. One of the best examples of feral animal control was in Darwin in 1998, when the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation removed the zebra mussel from infested harbour areas. A great success was achieved. In the eastern parts of England back in the 1980s an animal from South America called the coypu was totally removed under eradication controls. It can and should be done here with rainbow lorikeets. If not, I fear, minister, we will give the world a great environmental disaster, which we can act now to prevent.

MRS EDWARDES (Kingsley - Minister for the Environment) [9.47 am]: I thank the member for Vasse for notice of the grievance and for the information he provided to me. The rainbow lorikeet is a spectacular bird in appearance with attractive colouring of bright reds, blues and greens. As the member for Vasse pointed out, it escaped from aviaries in the 1960s. Although the member indicated some bird numbers, it has been difficult to acquire a real handle on the number of this species in the metropolitan area. They are often being fed in backyards in the metropolitan area, and their interaction with people cannot be ignored as people tend to like such an attractive bird.

The member was concerned, first, about the competition that the introduced rainbow lorikeet is likely to have with the western rosella, which is found only in the south western parts of Australia. Although the number of western rosellas has declined in recent times, the rainbow lorikeet, I am advised, is likely to have a significant negative impact on that species. The rainbow lorikeet, although smaller than the western rosella, often takes possession of the hollows. However, it is said that it will not be a significant conservation problem as the Australian ringnecks have increased in numbers and are in abundance. They are common and, as the member for Wagin indicated, can become a pest themselves.

Mr Wiese: We hate them!

Mrs EDWARDES: We are constantly trying to deal with them as a potential problem.

The member for Vasse indicated that in north eastern Australia, from where the rainbow lorikeets originate, the species is regarded as a casual or significant pest in soft fruit orchards, including those growing apricots, peaches, plums. They rather like fruit, as well as flowers, pollen, nectar and other foods. The crop losses from this species can run into millions of dollars per annum. There is no reason to think that the rainbow lorikeet could not become a significant pest in Western Australia if it got into the fruit growing areas. Biology and experience elsewhere suggest it is a real possibility. Legally, rainbow lorikeets are declared to be acclimatised fauna, but an open season is declared throughout the south west of Western Australia, which is obviously significant because of their potential to be a pest in the fruit growing region. Its occurrence in the metropolitan area and its relatively high public profile mean that any possible control measures would have to be carried out very carefully in conjunction with an appropriate education campaign. It is believed that eliminating the Perth population is probably impossible, given the current range and population size.

The control of rainbow lorikeet numbers would be difficult if not impossible. Trapping or poisoning would be possible, but the use of such methods would obviously be done with expert advice. We are conscious of the possible problem of their being a significant pest in the fruit growing region. Although they are identified as an acclimatised fauna, an open season has been declared on the rainbow lorikeet throughout the south west of Western Australia. Obviously we will continue to monitor that area.

The SPEAKER: Grievances noted.

MIDLAND REDEVELOPMENT BILL 1999*Returned*

Bill returned from the Council with amendments.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON UNIFORM LEGISLATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS*Report*

MR MINSON (Greenough) [9.53 am]: I move -

That the report be printed.

It is with some pleasure that I table this report, which covers more than one year. Although it is called an annual report, the reporting period is approximately three years. I want to reverse the procedure. Usually one thanks one's colleagues and staff members at the end of tabling a report. However, on this occasion I wish to thank those people right up front. Melina Newnan, who is our research officer, as I have said before, is probably the most experienced person in Australia in this field. She has continued to build on her work and knowledge bank. Peter Frantom has been the committee's clerk for some time. He manages to get us where we have to be with a minimum of fuss and interruption. He also manages to keep us out of trouble. Pat Roach also has done good work as the committee's stenographer and typist. That is not to take away from the good work of my colleagues, the members for Burrup, Girrawheen, Southern River and Moore.

It is unnecessary for me to run through the history of this committee. It was established in 1992. Most people are aware of the circumstances under which it was formed, which were to do with the Financial Institutions (Queensland) Act, which was debated in this Parliament in 1992. The reports that the committee has tabled in the period covered by this report include evidence law, ministerial councils, a bank mergers Bill and a report on uniform legislation. I suggest to members who have any interest in the uniformity of legislation and of harmonising legislation across Australia that they get hold of that report. It is not very big but it is very clear, and it very well outlines the different methods of arriving at uniform or harmonised legislation across Australia. I will refer later to the increasing necessity for that.

The committee also tabled a report on cooperatives law, supporting what the Government proposed to do. There was also one on financial systems reform. The last report was quite extensive and really an update on competition policy and reforms in the public utilities sector. Once again, for members who would like to be updated on competition policy and its implementation, particularly in public utilities across Australia and New Zealand, I suggest they get hold of that report. The Government tabled its response to that report a couple of weeks ago.

Currently the committee is investigating the Human Reproductive Technology Act and the need at least to harmonise legislation and probably have national legislation across Australia. The committee is acting on a request from the chairman of the committee, who I confess is me. So I have received a letter from myself, and we are looking at that matter.

We are looking at legislative structures; in other words, the means of being able to achieve uniformity as required across Australia with the various mechanisms available to us. We are looking at a register of intergovernmental agreements and uniform legislative schemes, so that at any one time people can see what is happening and what has happened.

Of particular interest to members of this place is the work being done on treaties across Australia. At a recent seminar in Sydney considerable discussion took place about treaties from the point of view of interstate and international intergovernmental treaties. It is interesting that very often, particularly in country areas, I find a certain amount of paranoia about the number of international treaties we sign that never really see the light of day; in other words, there is never any consultation, and people are not told what is in those treaties and that we are signing them. From time to time that causes some angst. I suppose a treaty that would spring to everyone's mind is on the rights of a child. A lot of work has been done in the past 12 months or so, and our committee is interested in following up on this, on having some sort of mechanism by which we can table in our Parliament from time to time a list of treaties and agreements, so that at least the Parliament's attention is drawn to the fact that these things are happening. Through this Parliament, members' constituents would then be able to see these treaties. I have found that sometimes that paranoia is generated by the secrecy surrounding these treaties, when in fact most treaties are rather urbane and boring, dealing in the main with things like international airline operations, shipping and so on, in which most people have absolutely no interest. However, from time to time one comes to the notice of the people, and they become very concerned about it.

Members of this House may be interested to know that the committee is considering the uniformity of legislation and procedures for organ transplants. About a month ago, a flurry of attention in our local press was given to the unavailability of donor organs. The matter was referred to the committee from Hon Barbara Scott in the other place, who has a particular interest in this matter. The committee decided to inquire into the matter because it is well known that Western Australia's organ availability rate is much lower than anywhere else in Australia, which in turn is much lower than availability rates in other countries. The definition of death, for example, is neither consistent across Australia nor across the world. This Parliament must now define the moment of death so that an appropriate time can be declared when organs may be made available. Also of considerable concern in Western Australia are the issues relating to the transport of organs, obtaining the agreement of donors and how that should be achieved, and the rights of the next of kin to override that agreement. It does not matter which box someone ticks on a drivers licence indicating a wish to donate organs, the next of kin can override that wish.

Mr Prince: They cannot as a matter of law. As a matter of practice, they do.

Mr MINSON: That is true. We must resolve that issue and there a number of innovative ways to achieve that aim. Counselling should be made available to people before they agree to be organ donors, and also to the families of those donors and the recipients of donated organs. It is true that with the increasing advances in technology and the improvement in anti-rejection drugs, there will be an increase soon in the amount of organ transplantation in Western Australia with which, as a State and as a nation, we must come to grips.

Chapter 6 of the committee's report details the issues with which the committee must deal. The most pressing issue is the committee's continuance in its current form. Members who are involved in various committees will know that the Commission on Government and the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee of this House recommended a number of changes. I will not refer to those changes as information is freely available for anyone interested in reading it. However, I will say something about this committee.

Regardless of the outcome of the referendum in a couple of weeks, there will be a need for increased harmonisation and/or uniformity of various laws across Australia. I have said before that this Parliament should have a bank of information so that when it considers taking part in the harmonisation and/or uniformity of a piece of legislation, it can pull out a recipe from a bottom drawer on how to go about it. That issue will become more important if the yes vote prevails in a couple of weeks; if Australia becomes a republic it will be dealt with quickly. This State will have to negotiate its position of where it and other States sit in any new republic of Australia. To have the work that this committee has already carried out, and the work that it could carry out, available to this Parliament, would serve Western Australia well. It will ensure that the committee is not only operating but also has the resources and the time to concentrate on those matters. If there is a yes vote in a couple of weeks, this State will have a window of opportunity to propose a model on which we will continue to operate to achieve harmony and/or uniformity of legislation without sacrificing our statehood. I do not believe that we want to lose our identity as a State.

Mr Bloffwitch: There is no reason that we should.

Mr MINSON: I agree. However, under any new Constitution, we will have to stake our claim. We could become a republic within a republic. We can put forward some sensible suggestions about how to retain our sovereignty - that is probably the wrong word when referring to a republic. It was suggested when both models were put forward by the Commission on Government and also by the Standing Orders and Procedures Committee of this House that the work of this committee and another committee would be merged, with or without staff. Some members on the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Intergovernmental Agreements have served also on the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation, the two committees which have been earmarked for amalgamation. I have talked with the chairman of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation, who happens to be sitting on my left, and with its members. The Delegated Legislation Committee does its work well, meets often and always has more work than it can complete.

I signal a warning to this House that we should not compromise the ability of any new committee, which has the dual task of both committees, to work well. In deciding whether both delegated legislation and uniform legislation committees continue in their current form or are amalgamated or expanded, we must ensure that they are able to carry out the functions for which they were established. This Parliament and the people of Western Australia will be the losers if we water down either of those committees. Regardless of the outcome of the referendum, it is important for us to confront and deal with the issues of ease of travel in Australia, mobility of the population with the portability of qualifications, and harmony in the area of occupational health, safety and welfare so that companies can operate across Australia and travel across boundaries without confronting vast sets of rules.

The committee is aware, as pointed out in chapter 7 of the report if members are interested in reading it, that uniform legislation is now being developed across Australia in the areas of children in the legal process, the proceeds of crime, the legal risk of international commerce, particularly electronic banking, the status of documents and records that are stored and transmitted in electronic banking, and the security of those documents and their transmission. Other laws being considered relate to de facto relationships, succession and wills so that different laws do not apply in different parts of the country, a national criminal code, property, legal profession regulations, occupational health and safety, defamation, and privacy. There is much happening in this area and I commend the report to the House.

I conclude by sounding a note of caution to this House and to the Procedures Committee when it finally decides what to do with the various committees and the committee structure of this House. We must not only consider what has been done and what is being done but also take note of what will be done in the future. The issue of harmonisation and uniformity of laws across Australia will be extremely important, regardless of the outcome of the referendum in a couple of weeks.

MR RIEBELING (Burrup) [10.10 am]: I acknowledge the role of Peter Frantom, Melina Newnan and Pat Roach, who once again have provided outstanding service to the committee. I regret that over the past 12 months I have not put in as much time with the committee as I would normally. The chairman has had to take up many of the duties I would normally undertake. I also thank other members who have fulfilled my role in a number of meetings.

This committee has produced, I think, 24 reports since its inception. I was on the select committee that created the original committee and I am the only member who has been on the committee since its inception. As the chairman indicated, it was established following the non-banking financial institutions legislation introduced by the Lawrence Government in 1992, the host Parliament of which was Queensland due to its unicameral system. The Bill had to be passed within a couple of hours of being introduced even though we did not have a copy of the Act in Western Australia. Therefore, in effect, legislation was passed concerning an Act that did not exist in this State.

That shows a lack of scrutiny which was a bit of a worry. As a result of that process, it was determined by this Parliament -

I think the Independents at the time insisted on it - to establish a select committee that led to the establishment of the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Intergovernmental Agreements.

Mr Bloffwitch: Under the new standing orders, that cannot happen anymore.

Mr RIEBELING: Under the new standing orders, the standing committee, of which I am deputy chairman, does not exist either.

Mr Bloffwitch: It will be resourced, but it will be amalgamated.

Mr RIEBELING: It does not exist in name under the new standing orders.

The Commission on Government said that it should be abolished and that this standing committee and the Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation should be amalgamated. The major flaw in that argument is that most legislation is introduced in this place. Although I appreciate that the COG's recommendation is based on the fact that the proper House of review is the upper House, the scrutiny of uniform legislation should occur prior to the introduction of the legislation, not at a later date. Although the upper House is the arm of Parliament that has the primary function of reviewing legislation, it would be inappropriate for this standing committee to be funded through the upper House.

I hope the Speaker will acknowledge that the uniform legislation committee should have its role and its powers enhanced to ensure that ministers report on uniform legislation agreements into which they are proposing to enter so that this House has an opportunity of authorising them to proceed with uniform legislation in specific areas. The primary function of this place is to ensure that, first, the people of Western Australia benefit from legislation. If that test is satisfied, this House should endorse it.

Following ministerial councils, the last people to find out about intergovernmental agreements are the people in this place. Often we are told we must participate in a scheme because the rest of Australia is doing so, and if we do not, we will miss out on some sort of commercial benefit. That may be right. However, there is nothing wrong with informing the Parliament that we must be party to something two or three months before legislation is introduced. Perhaps a motion could be moved, or a ministerial statement made, flagging the Government's intention. The members of this committee have been saying that for seven years.

The response appears to be, at least from the procedure committee, that the committee should be abolished. I am dumbfounded that it has been suggested that a committee that makes sensible recommendations to this Parliament and the Government should be abolished and somehow absorbed into a committee inquiring into delegated legislation which, as the member for Geraldton knows, is an exceptionally hard-working committee.

Mr Bloffwitch: I agree.

Mr RIEBELING: I understand that the number of times it must sit on a weekly basis to cover its workload and its pile of work is not decreasing; it is increasing. To suggest to the Delegated Legislation Committee and its members that it should handle international treaties and intergovernmental agreements as well as regulations is madness. It does not make sense. I hope the Speaker has a realistic look at the workloads carried out by both those committees. If a realistic approach is taken to the future structure of committees, I am sure a good result will eventuate. However, it will not be due to the abolition of a committee which has produced 24 reports during its term and provided the Government with excellent advice.

The chairman did not mention that one of the other roles of the committee is to ensure the State's rights are protected regardless of intergovernmental agreements. It is not a matter of being part of uniform legislation just for the sake of it; we do not have to accept it just because we are told we must. We must consider whether being part of uniform legislation will benefit the State and whether there should be a limit on the amount of uniform legislation we enter into. The end result of the push for uniform legislation, although a long way off, could mean that this place will be no longer necessary. There is a role in the future for the State. This Parliament should protect its role and ensure that the scope of uniform legislation does not lead to this Parliament's becoming irrelevant.

I am sure that members on the other side of the House acknowledge that the result of uniform legislation over the past few years has seen the beginnings of a backlash, especially in country areas, and it is time we had a good look at it. Through this committee, the Government has a vehicle to achieve that and therefore should maintain it.

Question put and passed.

[See paper No 288.]

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Forty-Fourth Report on the Seventh Australasian and Pacific Conference on Delegated Legislation and Fourth Australasian and Pacific Conference on the Scrutiny of Bills July 21, 22 and 23 1999

MR WIESE (Wagin) [10.19 am]: I present for tabling the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation on the Seventh Australasian and Pacific Conference on Delegated Legislation and the Fourth Australasian and Pacific Conference on the Scrutiny of Bills held on July 21, 22 and 23 in Sydney, New South Wales. I move -

That the report be printed.

This conference was held in the Legislative Assembly Chamber in Parliament House in Sydney. It was a salutary lesson for members of the committee to see what has been done with an older and historic parliament building in Sydney. The

additions that have been made to that building provide magnificent facilities for both members and staff of the Parliament. It was certainly a salutary lesson to us from Western Australia to see what can be done in providing parliamentary facilities.

Mr Court: Did you find any games tickets under the seats?

Mr WIESE: I did not find any games tickets under the seats; we were not looking under seats. The New South Wales Parliament is to be congratulated on what it has achieved.

Five delegates and two staff from the Western Australian committee attended this conference. Delegates from all of the Australian States and Territories, as well as a delegation from the Commonwealth, attended the conference. In addition, there was a strong contingent of delegates from Canada, a delegate from Samoa and delegates from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. The OECD delegates made interesting and helpful submissions, by invitation, to the conference. It is possibly not well known and accepted that the OECD leads probably the world in its pioneering work on delegated legislation, the manner in which it is dealt with and how it operates. It is the group to which most delegated committees look for future direction on how these things function. There were discussions on various aspects related especially to delegated legislation. An area was highlighted in the report under the heading dealing with the OECD and regulatory impact analysis and some very interesting papers were put forward in relation to that. There was considerable discussion on national scheme legislation, specifically as it applies to delegated legislation, but also on the whole question, because there were delegates at the conference whose role is in the national scheme of primary legislation rather than in delegated legislation.

It is interesting that, following on from the tabling of the previous report by the member for Greenough as the chairman of the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Intergovernmental Agreements, our conference also addressed the issue of national schemes of legislation. A paper was presented by Mr Peter Ryan from Victoria, dealing with and looking at this national scheme of legislation specifically as it applies to delegated legislation. A motion was subsequently passed by the conference dealing with that and the conference resolved to establish a national committee comprising the chairs of the Australian scrutiny of primary and delegated legislation committees for the purpose of reviewing all aspects of proposed national schemes of legislation, including that proposed at this conference by Peter Ryan. In fact, the delegated legislation committees are also keen to ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to deal with situations which occur from time to time, in which the Commonwealth Government endeavours to put in place uniform schemes of delegated legislation. There is no ability at present for any of the States to scrutinise that legislation before it is incorporated and adopted by the Commonwealth Government or even to comment upon those legislative instruments which are proposed to be put in place by the Commonwealth Government, which then flow on for automatic adoption by all of the States. The problem that arises is that the States have no input and no opportunity to scrutinise those delegated legislation schemes. That is a big weakness in the scrutiny of delegated legislation as it applies across Australia at the moment. We are endeavouring to address that issue.

Another heading of the report deals with when to scrutinise subordinate legislation. Quite a bit of discussion related to how that should be done, and several papers were presented. Five resolutions were passed at the finalisation of the conference and they are detailed in the report. Reports were presented by the chairpersons of each of the state and commonwealth committees which were represented at the conference. I presented one on behalf of Western Australia which is appended to this report. Anyone who wishes to read that might care to look at the final two or three paragraphs of that report which deal with some of the matters that have arisen in Western Australia, especially the part dealing with the effect of the amendments to fees that had been introduced by one of our local departments or ministries. Members might find it interesting reading.

In conclusion, the members and staff of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation who attended the conference learnt a great deal. We certainly extend our appreciation to the New South Wales committee which hosted the conference. I table the report for the edification of members of this House.

Question put and passed.

[See paper No 287.]

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND AUDIT AMENDMENT BILL 1999

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Court (Treasurer), and read a first time.

Second Reading

MR COURT (Nedlands - Treasurer) [10.28 am]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The principal purpose of this Bill is to amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act to allow for the implementation of accrual appropriations and a capital user charge. The Bill also contains an amendment to facilitate e-commerce.

A range of financial management initiatives has been implemented in recent years to improve resource allocation, performance management, accountability and transparency in the Western Australian public sector. Government departments have been reporting their annual financial statements on an accrual basis since 1994. Output-based management, implemented in July 1996, is one of the major reforms impacting on the public sector. Output-based

management has provided benefits to Parliament, government, the community and agencies by improved specification of government desired outcomes; outputs - that is, goods and services - to be provided by agencies; full accrual cost of the agreed outputs; and performance of agencies in the delivery of agreed outputs.

The implementation of output-based management was closely followed by the presentation of budgets on a full accrual basis, commencing from the 1998-99 budget. The final step in the implementation of accrual budgeting requires appropriations to cover the accrual cost of services, much like a business covers its costs by charging prices. Appropriations would also be made when capital injections are required.

The present appropriation framework is focused exclusively on cash. This appropriation regime has provided a satisfactory means to control and manage cash payments. However, it is inadequate as a basis of properly managing superannuation, leave entitlements and asset replacements. As such, it is preventing the Government from reaping the full benefits of the output-based management and accrual accounting reforms.

Accrual appropriations represent the final support in a structure that encompasses output-based management and accrual accounting. This will enable agencies to align all their financial management processes - planning, resourcing, monitoring and reporting - on a consistent basis. Keeping agencies on a cash "drip feed" is acting to prevent agencies from integrating accrual accounting, service delivery and results focus into their business planning. Accrual appropriations will offer the following benefits -

They will allow parliamentary control over non-cash commitments and costs - for example, leave liabilities, superannuation, depreciation - by bringing them within the ambit of parliamentary appropriations - a significant accountability improvement.

Financial managers will be given the right incentives. Chief executive officers will be forced to manage balance sheets - for example, liabilities and asset replacement from depreciation-generated reserves - and to earn the full cost of resources consumed in the production of outputs.

The full cost of outputs can be compared with other state public sector providers, providers in other jurisdictions and the private sector.

Accrual appropriations will allow for the proper assessment of the performance of CEOs. An accrual appropriation regime will mean that operating results reflect performance and not the shortcomings of the appropriation regime. Agencies that continue to show operating losses in their annual reports to Parliament will not be able to blame inadequate funding.

Information requirements for internal budgeting, monitoring and reporting to Treasury will all be accrual based.

Clause 4 of the Bill makes possible the proposed introduction of accrual appropriations for the 2000-01 budget by providing a mechanism to allow the transfer of amounts required to meet commitments incurred in the delivery of the services of a year to suspense accounts created under section 27(1). This will enable these commitments to be met in future years, as and when those commitments fall due for payment. Funds would not otherwise be available as appropriations lapse at year end.

It is proposed to draft a Treasurer's Instruction to provide a framework to govern the rights of agencies to draw against accumulated unspent appropriation balances and establish a requirement to negotiate the timing of cash drawdowns. The amount of drawdowns against previous years' accumulated unspent appropriation balances, contained in accounts created under section 27(1), will be disclosed in the budget papers.

Clause 7 of the Bill enables the introduction of a capital user charge. A capital user charge is a charge on capital employed by public sector agencies, levied by central government on agencies. The Government of Western Australia, and therefore the taxpayer, has an investment in excess of \$20b in the net assets of general government sector agencies. Capital invested in and employed by government agencies has an opportunity cost in that these funds could be spent on other government priorities. The cost of this investment is also a significant element of the full cost of goods and services provided by agencies which is not presently reflected. A capital charging arrangement allows both enhancement of the management of capital and measurement of the full cost of outputs. The absence of a capital charge may have the effect of skewing capital structure decisions because, without a charge, equity does not have an explicit cost like debt does.

The capital user charge provides an incentive for agencies to reduce capital employed by disposing of surplus assets or seeking more cost-effective replacements. These actions lower the charge while allowing agencies to retain the initial level of funding. Such action also contributes to a reduction in the State's net debt. A capital user charge therefore brings the cost of capital employed into focus. It is a complementary reform to accrual appropriations that will significantly enhance asset investment and balance sheet management practices in government. Accordingly, it is proposed to implement the capital user charge simultaneously with accrual appropriations. Agencies will be fully funded in the first instance for the capital user charge. This will provide them with the incentive to rationalise assets and reduce the charge, freeing up valuable funds for output - service - delivery.

These proposed reforms are about improved financial management, as well as good government. They are essential to deliver on the Government's commitment to building a high-performing and responsive public sector, which operates in a more businesslike way. The adoption of the reforms will, over time, contribute to improved financial outcomes by improving financial management.

Finally, clauses 5 and 6 of this Bill provide for government e-commerce by allowing direct debiting arrangements and removing a barrier existing in the Act, which has been interpreted as requiring physical certification of payments on paper.

The amendment contained in clause 6 provides for electronic certification to be accommodated in the Treasurer's Instructions. I commend the Bill to the House, and for the information of members table an explanatory memorandum for the Bill.

[See paper No 290.]

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Cunningham.

STATE SUPERANNUATION BILL 1999

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Court (Premier), and read a first time.

Second Reading

MR COURT (Nedlands - Premier) [10.36 am]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill repeals the legislation governing the State's public sector superannuation schemes and establishes a new framework to provide better superannuation for public sector employees. At a broad level the proposed changes will provide more flexibility for members and access to industry standard superannuation and new products and services; remove unintended anomalies and inequities; ensure timely compliance with relevant commonwealth legislation; and support more efficient administration, which has the potential to deliver lower costs to members and savings to government.

The superannuation industry generally is developing in an environment which is comprised of choice, change and increasing member expectations. Amendment to the legislation governing the State's schemes is essential to maintain pace with this changing environment.

Superannuation for state public sector employees is provided through the government employees superannuation fund, which is the State's biggest fund and comprises three separate superannuation schemes established through two Acts. First, there is a closed pension scheme established through the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act 1938 with around 900 contributors and 12 000 pensioners. Under the Government Employees Superannuation Act 1987 there are two lump sum schemes: A closed defined-benefits scheme with around 41 000 members, and an accumulation scheme which is open to new members and has around 187 000 members. This scheme provides for the State to meet the Commonwealth's superannuation guarantee requirements, presently 7 per cent of salary and rising to 9 per cent in 2002-03.

The Bill provides for the repeal of the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act 1938 and the Government Employees Superannuation Act 1987, and for their replacement with one new Act. This new Act will contain the rules regarding establishment and administration of the Government Employees Superannuation Board and the fund, and the regulations to the Act will contain the specific arrangements for each scheme, including the benefit design and scheme rules.

The existing pension and lump sum schemes will continue. However, this restructuring of the legislation is necessary to enable greater flexibility to respond to member needs, ensure timely compliance with relevant commonwealth legislation and support efficient administration. It is important to note that the Bill does not change the basic legislative framework that establishes the board and the fund. Furthermore, the proposed restructuring of the legislation will not interfere with the right of Parliament to determine the scope and operations of the board and the prudential controls over the fund.

The functions and powers of the board have been updated and are now consistent with the modern drafting provisions applying to other statutory corporations generally. Similarly, the provisions in the Bill relating to the investment powers of the board have also been updated and are now very broad to ensure that the board can access new and emerging opportunities in the market. Importantly, however, all forms of investment will continue to be subject to the Treasurer's approval.

Public sector employees who are members of the board's largest scheme feel trapped in outdated and inflexible superannuation arrangements when compared with members of private schemes. The proposed regulations will provide an opportunity to consider more modern member investment arrangements, as well as new products and services.

Examples of the types of new products and services that could be offered by the board include a roll-over facility - where members who retire can leave retirement benefit with the fund, or an allocated pension - which offers retired members the flexibility of a regular pension and a lump-sum draw down facility. These products have been very well received by members of interstate public sector funds, where similar products have been offered.

Importantly, the Treasurer will be required to approve new products and services offered by the board, and when exercising this discretion the Treasurer will take into account the public benefit and competition policy principles prevailing at the time. In addition, a range of improvements to the scheme rules to meet members' needs are planned to be incorporated into the regulations. Some of these include flexible insurance coverage, increased portability of benefits, contributions to spouse accounts, payments to retirement savings accounts and recognition of purchased leave.

A number of anomalies and inequities in the scheme rules will also be addressed within the new legislative framework. For example, although lawful, the closed pension scheme contains some gender-discriminatory provisions relating to reversionary pension entitlements for widowers. The proposed regulations will allow the qualifying conditions for these pensions to be the same for both widows and widowers. This change corrects a significant inequity for female members in this very important International Year of Older Persons as well as giving tangible effect to the celebration of the Centenary of Women's Suffrage.

Another inequity that exists within the current legislation relates to salary packaging where, unlike other schemes which have access to this feature, pension scheme members cannot package their contributions. As a first step to stem the growth of the State's unfunded superannuation liability, this Government made a commitment to fund all future contributions to the open lump-sum scheme from 1 July 1998. A standing appropriation to support this decision will be incorporated into the Act to ensure that this commitment is maintained by successive Governments.

The Bill also expands the board's borrowing powers, again subject to the Treasurer's approval. This change will enable all possible funding options for the outstanding superannuation liability to be examined, demonstrating a responsible approach to financial management of the State and consistency with the Government's general policy of empowering statutory authorities with borrowing facilities within their enabling legislation.

Ongoing compliance with commonwealth legislation governing superannuation also drives the need for changes to the structure of the legislation as proposed in the Bill, otherwise the State will continue to fall behind. At present the state legislation does not comply with the commonwealth preservation standards, and specific changes are required to ensure that the legislation is consistent. As many of the commonwealth compliance requirements will form part of the regulations, this means that compliance issues can be more easily addressed. The board is currently reshaping its business to ensure it provides customer responsive superannuation services to its members. The existing legislation contains many prescriptive rules that restrict the board's ability to change its business processes to meet the needs of its customers. For example, under the current provisions relating to member statements, a member may receive information about the board's schemes at different times of the year. It is proposed to improve member statements so that the board can incorporate all the information that is relevant to the member on a single member statement. Similarly the current legislation does not allow the board to pass on the benefits of new technology for members. Examples of potential improvements through electronic commerce include providing members access to their superannuation using interactive Internet web site facilities. Again, by having all prescriptive rules in the regulations the board can more readily adapt to these changing circumstances.

Efficiencies and savings will also be gained from the introduction of the Commonwealth's \$450 rule and the flexibility to rollover small accounts to an eligible rollover fund. The \$450 rule introduces a minimum monthly salary limit of \$450, which must apply before persons become entitled to a compulsory employer contribution in the current lump sum scheme. The application of this rule is consistent with the Commonwealth's superannuation guarantee legislation, and will reduce the proliferation of small accounts in the scheme. These accounts are of little or no value to the member, and result in administrative inefficiencies for the board. The estimated savings from the introduction of the \$450 rule are projected to be around \$2.8 million in the first year.

Providing the board with the flexibility to transfer small inactive accounts to eligible rollover funds will increase administrative efficiency, which can result in lower fees for members. These funds are specifically designed for small inactive accounts and must comply with the same commonwealth prudential rules as other superannuation funds.

In conclusion, the proposed amendments to the structure of the legislation will enable the board and its schemes to be responsive to members and readily comply with commonwealth legislation. Together with the efficiency gains realised from improvements in administration, these changes will deliver industry standard superannuation arrangements for members as well as significant savings to Government. Of overall importance, the changes proposed in the Bill will provide the framework for the delivery of customer driven superannuation services for public sector employees. I commend the Bill to the House, and for the information of members, table an explanatory memorandum for the Bill.

[See paper No 291.]

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Cunningham.

STATE SUPERANNUATION (TRANSITIONAL AND CONSEQUENTIAL PROVISIONS) BILL 1999

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Court (Premier), and read a first time.

Second Reading

MR COURT (Nedlands - Premier) [10.46 am]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

As a consequence of proposals contained within the State Superannuation Bill 1999, this Bill -

allows for the transition of the Government Employees Superannuation Board and the government employees superannuation fund from the existing legislative framework contained in the Government Employees Superannuation Act 1987 and the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act 1938, to the new legislative framework proposed in the State Superannuation Bill 1999;

amends various other Acts to replace references to the Government Employees Superannuation Act 1987 and the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act 1938 with the new references required as a result of the State Superannuation Bill 1999; and

deletes references in the enabling legislation of various statutory authorities and statutory office holders that recognise those authorities and office holders for superannuation purposes, so that these provisions can be incorporated within the regulations of the new legislative framework.

The transitional arrangements within this Bill are necessary to give effect to the new Act proposed by the State Superannuation Bill 1999. For example, the transitional provisions provide for the continuation of board members, staff, board policies and strategies. Transitional provisions relating to the fund have also been incorporated and examples include continuation arrangements for actuarial investigations and reviews of investments. The Bill also provides for transitional regulations to be made where it is necessary or convenient to effect transition to the new legislative framework.

The consequential provisions in this Bill amend various Acts by either updating the reference to superannuation legislation or deleting any reference to the two existing superannuation Acts. This change is simply to enable the transfer to the new legislative framework proposed by the State Superannuation Bill 1999 and will not alter the benefit entitlements of these members. Rather, it will allow these entitlements to be incorporated into the regulations that will be developed as a result of the State Superannuation Bill 1999.

The commencement of this Bill, when passed by Parliament, will coincide with both the commencement of the State Superannuation Bill 1999 and its regulations. I commend the Bill to the House, and for the information of members, table an explanatory memorandum for the Bill.

[See paper No 292.]

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Cunningham.

CONSUMER CREDIT (WESTERN AUSTRALIA) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Shave (Minister for Fair Trading), and read a first time.

Second Reading

MR SHAVE (Alfred Cove - Minister for Fair Trading) [10.50 am]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Consumer Credit (Western Australia) Amendment Bill 1999 amends the appendix which is termed the Consumer Credit Code of the Consumer Credit (Western Australia) Act 1996. The Consumer Credit Code is a national scheme of uniform consumer credit laws that aims to ensure borrowers are provided with adequate information, at all stages of consumer credit transactions, to enable them to make informed choices and decisions. It applies to all consumer credit lending for personal, domestic or household purposes.

In 1993 all the Australian States and Territories entered into the Australian Uniform Credit Laws Agreement. The agreement provides that the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs has responsibility to develop and implement a cooperative, uniform, national legislative and administrative scheme to regulate the provision of consumer credit in Australia.

Uniformity of consumer credit law is achieved under clause 7 of the agreement. This clause provides that a party to the agreement may pass application of laws legislation which automatically adopts the Consumer Credit Code as in force from time to time in Queensland, or enact consistent legislation. The Western Australian Government has opted to enact consistent legislation. This amendment Bill has therefore been drafted to mirror the provisions of the Consumer Credit (Queensland) Amendment Bill 1998 to ensure that the same consumer credit laws apply in Western Australia as in all other Australian States and Territories.

The Consumer Credit (Queensland) Amendment Bill 1998 was the outcome of an extensive consultation process throughout Australia under the auspices of the Ministerial Council of Consumer Affairs. In September 1996 a call for submissions on amendments to the code was distributed nationally, on behalf of the ministerial council. In September 1997 the first draft Bill was released for consultation, and as a result of submissions from industry and consumer groups, changes were made. In January 1998 a second exposure draft was also released to stakeholders for comment.

As a result of this extensive period of consultation, approval to introduce an amendment Bill in Queensland was unanimously granted by members of the ministerial council. The amendment Bill before the House today therefore forms part of, and is integral to, the maintenance of the uniform national scheme.

The amendment Bill contains two broad types of amendments. Firstly, the Bill brings the special transitional regulations contained in the Consumer Credit Regulations 1996 into the code and makes them permanent. The special transitional regulations were promulgated to come into operation at the same time as the Consumer Credit Code. They were necessary to overcome practical implementation problems which emerged during the lead time between enactment in Queensland in 1994 and commencement across Australia on 1 November 1996. These problems were identified when legal advisers to credit providers and information technology specialists began the detailed work of drafting documents and manuals and designing software systems to achieve code compliance. Due to the limits on the power of the special transitional regulations, they have had to be renewed each year. These amendments will provide certainty and avoid the need for annual renewal.

Secondly, the Bill makes amendments to improve the operation of the code; for example, by eliminating ambiguities and dealing with practical problems which have come to light since the code commenced operation. The three most important amendments, apart from the amendments which replace the special transitional regulations, are -

clause 61, which removes unnecessary duplication and provides new flexibility in the serving and giving of notices to debtors and guarantors;

clauses 54 and 55, which remove credit advertising restrictions which currently prevent credit providers from including certain information which potential borrowers would find useful; and

clause 45, which clarifies that a credit provider's recoverable enforcement expenses include both internally and externally incurred expenses but also give debtors and guarantors a specific right to challenge the reasonableness of any such expenses so charged.

The amendments in Western Australia will commence on a date fixed by proclamation to coincide with the proclamation date for amendments in other States and Territories. The national commencement date of the amendments is currently the subject of discussion between industry and the ministerial council. Due to issues concerned with the millennium bug and implementation of the Commonwealth Government's goods and services tax legislation, industry has requested that proclamation of the amendment Bill occur some time in the first half of the year 2000.

This Bill does not address the fundamental policy issues underlying the Consumer Credit Code. These broader issues are currently the subject of a post implementation review, which also involves a review under national competition policy guidelines. However, by correcting the problems I have detailed above, this Bill will reduce the cost to credit providers of complying with the code, which will in turn have benefits for both business and consumers.

The consultation process for this Bill has been extensive over two years and has sought to achieve consensus. The Bill has the support of industry, consumer groups and government, and the approval of the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs. I commend this Bill to the House and, for the information of members, I table an explanatory memorandum.

[See paper No 289.]

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Carpenter.

DISABILITY SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL 1999

Declaration as Urgent

On motion by Mr Omodei (Minister for Disability Services), resolved -

That the Bill be considered an urgent Bill.

Second Reading

Resumed from 21 October.

MR CARPENTER (Willagee) [10.57 am]: The amendments in this Bill are the result of a review that was conducted by the minister as required by the Disability Services Act 1993. In broad terms, the suggested amendments are not particularly controversial, although there were some moments of controversy along the way as we developed a position on the various suggestions that came forward. However, thanks to some lobbying from this side of the Parliament and from people involved in the disability services sector, the most controversial elements that were proposed have been withdrawn, although there is still some controversy about what we may describe as the MacKinnon amendments, which may attract some attention later, but I do not think they will attract opposition.

I will take this opportunity to talk about the situation that faces people with disabilities in Western Australia. Severe difficulties beset people with disabilities, many of which, it would be fair to say, should be sheeted home to the Federal Government and its mean-spirited approach to this area. That has caused great distress for people with disabilities across Australia and has probably led to the rather unusual situation in which people from across all walks of political life and from all the States of Australia have combined to speak against the Federal Government's position and have tried to promote a better outcome for people with disabilities. Disability services is a much misunderstood and devalued sector when it comes to the distribution of government money, particularly at the federal level. It has been generally accepted in Western Australia that between one in five or one in six people has some form of disability, so we are talking about between 250 and 300 people in Western Australia. When the impact of that on the families of those people, their friends and their relationships is calculated into the statistic, it can be seen that it is an area of vital importance for any State Government that is committed to improving the lives of its citizens. At the same time, although the current State Government has increased funding to the disability services area in a way consistent with its long-term plan strategy, some of the outcomes have been disappointing.

I think the Government would concede that in the provision of accommodation, its strategy has not been able to keep pace with the growth in demand for accommodation. This has been discussed in Parliament before, and I have had an exchange with the minister on this subject. The growth in demand in the disability sector has been so substantial that the forward planning done five years ago has not been sufficient to match the growth in demand. A couple of factors have a bearing on that. First, there is the general issue of community expectations. Ten or 20 years ago, and certainly before that, people had low expectations about the quality of life for those who had a physical or intellectual disability. Many of those with intellectual disabilities, such as Down's syndrome, were institutionalised for the whole of their lives and were put into the out-of-sight out-of-mind category. As a result of the change in attitude towards people with disabilities, which flowed into government policy in the late 1970s, but more spectacularly in the 1990s, the expectations of people and their families about the quality of life they might be able to enjoy has grown considerably. Concomitant with that is the strength of the political voice of people with disabilities and their families. They no longer accept that they should have anything but the best possible quality of life available to them. The flow-on from that presents a financial dilemma for State Governments, which are the principal organisations that provide funding for services for people with disabilities, because of the vastly increased call on government expenditure to match this growth in community expectations.

I produced figures at one stage, when the minister was trumpeting about the achievements of his Government in disability services. I did not disagree with him. However, the statistics indicate that at the end of the O'Connor Government approximately 0.7 per cent of the total state budget was expended on people with disabilities, either physical or intellectual, and by the end of the 10 years of the Labor regime that figure had doubled to approximately 1.4 per cent. The latest calculation I have made indicates that currently 1.7 per cent of the total state expenditure is spent on the disability sector. It is still a very small percentage of the total state expenditure in a budget of \$7b. This year the expenditure was projected to be a net figure of \$151m. That indicates that, although there has been a very commendable growth in expenditure on the disability sector from the beginning of the 1980s and continuing into the 1990s, only a small fraction of state government funds is expended in this area. The real culprit has been the federal Liberal Government. The minister will probably agree that the last two or three ministers in that area have been a major disappointment, perhaps with the exception of Warwick Smith who was the responsible minister for a while and indicated he would do good things, but lost his seat in the 1996 election. The Federal Government has adopted a very hard-hearted approach to the disability sector, and has left State Governments across Australia lobbying furiously for a better outcome.

In tandem with the growth in expectations, other factors have increased the financial and other responsibilities of the States. The ageing population has produced two outcomes. First, the number of people who are aged and have a disability has grown considerably in the past two decades. Secondly, the number of people who are aged and who are carers of people with a disability has grown dramatically. This is a problem for the State Government which is far from being addressed satisfactorily. Reference is made in this year's budget papers to the ageing population of carers in Western Australia. Often today the parents of the person with a disability are well into their seventies or eighties, and are looking after an adult who may well be in his or her fifties or sixties. Many of the parents are getting to the stage at which they are desperately concerned about the long-term security and future of their disabled child, as they see the end of their own lives looming closer.

This has important ramifications for the Government in its policy making, which I do not believe are being satisfactorily addressed at the moment. Because of the pressure on expenditure, in the past year and a half there has been a shift in the way the need for accommodation is being addressed in the disability area, and the way the demand for accommodation in the disability sector is being described. The effect is to disguise the existing crisis in accommodation. Rather than producing figures for the Parliament which show the number of people who have applied for, and been successful in obtaining, accommodation and, therefore, those who have been unsuccessful in their applications, the figures are presented in a way that shows the number of people given assistance in their own homes when they apply for accommodation. The level of that assistance often is not sufficient to meet the demands of the people applying for assistance, and it does not in any way alleviate carers' concerns about the future of the people for whom they are caring.

The number of people reaching old age and then acquiring a disability is also increasing, and has increased considerably over the past few years. This requires a broader approach than can be achieved by any one department, whether it be the Disability Services Commission, Office of Seniors Interests, or the Health Department. There is a need for a long-term, across-government strategy to deal with the ageing population of WA, the aged people who acquire a disability, and how those people's needs should be addressed by the Government in Western Australia. I would like that to be developed over the next two or three years, certainly by members on this side of the Parliament. There should be a long-term strategy to deal with these factors which are starting to impact very significantly on the Western Australian community.

Another point that needs to be taken into consideration more than it is at present is the rights of the carers. In Britain a charter of rights for carers has been introduced. The assessment of need is often almost entirely focused on the person with the disability. The needs of the carer are often not considered in sufficient detail. I see great merit in a charter of rights for carers in this area. A charter of rights would require that any assessment done for a person with a disability must take into consideration the requirements and needs of the carer, especially when the carer is a direct family member. The need and demand for improved and increased therapy services for people with disabilities has escalated in Western Australia in the past five years. That need defuses the potential benefits flowing from the increased budget allocation in this area. In particular, therapy at the early stages of disability and for young people with disabilities is affected. There is a clear correlation between the amount of therapy and early intervention provided and the capacity to negate the long-term costs of disability. In other words, the earlier assistance, therapy and intervention are provided, the less significant the costs will be down the track. This must be a focus of government attention. To be fair, the Government has focused on this to some extent and made some positive steps in this direction. However, in the Estimates Committee I raised one aspect of change to the provision of therapy which I do not consider to be satisfactory. That aspect was school-aged therapy services. However, I will not dwell on that because the water has well and truly flowed under the bridge.

The provision of services to people with disabilities via outsourcing has presented difficulties. I have noticed a subtle shift in the attitude of the chairman of the Disability Services Commission Board toward outsourcing. When I first spoke to him he was adamant that the private sector would nearly always do it better and that accommodation and services to people with disabilities should be outsourced wherever possible. His position has shifted because he has realised that great uncertainties impact on the lives of people with disabilities. Many people feel uncomfortable if they believe the Government is moving out of the provision of service. There are other reasons: The loss of corporate experience and corporate memory from government to the private sector is dangerous because it limits the capacity of government to ensure that services provided by the private sector reach expected and required standards.

Mr Pandal interjected.

Mr CARPENTER: He is a constituent of mine. That may have had some positive impact on him. I do not believe that the Government should rush headlong to outsource and privatise the provision of accommodation and services to people with

disabilities. That is generally recognised across government and the trend has probably slowed. That is a good thing. The Government has a basic and fundamental responsibility to ensure that people with disabilities are guaranteed a sufficient quality of life. All sorts of stresses and pressures on people with disabilities and their families are created when Government is seen to be, rightly or wrongly, withdrawing from that responsibility. That point is now more generally understood.

Another factor that must be taken into consideration when talking about the level of financial provision was referred to in documents produced by the Disability Services Commission last year and repeated in the budget papers. The growth in demand for services from people with disabilities is about three times higher than the growth in demand for services from people without disabilities. That enormous growth must be catered for by the State Government. One of the positive measures taken by the State Government has been to guarantee funding over a period of years. That helps address that rapid growth in demand - although I do not think there is enough funding - and reassures people in the sector that at least base level funding will be available. That base level funding may increase with lobbying and pressure on government. As growth in demand in the disability areas is so significant, the Government must constantly review the allocations it has foreshadowed for the sector and be prepared to increase those allocations above the planned levels. People with disabilities often live on fixed incomes. One of the unfortunate outcomes of the State Government's policy is that people on fixed incomes have suffered financially from the imposition of some of the government charges and from the benefits it has removed for people on fixed incomes, such as the free water allowance, increases in public transport costs and the diminution of public transport services. While this is not reflected in the disability services budget papers, it has a significant impact on people with disabilities. They often have extremely small incomes, no capacity to meet increases in taxes and charges, and transport difficulties. Any change in these areas can severely impact on their ability to lead a good quality of life. Two or three cases were brought to my attention last year in which simple changes in bus routes had devastating effects on people with disabilities in the southern suburbs. These people had been using public transport to go from one location to another for therapy and so on. They were no longer able to access those therapy services because of a simple change in bus timetables as a result of the privatisation of the buses in that area. People with disabilities are among the most vulnerable people in the community, therefore, the Government needs to take a broad whole-of-government view of the impact on people with disabilities of any policy change it might institute. That applies to all fields of government. It is good to see in the budget papers guaranteed increases of funding over five or six years to the disability services sector; however, the statistics in these papers do not reflect the impacts made by other government areas on people with disabilities. Some sort of assessment should be made, when the Government considers cutbacks in various areas, of how those cutbacks will affect the most vulnerable people, such as those with disabilities.

One of the changes proposed earlier in the year was to amalgamate the Disability Services Commission with another government department and create a super-ministry. That created high levels of anxiety among carers and people with disabilities. They believed - I shared that belief and so did the minister - that people with disabilities could be guaranteed that the focus of Government would remain sharp if they had their own department, minister and legislation. The focus would be blurred by being part of a bigger ministry, such as being incorporated into the Health Department or combined with Family and Children's Services, which was one of the plans being run through government at one stage.

It is to the credit of the minister - I do not often give him credit, because he does not deserve any - that he was able to resist the internal changes being proposed within government. He was given some assistance in that by people in the disability services sector and those in other political parties who guaranteed there would be a major controversy if the Disability Services Commission became part of a larger government department, with a minister heading several different sections. That is an excellent outcome of the debate on disability services this year. As I said, the current minister deserves credit for the role he played in achieving that.

The amendments to this legislation are not greatly controversial. The proposition that the composition of the board be altered so as not to require a quota of people with disabilities to serve on it, which was part of the original plan for this legislation, has been withdrawn. That is a good outcome and one that reflects commonsense and also some sensitivity to the needs and expectations of people with disabilities. It is a very wise step to avoid the controversy which would have been totally unnecessary. This series of amendments will get broad support from those on our side of the Parliament; however, some members would like to take up some issues related to specific areas. We intend to debate the Bill for a short time during the consideration in detail stage.

MR RIEBELING (Burrup) [11.21 am]: I will bring forward a concern about disability services raised by people who are involved in this area in my electorate, especially parents who have disabled children in their care; that is, making the money provided for those people in my electorate as effective as it is for those in the metropolitan area, who get the same amount. The problem is that a certain amount of money for services is provided to each of the disabled people. In the case of Karratha, a huge proportion of that money goes into transporting the experts to the regional area; therefore, the money provided does not go as far in the provision of treatment as it does for a comparable person in the metropolitan area. I hope the minister can tell me that the changes to the legislation will result in that problem being addressed.

My conversations with officers of the department several months ago indicated an announcement was about to be made about a solution to that problem; however, nothing happened, and I do not know why. If that problem were solved in country Western Australia, it would bring a great deal of applause from these people whose resources are very limited. The services provided through the experts are exceptionally well received by the carers of people with disabilities; yet there is a huge amount of frustration that the amount of money provided, even in the metropolitan area, is minimal when compared to the needs. It is not an overgenerous allocation, but one that has been determined as the minimum required for people with varying degrees of disability. In country areas that amount is eroded considerably due to transport costs associated with the provision of services. I hope in his response the minister can solve my problem and announce that the current situation is to be changed.

I noticed in the second reading speech the minister mentioned the best interests of people with disabilities and strengthening the application of competition policy. He went on with the usual rhetoric people on the other side of the House use. However, competitive services are not always a prospect for people with disabilities in regional Western Australia because they are not always in place to enable such people to get the best out of them. What might be the best option for service delivery to people in the metropolitan area of Perth might not be the best for those in Karratha. In his response, I hope the minister mentions how those in remote areas will be better off under this new legislation.

MS ANWYL (Kalgoorlie) [11.25 am]: I will make some brief comments about the needs of people with disabilities in my electorate. The minister is no stranger to the comments I have made about the specific needs of the people in my electorate. I was very encouraged last week when a senior officer of the Disability Services Commission took the time to visit me in my office. At last an audit is being carried out in the goldfields region as to the needs of the 150-odd people registered with the commission as having disabilities. Further to my previous speech in this place on this issue, I will take a brief time to update events that have occurred in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area.

I continue to believe that the primary needs which are not being met are those of intellectually disabled adults who have long-term accommodation needs. Ageing disabled people are, in turn, being cared for by their aged parents. Unfortunately, some of them are facing health problems and fall into the category of frail aged. A source of much consternation amongst the parents is that they will have to move to Perth, away from the goldfields, having spent considerable time there; in one case, one lady has spent 86 years of her life in the goldfields. She is contemplating a move to Perth because accommodation services are available which cater for the needs of parents who have adult children with intellectual disabilities. It is most important that real planning is undertaken - I am not suggesting that buildings be made available overnight - so parents have some indication of what might be available within the next year. For that reason, I was encouraged to have an opportunity to speak to a member of the commission who seemed to have a good understanding of the issues. I impressed on him that I wanted to be kept informed about the matter and that it would lead to some results.

Some people do not have ready access to respite. The minister has listened to my comments on this issue before. For many people, in-home respite is not their preferred option. We should look at the need for a permanent facility, which can be supplemented by regular trips, holiday camps, and the like, for children, which apparently several years ago was a feature of disability services in the goldfields. I am sure the minister knows Lorna Mitchell, and others associated with her, who was involved in the organisation of regular camps. That matter was raised at the disability support group meeting that I attended recently. If these annual or biannual camps occur, families can have up to a week of quality time in their homes, so that the schooling of other children is not disrupted. That certainly seemed to be an option.

I was disappointed to find out from the visiting Disability Services Commission staff member that previous calls I had made for the use of the Paddy Hannan Hostel had not been effective. The Paddy Hannan Hostel is attached to the Kalgoorlie Nursing Home but is an independent living wing of it. It is owned by Moran Pty Ltd. With the support of the director of nursing at that Kalgoorlie Nursing Home, because the Paddy Hannan Hostel is not currently in use, it seemed appropriate to me that there could be an interim form of respite, perhaps even long-term respite, by using those six independent living units. Medical care is on hand from the staff of the nursing home. Access to a kitchen and food is made available through the nursing home. It seems a good place for a respite interim set-up. As the Kalgoorlie Nursing Home is in Dugan Street, it is very central to the central business district. One of the complaints made about the old Burt Street hostel and respite house was that it was on the fringe of town and less appropriate.

I am encouraged by the fact that the respite house is still unsold, despite the minister's department's best efforts to flog off that real estate and put the money back into the central coffers of the commission. The land represents a unique piece of real estate that has the potential to be developed into the sort of living facility which I envisage. The facility could cater for a range of disabled people and have carers' accommodation. It is a sad fact that several disabled people in Kalgoorlie-Boulder have no family to speak of and are dependent on full-time carers. Homeswest provides some accommodation for them, some of which is purpose built, but many other disabled people live in private rental accommodation, the cost of which is met through government agencies. I do not envisage a group home with everybody living in hostel-type accommodation, but accommodation where carers can support them in a cluster-type environment. Homeswest has indicated that it could be a party to such a project. A number of very keen and dedicated members of the goldfields community are lobbying towards that end. The Paddy Hannan Hostel could provide temporary or permanent respite. Long-term accommodation could be made available by using the land at the end of Burt Street in Boulder.

I have recently had a number of representations from people with autistic children. Kalgoorlie-Boulder has an autistic self-help group. One of the principal issues that has been raised is not only the current educational support but also post-school options. That comes up again and again in my contact with parents. I have raised before the concern about the fixed amount of money available for providing support for autistic children. That sum is the same whether people live in Kununurra, Kalgoorlie or Kelmscott. It seems very unfair that people get a fixed amount of money notwithstanding the distance they live from the city. The cost of air fares and accommodation to visit the autism therapist must be met out of that same amount. Children who live in Perth obviously do not have to pay large air fares or accommodation charges. It will be a challenge to overcome that great inequity. Having said that, I am perhaps more optimistic than when I last spoke to the minister because of the visit I have had from a member of the Disability Services Commission. However, if I do not continue to have feedback on meeting the unmet demands, I will be speaking about this matter again.

MR OMODEI (Warren-Blackwood - Minister for Disability Services) [11.35 am]: I thank members of the Opposition for their intended support of this amendment Bill. It is appropriate that I respond to some of the comments made by the member for Willagee. I agree with his comment on the disability sector gaining in strength. It now has a strong political voice, particularly in Western Australia. One of the reasons for that is the actions of this Government. At the beginning of the term

of this Government, we set up a separate Minister for Disability Services, a new Act of Parliament that covers all of the disability sector, and a board and a chairman of the board, and of course the advisory council was carried on from the previous legislation. That has lent strength to the non-government sector. A measure of support has come from people who were previously in this place. The chairman of the board of the Disability Services Commission is Barry MacKinnon, who was a former Leader of the Opposition. Only yesterday I spoke to the Council of Funded Agencies, comprising some 107 non-government agencies funded in part by the State Government through the Disability Services Commission. The chairperson of that organisation is none other than Ian Taylor, the former member for Kalgoorlie, who was also a former Leader of the Opposition. That is an indication of the level of support we are getting at a very high level.

We have a very good organisation, which is recognised in Australia as the leading disability organisation in the country. The fact that we have a Minister for Disability Services is something we can all be proud of and something that other States are trying to emulate. We have had excellent bipartisan support in the time that I have been minister over the past four or five years - it seems that long anyway. We have lobbied the Federal Government fairly hard over a number of issues. I suppose that I am not popular among some of my Liberal or coalition counterparts in the Federal Government, but I do not resile from that because we have made some major achievements, particularly with the Commonwealth-State Disability Agreement. Our relationship with national bodies like the Australian Council for Rehabilitation of the Disabled and the National Council on Intellectual Disability has been excellent. We have gone to the lengths of organising pre-ministerial conferences so that we have a telecommunications link-up and all ministers of States are on the same wavelength when they talk to the federal minister. That has not gone down too well with the Federal Government from time to time but it has been a very effective strategy.

It will not be very long before the State has its second business plan. Treasury officials like the concept of a business plan because they know what the demands will be from a particular sector. We are currently in the fifth year of our first business plan. It was strongly supported by the Premier and the previous minister, Hon Kevin Minson, who put the plan together with officers from the Disability Services Commission. That strategy has proved to be very successful. It is very difficult to predict the demand five years ahead. We have done so fairly effectively, but our budget is fairly tight this year. As members opposite have mentioned, the disability sector has increased its demand. I dare say there will never be enough money and that we could spend a lot more money on disability services. We are currently negotiating with the Treasury on the second business plan. We have had some very productive talks. We have also communicated with the non-government sector on that plan. We have recently persuaded Cabinet to agree to an allocation of \$2.2m to cover the huge increases that have occurred in workers compensation. We have ongoing dialogue with the sector to ensure it implements risk management processes to minimise the demands on workers compensation.

The Count Us In program introduced in 1995 has been very successful, and it will continue. A number of strategies have been adopted to assist the disability sector, one of which is the "adopt a politician" scheme suggested by the Developmental Disability Council, which is very successful. Like me, the member for Willagee has an adopted family. It is a good way of highlighting to members of Parliament the needs of people with disabilities so that members can advocate on their behalf and ensure that they are aware of the services that are available to them.

Throughout the State we have expanded the innovative local area coordination scheme that was introduced by the previous Labor Government towards the end of its term. Every area in regional Western Australia now has a local area coordinator, most of whom have responsibility for about 50 clients. We are in the final stages of expanding that scheme across the metropolitan area. It has proved to be successful to the extent that people from Queensland have sought assistance from this Government to implement a similar system. It is interesting that the Department of Aboriginal Affairs is also adopting a similar coordinator model. The success of that program is evident.

The member for Willagee referred to carers. The commission is in the final stages of preparing a carer strategy to reach across the spectrum of disabilities and Family and Children's Services. It is a good initiative. We have all been critical recently of the Federal Government's attitude to unmet demand which was a very hot issue for the States. The Federal Government has responded, albeit not to the extent we would like. It has allocated \$150m over two years, commencing next year, with \$50m to the States and \$100m the year after specifically for assisting aged carers. The commission will put those funds to good use. Negotiations with the Commonwealth and the States on that allocation of funds are ongoing.

I am confident about our new business plan, the allocation from the Commonwealth and the huge amount of money raised by the non-government sector. There are approximately 130 non-government agencies in Western Australia. The Multiple Sclerosis Society of WA raises about 70 per cent of its funds and the blind society raises about 90 per cent of its funds. Although the Government allocates about \$170m to disability services in the State, the non-government sector is certainly very productive. With those arrangements and the heightened awareness of the general public in Western Australia - there are approximately 305 000 people with disabilities in the State; that is, one person in six, so everybody has a connection, and from a carer's point of view, one person in three has contact with a person with a disability - the commission has in train a program that will assist the non-government sector and people with disabilities.

The main area of responsibility or demand is in accommodation and respite care. We have programs for both individual and family support. Post-school options was an initiative of this State Government which has been followed by other States. However, we are having a battle with the Commonwealth Government over funding for post-school options.

The member for Burrup is concerned about professional services, which I will talk about shortly. That issue, the relocation of young people in nursing homes and aids and equipment are the main areas of concern that we are targeting with our second business plan.

With reference to the comments by the member for Willagee on water and transport, the first 50 kilolitres available to people

in the metropolitan area were free, but this was not the case for people in the country. When we rehashed water prices we removed the water allowance and made the cost for the first 150 kilolitres of water very low. Pensioners and people with disabilities who receive a disability pension are eligible for the 50 per cent government subsidy. The same applies to transport.

Mr Carpenter: I thought you said you would correct what I said, but you confirmed it.

Mr OMODEI: I corrected it by saying that we had removed the free allowance for people in the metropolitan area - the new tariffs are not huge - but country people did not receive a free allowance. City people were treated differently from people in the country. As a parochial member and the Minister for Water Resources at the time, I was keen to square the ledger and have people treated equally.

The comments by the member for Willagee on transport were somewhat off beam. He cannot deny that we have spent significant sums on transport in this State, including our expenditure on the northern corridor rail line, where the number of passenger vehicles has been increased. The central area transport system has been revamped with the purchase of new buses and we are replacing the whole bus system in Western Australia. He must give some credit where it is due; although it is difficult because he is in opposition.

Mr Riebeling interjected.

Mr OMODEI: What happened to the bus services that were sold? Were they left at the dump? The services were sold and new routes were added. We can debate that another time.

The member for Burrup referred to competition. We have introduced competition in areas such as therapy where competitive tenders are sought for funding from the Disability Services Commission, and the same applies to autism services and other areas. The member for Burrup is right about delivery of specialist services in country areas - it has always been a problem - where we cannot attract specialists to live. I acknowledge that people must travel long distances to deliver those services.

Mr Riebeling: Have you addressed that?

Mr OMODEI: We are addressing that.

Mr Riebeling: How?

Mr OMODEI: We are considering a new approach, especially for children with autism. We have implemented telelink specialist services and we have launched a training manual for schools so that school teachers can deal with children with autism and their families and assist in classroom support. The local area coordinators support the families and tailor packages for families in need.

Mr Riebeling: Will you provide a greater allocation of money?

Mr OMODEI: The next five-year business plan will provide significant increases in funding for a range of areas that were mentioned. Within that plan are specific allocations of funds for the metropolitan, country and regional areas.

Mr Riebeling: Does it supplement travel costs?

Mr OMODEI: It will depend. The cost of travel is built into the delivery of services. If the member for Burrup has specific areas of concern, he should bring them to my attention so that we can address them.

Mr Riebeling: I have.

Mr OMODEI: The member for Kalgoorlie referred to the problem of ageing parents caring for children with an intellectual disability. The Government is addressing that. Dealing with the goldfields respite centre and other facilities that the member has raised previously in this place, we have allocated substantial funding to a range of respite services. Some of the options include in-home respite and vacation respite; that is, camping-type programs. I note that Rotary has weekend respite programs for people with disabilities, even in my area in the south west. Those programs are also complemented by commonwealth funds for respite.

The Disability Services Commission has just completed a series of focus group meetings to coordinate the various views of people in the Kalgoorlie community. In particular, the ideas on respite and accommodation needs are being addressed. As a result of this initiative, a plan on expanding the services in the goldfields area will go to the board of the commission.

One of the jobs of members of Parliament is to represent the people in their electorates. Among the most important of those people are those with disabilities. I am pleased that a number of members raise matters directly with either me or the commission, and we try to respond as quickly as we can.

Ms Anwyl: In the goldfields, is there any idea of a time frame for that process?

Mr OMODEI: I have been told that it will go to the commission. I assume that will be in the near future. There have been a series of visits to the member's electorate by the commission and the board. I think the board went to the goldfields last year. It travels around the State from time to time to ascertain the various needs. I also have a very good advisory committee. The regional advisory forums feed into the advisory committee, and we meet on a regular basis. Membership of the advisory committee comprises a range of people with different interests. They report to the committee, and the committee then reports to me.

The system that we have put in place works well in this State. My only regret is that if every other State in the Commonwealth had the same structure as Western Australia, we would be able to lobby the Commonwealth on a stronger basis for much needed funds in the disability area. We have shifted people out of the old institutions into homes in the community. We have a mix of respite services, a mix of accommodation services under our service-plus policy, a mix of services that come from home and community care and the Silver Chain Nursing Association, as well as other services for therapy and community aids and equipment. Those schemes are working well, and with those schemes in place, we are able to make our dollars go as far as possible.

I have responded to most of the matters raised by members of the Opposition. I thank them for their support of the Bill. It is imperative that it go through the Parliament before Christmas. I know that a large amount of legislation in the Legislative Council must be passed. However, some matters contained in this Bill will be advantageous to people with disabilities, so I hope it will be passed during this session of Parliament.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 3 put and passed.

Clause 4: Long title amended -

Mr CARPENTER: Why was the change to the nomenclature deemed necessary?

Mr OMODEI: There was a comprehensive approach to the disability sector, as per the requirements under the review of the legislation. A committee travelled throughout the State and met with people from the disability sector. The Advisory Council for Disability Services was retained; it was included in the previous legislation and the legislation before that. The idea to rename it the Ministerial Advisory Council for Disability Services was in response to confusion in the sector about the advisory council. There are a number of advisory councils. There is a commonwealth ministerial advisory council and a number of others. It was deemed that if it were renamed the Ministerial Advisory Council for Disability Services - the council has always advised the minister - it would make clear the name of that council.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 7 put and passed.

Clause 8: Section 12A inserted -

Mr CARPENTER: Will the minister give an outline of the practical effect of proposed section 12A, "Contracts to provide goods or services to the Commission", in particular the size of the contracts that will be subject to the State Supply Commission Act? Proposed section 12A(2) states -

Except with the approval of the Minister, the Commission is not to enter into a contract under subsection (1) if the amount to be paid under the contract exceeds an amount specified in a written direction given to the Commission by the Minister . . .

What will be the dollar amount specified in a written direction?

Mr OMODEI: I am told that the current amount requiring approval of the minister is anything above \$5 000. However, it is intended that that will be negotiated with the commission, dependent upon the type of program that is being delivered and whether tenders will be sought.

Mr Carpenter: So you will have absolute discretion?

Mr OMODEI: I dare say, yes, in the end the minister will. From time to time the minister needs to know what the board is doing. There are a number of new requirements under the amendments to this legislation that require the commission to advise the minister of what it is about to do.

Mr CARPENTER: Perhaps the minister could give us an example, under proposed section 12A(2), of how this will impact in reality.

Mr OMODEI: One example is that if the commission decided to review a specific area of service delivery that exceeded \$5 000, it would need to seek the minister's approval. Alternatively, if the commission wanted to engage consultants to review a program, the minister would need to be notified.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 9: Sections 21A and 21B inserted -

Mr CARPENTER: Proposed section 21B is headed "Minister to be consulted on major initiatives" and states -

The Commission must consult the Minister before it enters upon a course of action that in its opinion -

- (a) amounts to a major initiative; or
- (b) is likely to be of significant public interest . . .

Does this mean that there have been occasions to date where that has not occurred?

Mr RIEBELING: I thought that the legislation and the structure of all government departments was such that the minister would give directions on policy matters. Why do we now need proposed section 21A? Has there been a problem in the past where some sort of confusion has reigned with regard to policies of the Government and what is required? Why are we now putting it in such a defined and specific way?

Mr OMODEI: The commission must comply with the principles of the legislation. If the commission wanted to make significant changes - for example, to restructure its staff - proposed section 21B states that the minister shall be consulted. Proposed section 21A states that the minister may notify the commission in writing of general policies of the Government that are to be implemented by the commission.

Mr Riebeling: It is just with regard to staff?

Mr OMODEI: That is just one example.

Mr RIEBELING: What are the general policies of the Government that would need to be outlined in that manner? Are we talking about shifting to contracts and the like? Is that the type of thing which has not been happening and that the Government wants to happen?

Mr OMODEI: Not necessarily. The legislation gives the commission the flexibility to go to contract or to allocate funds without going to tender. In some specific areas, there may be a requirement for the Government to tell the commission that it should go to contract.

Mr RIEBELING: My concern is that we need to have clear guidelines, but if the directions became too specific, we might get to the point where the minister was playing a day-to-day operational role in the department. Are we slowly getting to the point where the head of the department will be the minister? A too-intrusive minister is not what our system is about and may not be in the best interests of disabled people. This minister may be the best minister ever to play that role - I doubt that, but that may be the case - and the next minister -

Mr Omodei: Which minister would that be?

Mr RIEBELING: The next minister will be far better! However, we may not be in government for the next 100 years and the coalition may get back in and we will have a rotten minister. These sorts of provisions may allow for abuse. What protections are provided for the clients?

Mr OMODEI: The legislation is couched in terms where the best possible outcome will be obtained for people with disabilities. That is emphasised over and over again. Under the current legislation, the Disability Services Commission has the power, for example, to set up certain structures. This legislation provides that if the commission decides to outsource some part of its organisation, as it did with school age therapy services, it shall advise the minister; or the minister may dictate to the commission that it shall consult with the minister.

Mr CARPENTER: Was the school age therapy services decision referred to the minister and did he give explicit consent to those services being outsourced?

Mr OMODEI: The commission had to comply with the requirements of the Department of Contract and Management Services and the Buy Wisely policies of the Government. I agreed to the outsourcing of school age therapy services. Our therapy focus is currently operating very effectively in this State and does create some competition with the services that are provided by the Disability Services Commission.

Mr Carpenter: What was the value of the contract?

Mr OMODEI: I am told it was around \$2m to \$2.5m.

Mr Carpenter: There was no tender?

Mr OMODEI: In that case the commission went to the State Supply Commission and received an exemption.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 10 put and passed.

Clause 11: Section 25 amended -

Mr CARPENTER: Proposed section 25(4) states that without limiting the terms and conditions that may be included in an agreement referred to in subsection (1), unless the board considers that it is inappropriate for an agreement to do so, such an agreement is to require the recipient of a grant under section 24(1)(b) or (c) to report to the commission the death of any person with a disability, significant physical or psychological harm suffered by a person with a disability, an assault, including a sexual assault, of a person with a disability, or the neglect of a person with a disability. I take it from the presence of these amendments that there is no such requirement at present.

Mr OMODEI: For clients who receive services from the Disability Services Commission, there is currently a discretionary arrangement with regard to those people reporting. When the review committee travelled around the State this was one of the issues parents raised. Reporting of any of those incidents is now mandatory. This is a response to people who made submissions to the review committee requesting that there be mandatory reporting. That has been built into the legislation.

Mr RIEBELING: I always think that bureaucrats and draftspersons put silly things into legislation to see whether we are awake. Does this clause provide that people who pass away still receive benefits under the current system?

Mr Omodei: No.

Mr RIEBELING: Or could they?

Mr OMODEI: This brings the requirements in the non-government sector into line with those in the Disability Services Commission sector. It makes it mandatory to report. Reporting is also required so that an assessment can be made about how the harm occurred.

Mr RIEBELING: Perhaps I am reading this incorrectly. The reporting of the death does not relate to the provision of services; it relates to an inquest that will be conducted. This is a coronial process as to the injury and the like. Is that a correct interpretation?

Mr OMODEI: It would be in addition to that. Obviously, if someone died in unusual circumstances, there would be a coronial inquiry. A large number of agencies are funded by the Government. This provision establishes a reporting mechanism.

Mr CARPENTER: This clause draws the non-government sector into line with the service provision standards that the commission must meet.

Mr Omodei: In many cases the non-government agencies are funded by the commission.

Mr CARPENTER: That is the point to which I am referring. What staff screening is undertaken when an agency applies to the commission for funding to provide a service to a person with a disability? Members must bear in mind these potential outcomes; that is, death, assault, sexual abuse and so on. What screening is undertaken of non-government agencies using government funds?

Mr OMODEI: All staff members of non-government agencies must go through a police check before they are employed. The normal reporting mechanisms for any agency funded by the commission are then followed. In addition, the commission undertakes standards monitoring of all agencies.

Mr Carpenter: So everyone working for an agency must have a police clearance.

Mr OMODEI: Yes, including volunteers.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 12: Part 4A inserted -

Mr RIEBELING: This clause deals with contracting out, which is supposed to result in benefits to people with disabilities. I asked in the second reading debate how these provisions would benefit people in country Western Australia. I am hoping to hear what allowances will be made for people in remote areas in which there is no element of competition. As the minister is no doubt aware, contracting out works positively only if there is competition. In fact, it operates to the detriment of country regions because it is uneconomic for many providers to go to those areas.

Mr Omodei: If that were occurring, I would tell the commission not to continue doing that.

Mr RIEBELING: It is happening now.

Mr Omodei: No, it is not.

Mr RIEBELING: People do not have the same access to services in country areas because of the budget allocations. My only concern relates to people with disabilities and carers accessing the services they require from health professionals. People in my electorate tell me constantly about these problems. A small group of people work very actively to raise funds and to organise work opportunities for people with disabilities. People with profound disabilities need access to certain specialists, but the funding provided does not go as far in country areas as it does in the metropolitan area. A funding component should be included for travel, either for the specialist or for the individual. In many cases it is not an option for the individual to travel because of his or her disabilities, so the specialist must travel. I understand the difficulties and the expense. However, if the State Government decides that a level of compensation or assistance is available for a person with X problem, the allocation to such a person in the country should be X plus a travel component so that the person concerned can access the same level of service.

Mr OMODEI: The member is talking about individual funding.

Mr Riebeling: I am.

Mr OMODEI: This does not apply to individual funding arrangements for the care or support of people with disabilities in the home or in the community. The contracts are with agencies. They may now be renewed without having to re-tender unless that is considered to be appropriate by the commission or the minister. This gives the minister some flexibility. This clause provides scope for continuity and minimisation of disruption to services provided to people with disabilities; in other words, the contracts can be allocated without going to tender. All non-government services will be subjected to regular independent quality standards reviews and assessment, and a process to obtain accreditation to continue to provide services. Those people providing the services will be monitored by the commission. As I said, they do not apply to individual funding packages to families; that funding is provided to agencies.

Mr RIEBELING: I understand the minister is talking about contracts involving service provider groups and the like. I am talking about the individuals who access those services. Even though we are talking about groups, I am talking about the

individuals impacted upon by those groups. I am happy to get the examples together and to sit down with the minister and go through them. The response from the Disability Services Commission to these people is not on an equal basis to that for their metropolitan cousins. That is not an acceptable outcome for severely disabled people. When people go bush, quite often they accept that the level of services is not quite as high as would be the case in the metropolitan area. Everyone in the country accepts that; however, this service is not one of them. It is unacceptable that the level of assistance is reduced merely because people are in the bush. I will get a list of these people and their problems and sit down with the minister the next time we meet. Perhaps I am not explaining it well enough. I am sure there is a desire to fix the problems. I will take up my concerns with the minister outside the Parliament.

Mr OMODEI: I would appreciate it if the member did that. Funding for people in remote areas is an issue. This clause is not related to that, rather to giving the minister the discretion as to how the funding will occur. I will give this example: The chief executive officer of the Disability Services Commission is travelling throughout the south west today and tomorrow to meet people from the remote towns in those areas, who are seeking assistance. It is an ongoing process and if the member can provide specific cases, I will be more than happy to sit down with him and discuss them.

Mr Riebeling: I thank the minister for that.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 13 put and passed.

Clause 14: Section 29 replaced -

Mr CARPENTER: I had hoped to take up an issue in clause 12, but I might be able to use some dexterity to weave those comments about it into a later clause.

This clause deals with the report about a disability service plan. As it stands, are all public authorities in Western Australia required to have a disability service plan, and are they required to be implemented?

Mr OMODEI: Currently, under sections 62 and 66 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, they are required to report annually to the commission on the disability service plan. Under this legislation they will report on that aspect as part of their annual report. They will not report directly to the Disability Services Commission. Those annual reports are tabled in the Parliament, and the plan is required to be implemented. All local government authorities are included in that. As I said, departments are currently required to report to Parliament on the disability service plan through their annual reports. In line with the Government's commitment to reduce the centralised reporting requirements - that is, in this case, directly to the commission - this provision requires local government authorities to report on the disability service plan in their annual reports. It will ensure consistency of reporting arrangements and also provide for publicly accessible reporting mechanisms. That allows members of the public to scrutinise the progress and the implementation of the disability service plan.

We have received some positive reaction from local government across the State. All local government authorities had completed their disability service plan the year before last. We now require them to implement those plans, and many of them are already doing that. We have been encouraging communities to be accessible. We are even doing that in schools; there is a little competition in which school kids are made aware of making their schools accessible for kids with disabilities who attend the school. The Canning City Council has been at the forefront of making its municipality more accessible. A lot of local government authorities are now employing disability service coordinators in their municipalities. Through the initiatives that are available to reward them by recognition, local government authorities are responding admirably. We are expanding that initiative over all government departments and, as I said, requiring them to report in their annual reports, which will be tabled in the Parliament.

Mr Carpenter: Is there any sanction for their not complying?

Mr OMODEI: For a start, they will not be providing that information in the annual reports, and that will lead to the scrutiny of their municipalities. I suppose it will be a matter of the peer pressure, given what is already in place. The reaction to this initiative suggests that it is not an issue. It is one area in which we are very much ahead of the game, and in which local government authorities and government departments are responding admirably.

Mr CARPENTER: Is the Parliament required to have a disability service plan for Parliament House; and, if so, can the minister explain what it is? It is not readily apparent.

Mr OMODEI: It is a good question, but I will have to get back to the member on that. All new buildings must comply with the Building Code of Australia. That code contains a requirement that all buildings have access for the disabled. There is a ramp at the front entrance of Parliament House to enable easy access by disabled people; there are disabled toilets on the ground floor of the building; the lifts in the building are easily accessible by disabled people. As an aside, the little bump at the southern entrance to the building could probably do with a ramp over it, so that any person in a wheelchair seeking entry into Parliament House there could do so easily. That would be an improvement. The areas of main concern are mainly in older buildings where disabled access was not built into the design. There is always another sanction; that is, the commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act, under which people can be compelled to put in disabled access.

Mr CARPENTER: Following the same path, but diverting interest away from Parliament House, I am interested to know who provides the outline for what the plan should include. I am not interested in the broad picture. This relates to an issue that came up concerning the Australian Council for Rehabilitation of Disabled blue parking bays. Is a requirement laid down by the Parliament that new shopping developments or government buildings must set aside a ratio of parking bays for access by people with disabilities? Both the minister and I know that access to parking bays became quite a hot issue earlier this year.

Mr OMODEI: I can now answer the question the member raised about Parliament House. I have just had advice that the Parliament is not a public authority and, although we do try to comply in spirit, there is no plan at the moment. I understand the access improvement branch of the Disability Services Commission has discussed disabled access with officers of the Parliament. The member referred to ACROD. That organisation sets the number of parking bays, but the requirement for the existence of parking bays for the disabled is covered under the Building Code of Australia. They are required in any new development. ACROD has had ongoing discussion and consultation with the community about the width and number of parking bays. It is the body that makes those final decisions and policies on disabled parking bays.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 15 to 24 put and passed.

Clause 25: Schedule 3 amended -

Mr CARPENTER: The Opposition has had discussions with people from the Disability Services Commission and has no objection to this clause. Barry MacKinnon became the Chairman of the Disability Services Commission Board when the commission was established. Therefore, he has been a member of the board and the chairman for the six years since its establishment. The limitation of his term is about to expire. He is generally regarded as having done a very good job. There would be few people, if any, who would oppose his continuation in this position. As a matter of policy, is it the Government's view that there should be no limit on the length of time a person can hold the position of chairperson or does the clause deal with a particular issue that has arisen because of the nature of Mr MacKinnon's appointment?

Mr OMODEI: I agree with the member for Willagee. Barry MacKinnon has been an outstanding chairperson. He is a compassionate man who is highly regarded by the non-government sector. Obviously Barry will leave that position sometime in the future. The clause intends that although the position is reviewed from time to time, it gives the Government some flexibility. There is nothing special about having control over how many years a person should be appointed for. The clause states that a review of the chairperson will be held every three years. That means that the chairperson can stay in the position for more than six years. The reason for that is to ensure that the Government does not unduly disadvantage the organisation through the arbitrary loss of an experienced person. That is all it comes down to. As I mentioned in my response to the second reading debate, the Government has been very fortunate that it has been able to attract people like Barry MacKinnon and Ian Taylor into the non-government sector. Ray Young is still involved in sport and he is a previous minister of this Parliament. Our members of Parliament have an important role to play because of the high recognition factor. The adopt-a-politician program was introduced because we wanted to spread the word about what was happening in the disability sector in Australia, not in Western Australia. That scheme has been adopted interstate and nationally. The Prime Minister and the federal Leader of the Opposition are adopted politicians under the adopt-a-politician scheme. Attracting people with that kind of expertise to non-government agencies gives those agencies the benefit of the knowledge they have accumulated over their parliamentary careers. The Government is saying that if the Disability Services Commission Board has a good chairperson, it should be able to keep him in that role for more than six years, if deemed necessary.

Mr Carpenter: Will the position always be reviewed every three years?

Mr OMODEI: Yes, it will. The section of the Disability Services Act states -

Tenure of Office

1. (1) A member of the Board -
 - (a) holds office for such term not exceeding 3 years as is specified in the instrument appointing the member;

The chairperson is an appointed member. Each term will be three years in length but it will give the Government the flexibility of extending it if deemed necessary.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 26 to 28 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Omodei (Minister for Disability Services), and transmitted to the Council.

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (No. 3) 1999

Second Reading - Cognate Debate

Resumed from 27 October.

MR MCGINTY (Fremantle) [12.36 pm]: I take this opportunity to draw the attention of the House to a serious problem that has emerged involving the Ministry of Fair Trading. The story touches on tardiness by the Police Service, outdated procedures in the Department of Transport and a general failure by government to protect the innocent public from crooks and frauds. I take the opportunity to relate the unfortunate circumstances of a young Inglewood couple, Tina Richards, who is a veterinary nurse, and her partner, Volkar Wolske, who is a motor mechanic. The circumstances of this matter are that Mr Wolske wanted to sell his 1988 190E model Mercedes Benz. He put an advertisement in the *Sunday Times*, but was unsuccessful. The advertisement attracted the attention of a car yard known as Zone Car Wholesale, which is located at 212

Gnangara Road, Wanneroo. The business is run by Mr Nevill McKerrow. Mr McKerrow offered to sell the car for Mr Wolske on consignment. The car was sold on 22 July 1999 for \$20 000. That was a large amount of money for this young couple. Three cheques to Mr Wolske from Mr McKerrow, or Zone Car Wholesale, representing the proceeds of the sale were dishonoured by the bank during August. Zone Car Wholesale stopped trading on 17 August. Just last week, on 21 October, Mr McKerrow became a bankrupt, with a total loss to all creditors. The result of this sequence of events is that Miss Richards and Mr Wolske lost \$20 000. It is a sad story for them, but this story also reveals an indifferent approach by various government agencies which facilitated this fraud being perpetrated on this young couple.

First, I will look at the role of the Department of Transport. I have been discussing this matter with the Department of Transport today but have been unable to finalise exactly what happened in this case. It appears that the Department of Transport allowed the registration of a vehicle to pass from Mr Wolske without his knowledge or approval. During the course of the dealings between Mr Wolske and the car saleyard, Zone Car Wholesale, Mr Wolske specifically retained the registration papers of the vehicle. I have a copy of the current registration papers which were never handed over to the car yard or to the new owner. He specifically retained the licence sticker which was to attach to the vehicle. He did not sign form No 7, the notice of sale under the Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, because he wanted to make sure that he got his money before the registration passed to a new owner. He did not in any other way authorise the transfer of the vehicle; in fact, he verbally demanded of Mr McKerrow of Zone Car Wholesale that no transfer of ownership or of the vehicle proceed before he got his money. Somehow the vehicle was transferred first to Mr McKerrow, as I say, without the owner's knowledge or approval, and then to the new owner.

If somehow or other the current legislation or procedures of the Department of Transport allow a dealer to transfer the registration or ownership of the vehicle without the approval or knowledge of the owner, those procedures and legislation need to be reviewed and changed. They presuppose the honesty and integrity of dealers, a quality that has been sadly lacking on this occasion. I shall pursue with the Department of Transport exactly what happened on this occasion, because an answer needs to be given as to what occurred, and how, without the owner's knowledge or approval, he could be robbed of his property. In a sense the Department of Transport was in complicity with that. It may be that it did everything right according to its procedures, but any procedures or legislation which enable somebody to be robbed of his property in this way are obviously deficient. That matter needs some additional pursuit.

The Ministry of Fair Trading was first made aware of similar fraudulent behaviour by another complaint against this same company in April of this year. The Ministry of Fair Trading is responsible for licensing motor vehicle dealers. That implies some measure of government control and responsibility over the activities of used-car dealers. The department received a complaint in April. It is now October. With the exception of a small article in the newspaper warning people to be cautious when dealing with the selling of cars on consignment, the department seemingly has done nothing about the complaint. The article which appeared in *The West Australian* of 21 August of this year under the heading "Car sellers warned about using dealers as agents" reads -

Car owners should be cautious about selling motor vehicles through consignment, the Ministry of Fair Trading has warned.

Fair Trading is aware of two dealerships which have sold vehicles on behalf of owners but failed to pass on the cash because of the dealers' financial problems.

The article goes on from there. It is not good enough for the Ministry of Fair Trading, which is responsible for protecting the public interest and innocent purchasers from frauds and crooks, simply to issue a warning to be careful. When the department first received these complaints, why did it not take the licence off this crook before he could do more damage to innocent young people like Miss Richards and Mr Wolske? There seems to be an inertia flowing from the minister downwards in the Ministry of Fair Trading. I will come back to address that in a few minutes. However, the simple issuing of a warning for people to be careful was not adequate. The Ministry of Fair Trading, through its licensing and regulatory function, had a duty to do a lot more. From what I have been told, it failed miserably to protect, not only these people, but also many others. In addition to Mr Wolske and Miss Richards, some 20 people have lost money to Mr McKerrow of Zone Car Wholesale who has now gone bankrupt. Another 20 people gave their cars to him to sell. He sold them and the people lost their money, in most cases in toto. They were, of course, unsecured creditors of Zone Car Wholesale. This unscrupulous individual sold their cars and did not pass on the money. Not only did the couple to whom I am referring today lose their \$20 000 but also a total of 20 people have lost money because they tried to sell their cars through this individual in circumstances of inactivity on the part of the Ministry of Fair Trading.

Mr McKerrow has been a bankrupt twice before. This is the third occasion on which he has become a bankrupt. He was a bankrupt in 1981, again in 1992 and, as of last week, in 1999. One would have thought that the Ministry of Fair Trading might have looked at the record of this man because it must licence him to enable him to carry on business in this way. One would have thought that the ministry officials would have said that they needed to be careful with this man because he is obviously a failure and has stolen money from people in the past, but they did not; they enabled him to continue to trade and inflict greater losses on the unsuspecting customers who dealt with him in good faith. The Ministry of Fair Trading is there to protect the public from crooks like Mr McKerrow. It has failed to act when it knew what was going on when it had that complaint in April of this year. This seems to be a feature of this department. In its regulatory and licensing functions, it has failed investors in businesses such as Grubb, Global and others which have already been mentioned in this House as getting into financial difficulty. Now it is failing people who are trying to sell their cars through licensed motor vehicle dealers such as Zone Car Wholesale and Mr McKerrow. It will be very interesting to hear from the minister exactly what his department has done to help these people and to prevent these current losses.

The third matter to which I wanted to refer is the role of the police. From what I have related to the House today, the writing of three dud cheques which bounced is three criminal offences; trading while insolvent is a criminal offence; stealing someone else's car is a crime; fraud is a crime; arguably the transfer of the vehicle from Mr Wolske, without his knowledge or authority, is both fraud and stealing. What have we seen from the Police Force since these matters were first brought to public attention some months ago? It seems to me that although there is absolute justification for a proper investigation taking place, what we have here is a measure of inactivity or even indifference by the Police Force which should have moved quicker. The evidence is there; the man should have been charged. I am told that Mr McKerrow still lives in a palatial home on a huge property at 155 Vincent Road, Wanneroo, with its jacuzzi, expansive lawns and swimming pool. The question I pose to the Police Force is: Why is he not behind bars? Why has he not been charged with these serious criminal offences? I urge the Minister for Police to get the Police Force activated in the public interest and lay the appropriate charges. This is a distressing tale. We are dealing with a serial bankrupt who has shown no regard for the interests of the innocent battlers and others on whose behalf he has been trading. He has ripped them off mercilessly. It calls for the highest level of action from the Minister for Police, the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Fair Trading.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Ms Warnock.

[Continued on next page.]

TOURNAMENT OF THE MINDS, PERTH COLLEGE HONOURS

Statement by Member for Perth

MS WARNOCK (Perth) [12.50 pm]: Today I am delighted to share good news with members. It is pleasing to announce that students from one of the schools in my electorate, the high achieving girls school Perth College, have won high honours in the national Tournament of the Minds in Adelaide. Three hundred students competed in this annual battle that promotes creativity and problem solving skills. Six girls from years 8 to 10, Helen Burnside, Louise McLeod, Alethea Lindsay, Rebecca Griffiths, Thea Williams and Alinta Kemeny, won tournament honours in the secondary maths-engineering category. This demanding competition pits teams of bright, creative students against each other as they try to work out solutions to really difficult problems. According to their teacher, Nicola Dunn, those students at Perth College put on a dazzling display to take top honours in their category. I congratulate them.

Not content with competing in that intellectual tournament, the school also sent a team to Adelaide to compete in the national solar car competition. Eight year 10 girls built a toy solar car powered by an eight watt solar panel to travel on a 100 metre, figure of eight track at speeds of up to 30 kilometres an hour. It put in a pretty smart performance. It took them about three months to build that car, and their physics teacher, Nigel Fraser, is a proud man today. Today Adelaide, tomorrow the world! Congratulations all round to Perth College.

MARGARET RIVER WINE REGION FESTIVAL

Statement by Member for Vasse

MR MASTERS (Vasse) [12.52 pm]: From 19 to 21 November, the Shires of Busselton and Augusta-Margaret River will be the venue for the Margaret River Wine Region Festival. On offer will be music, food, entertainment and good company that will rival or surpass what is offered by the other wine festivals held around Australia. Some 36 of Australia's best vineyards will host the three days of activities, and it almost goes without saying that Australia's best wines will be available for tasting, drinking and general enjoyment.

Proceedings commence on Friday evening, 19 November, with a five-chefs banquet at the Abbey Beach Resort in Busselton, a festival blues concert in Margaret River and a rock and roll carnival in Dunsborough to name just a few of the activities and attractions that will be on offer. Incidentally, last week, the Dunsborough Tourist Bureau won the top tourism award, giving the Busselton Shire three wins in four years. Food, art, entertainment, market stalls, visits to the cape region's special places and historic homes, and tasting of the world's best wines will continue over the next two days, guaranteeing visitors a truly memorable and enjoyable weekend.

I have made suitable arrangements to ensure perfect weather for the festival. However, some serious thanks need to be passed on to the *Sunday Times* for its role as the festival's major sponsor. I commend the Margaret River Wine Region Festival Association Committee for the prodigious volume of work it has put into the weekend, and I wish it every success. I also look forward to many members of this Parliament visiting the south west and enjoying what I am sure will become one of Australia's most important wine-tourism festivals.

KIDNEY DIALYSIS

Statement by Member for Rockingham

MR MCGOWAN (Rockingham) [12.53 pm]: I relate to the House the important issue of kidney dialysis and the lack of any kidney dialysis units in the Rockingham-Kwinana area. Approximately 20 people undergo regular dialysis in the area, and that figure is increasing. I have been taking up the issue of the need for a dialysis unit in our area for a long time now. Fortunately, a local couple, Michelle and Paul Tartano, contacted me to say they were prepared to offer their kidney dialysis machine, which services Paul, to the public of Rockingham so long as the Government provided a venue for it. Fortunately for Paul, his very giving wife, Michelle, will donate one of her kidneys to him in February next year so Paul will no longer need the machine. They have offered this machine to the State, to stay in Rockingham. They fundraised to get the machine. However, it appears that the State is not prepared to allow it to be set up in the Rockingham community. I am disappointed with this decision. A number of community groups in Rockingham are prepared to assist with this project, and that should

be encouraged. I am very disappointed. I thank the Tartanos for their generous offer, and I look forward to putting more pressure on the Government to provide this necessary service.

PARISH OF ST SIMON PETER, SPRING AFFAIR

Statement by Member for Joondalup

MR BAKER (Joondalup) [12.55 pm]: I will use this brief opportunity to inform the House of a very special community event being held this weekend. This Sunday, the Catholic parish of St Simon Peter, based in Ocean Reef, will be holding its inaugural Spring Affair between 11.00 am and 5.00 pm in the grounds of the St Simon Peter Catholic Primary School in Prindiville Avenue, Ocean Reef. This spring festival is the culmination of over a year's planning, plotting and planting, and promises to be a wonderful pre-millennium occasion for the people of the district.

The aim of this very special spring event is to bring families together. There will be kids' rides, arts and crafts, a huge plant stall, preloved books and toys, a white elephant stall, sausage sizzle, lunches and teas, raffles, cakes galore, lucky dips, a chocolate wheel, races and games, dances, singers and music, a silent auction and much more.

In closing, I wish to pay tribute to Mr Harry Mithen and his hardworking organising committee, together with the parents and friends committees of Currambine Catholic Primary School and St Simon Peter Catholic Primary School. Proactive, hardworking community groups like these are the backbone of the northern suburbs community, and help to bring families together and keep them together.

SCHOOLTEACHERS, BROOME

Statement by Member for Willagee

MR CARPENTER (Willagee) [12.57 pm]: Earlier this week I visited Broome Senior High School, to which I referred briefly yesterday. However, I want to address a couple of issues. Broome High School is an excellent school, with an excellent principal, Mr Geoff Ranson, and dedicated staff. However, school teachers in Broome are disadvantaged in comparison with other teachers in the northern half of the State on several fronts. Because schools in Broome are the only schools in northern Western Australia not categorised as hard to staff, teachers miss out financially, they miss out on incentives for permanency, and they miss out on accumulation of transfer points. These inequities should be addressed.

Juvenile justice court appearance figures, school recorded suspensions, stress leave and staff assaults are far higher in Broome schools than in any other schools in the Kimberley. At the same time, because Broome is not considered hard to staff, teachers in Broome earn many thousands of dollars less than their peers in other Kimberley schools, and some schools in the Pilbara for that matter. Permanency and the right to return for permanent teachers is not available in Broome schools. The cumulative effect of these matters is to make the teaching environment in schools in Broome a difficult one. On top of that are the high levels of transiency and itinerancy of the student population, for which completely insufficient flexibility appears to be built into staffing allocations. The Government should address this as a matter of urgency.

CITY STREET DRAGS, BUNBURY

Statement by Member for Bunbury

MR OSBORNE (Bunbury) [12.58 pm]: Last Sunday, 24 October, I had the great pleasure of going to the back beach area of Bunbury and presenting trophies for the inaugural Bunbury city street drags. The event was an enormous success. It was organised by two terrific local policemen, especially a good friend of mine, Senior Constable Frank George, and also Senior Constable Frank Castle, who had seen this street drags idea operate in Newman. It was Frank George's idea that it could be introduced to Bunbury. When he came to me in July, he was not sure whether the event would be a great success. The day dawned and everyone was a bit nervous about whether there would be enough participants to make it a success. However, in the event, it proved to be a resounding success. Something like 3 000 to 4 000 people were present, with 83 competitors. At the end of the day, everyone believed it was a wonderful success, especially for the Police Force, which is often trapped in a confrontational and enforcement relationship with people who like to race fast cars. Therefore, it was a great public relations opportunity for the local police. The most common comment that I heard from participants at the end of the day was, "Thanks for doing this for us. We are looking forward to the event next year."

The only slight disappointment for me was that the fastest speed for the day was recorded by a Ford. Therefore, I intend to go back to Frank George to see whether those results cannot be doctored so that the proper result, a victory for Holden, can be achieved!

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm

[Questions without notice taken.]

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (No. 3) 1999

Second Reading - Cognate Debate

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MS McHALE (Thornlie) [2.37 pm]: I wish to make two points in my contribution to the debate which relate to matters of great concern to residents in Thornlie. The first concerns education. The Government, through the Education Department of Western Australia, will reduce the teacher-staffing formula for the year 2000. This is causing a great deal of concern right across my electorate and should be a matter of concern for all members in this House. Recently the Education Department

announced that the allocation per student in schools with more than 180 students will be reduced from 0.04 to 0.032. Although the reduction is small, it will affect the level of teaching numbers in each school. Consequently, that will affect the ultimate educational outcomes for our students. All members should be aware of that matter. No doubt they will receive representations from the parents and citizens associations and school populations in their electorates, because this decision will have a negative impact on the educational outcomes of schools.

I want to put on record and voice the concerns of the parents and citizens association of one particular school. I believe it represents the concerns of the schools in my electorate with enrolments above 180 students. I quote -

The P&C is concerned over the recent announcement of negative changes to the teacher/student ratio. We feel strongly that class sizes are already too large, and support teachers need more hours to accomplish their ever increasing tasks rather than less.

Our school is already struggling to find the teacher hours to maintain our computer lab and other activities, and we are concerned these projects will have to be axed.

The change in ration may appear to be small, but with an already overburdened education system we say enough is enough.

Another parent wrote -

I write to you to let you know how outraged I am at the Governments decision to change the teacher student ratio in our schools next year.

I urge you to take the argument up in parliament to reverse this decision.

I am doing that on behalf of this school. Another parent writes -

Now we know how the belltower and the wedgewood dinner set and the \$30000 table are to be paid for!

The children of today are Australia's future, PLEASE would you ensure that the Labor Party put maximum pressure on the government on this issue.

I have received a large number of letters to that effect. The letters express the concern that in 2000, schools will be further disadvantaged by government policies. It interesting to note that the rationale for removing or reducing the teacher formula is that the full-time equivalents generated from the adjustment will be used to maintain an adequate pool of resources for supporting programs, initiatives and discretionary allocations to schools above what has been allocated in the formula. However, the reality is that these resources and full-time equivalents will not be reinvested in the school. Schools never get teachers back once the teacher-student ratio and the full-time equivalents are reduced. The schools are penalised further each year through the reduction in full-time equivalents and the removal of key support positions in the schools. School populations and parents are now saying - as the House has heard me say - enough is enough. It must stop. Although this is a small adjustment, the schools and school resources are already stretched. Schools have lost support staff such as social workers, full-time equivalents and psychologists over the past few years. Yesterday I spoke to a principal who said that a couple of years ago a psychologist was in his school three days a week. Now the school has no psychologist time. Short-term, penny-pinching exercises such as that have an effect later on with antisocial behaviour, truancy and graffiti. Government decisions to reduce full-time equivalents and resources at the school level have an impact on a range of other social issues. I urge the Minister for Education to rethink this penny-pinching exercise. The quality of educational outcomes will ultimately be affected, which does not bode well for Australia's future.

My constituents in Thornlie have asked me to raise another issue in Parliament which pertains to the ever-present problem of security, a sense of insecurity and lack of police resources. I raised this with the Minister for Police in this place last year. I said that the Cannington police office was one of the worst-resourced police stations in the metropolitan area. I was informed that the per capita ratio of operational police officers in Cannington was one police officer to 1 466 people. That is a horrendous statistic, especially when coupled with the fact that home burglaries and car thefts are the highest in Cannington, Victoria Park, Maddington, Armadale and South Perth, all of which are in the Cannington police district. It is no wonder that statistic is so high when the police station in Cannington is under-resourced. The effect of that under-resourcing is becoming obvious at a local level. Residents in the Forest Lakes area of Thornlie are very concerned. I have had representations from a number of residents in that area who are sick and tired of the antisocial behaviour that is occurring regularly. They have written to the Cannington district office superintendent and have asked me to raise the matter in Parliament. They are at their wits' end and do not know what to do. The residents are concerned about antisocial behaviour by groups of young people who roam the streets of Forest Lakes, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights when they have been at the pub. However, many of the youth identified are underage and not legally able to be drinking in the pubs. They tend to congregate into groups and behave in a manner that terrifies a lot of the residents. These people wander about the suburb swearing loudly, discarding empty alcohol containers on people's lawns, damaging the property of homeowners in the area and vandalising municipal property. Residents say these individuals continue to act in this manner because of the limited police presence in the area on weekends. The property owners are unwilling to confront them for fear of personal injury. That is an understandable reaction, particularly after the brutal assault in Kensington recently. Residents fear for their lives and do not wish to confront these people for fear of brutal assault. That is a terrible reflection of how people are feeling in the metropolitan area.

I want to put this point on record because the Minister for Police has criticised me before for attacking the police. I have never attacked the police officers. I have attacked the policies which lead to the under-resourcing and understaffing of police stations. The residents believe the police have responded positively when a complaint is made about antisocial behaviour

in the area. The police attend as promptly as their resources allow. However, it is felt that a proactive rather than a reactive police presence in the area may reduce the incidents that generally occur between 11 pm and 2 am on Friday and Saturday nights. I know from previous representations that this is not a one-off occurrence or event. The residents in Forest Lakes and other suburbs are experiencing this behaviour for a range of reasons. Causes of crimes have been linked to the notion of disaffected youth, which may well be the case in Thornlie. The kids may be lacking things to do. Nevertheless, it is no excuse for traumatising residents who wish to live peacefully and calmly in their neighbourhood. The residents of Thornlie, in particular of Forest Lakes, are asking the Minister for Police and this Government to reassess the resources available in the Thornlie area. They particularly wish the minister, through the Cannington police district, to give consideration to regularly patrolling of the Forest Lakes area until this problem is effectively controlled or, better still, eradicated.

A couple living in Thornlie have written on similar lines to the superintendent with an urgent cry for help, asking for the police to combat what they see as the distressing and constantly occurring actions of young people. I know the couple very well. They are very law abiding; they are quite elderly. This is how they feel -

Concerning the effects on one's life and well-being, my wife and I are reduced to despair and, in my wife's case, ill health.

Three days after I received this letter, I received a phone call, because the couple were coming to see me the following Monday. Left on my answering machine was a message to say that the day before the wife had been taken to hospital very seriously ill and that in part the illness had been created by the anxiety that she was feeling as a result of having endured the fairly constant, serious antisocial behaviour.

I wished to use this opportunity to raise those two issues: First, the education matter, because unless the decision is reassessed, the quality of our educational outcomes will be reduced, and, secondly, to bring to the attention of the House, and I hope the Minister for Police, that residents like mine in Forest Lakes, in very pleasant suburbs in the metropolitan area, are suffering significantly. They despair at what they see as constant antisocial behaviour. They have had enough and need leadership from this Government. If this Government cannot give it to them, we certainly will.

MR MARSHALL (Dawesville - Parliamentary Secretary) [2.52 pm]: Normally I would use the valuable time set aside for an appropriation speech to promote the positive projects in my Dawesville electorate. However, in my capacity as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Sport and Recreation, I wish to use the time this year to correct the member for Rockingham on his outrageous and incorrect allegations about my minister, Hon Norman Moore, and sport in Western Australia. I am very pleased to see that the member is here because if he were not, I would be uncomfortable addressing him and giving him words of advice for his future in Parliament in something like a father to son speech, because I am not a king hitter and I do not like talking behind people's backs. I know that it is uncomfortable for the member to talk in the Assembly against a minister in the other House when the person he wants to denigrate is not here to listen. However, at the same time, if he is to be shadow Minister for Sport and Recreation, it is unsportsmanlike to make incorrect statements against a minister who is not here to answer.

Mr Thomas interjected.

Mr MARSHALL: I am pleased that the member for Cockburn is awake.

Several members interjected.

Mr MARSHALL: I will ask for interjections in a minute.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I just remind the member on his feet that remarks are to be addressed to the Chair. To this Chair any remarks can be addressed, and other people can listen, but this Chair will not put up with an argy-bargy across the Chamber.

Mr MARSHALL: I apologise for that, Mr Speaker.

Two days ago the member for Rockingham showed his immaturity as well as a lack of understanding of sport and recreation in Western Australia during his appropriation address. As a person who has had a lifetime of sport at the highest level, I shuddered as I listened to the amateur in action. For instance, he commented that the WA elite program would lose \$850 000 after the Sydney Olympics had been held. He said that this would affect a great range of programs. One does not have to be smart to make a statement like that. What the member did not say is that the federal government grant of \$850 000 to Western Australia was a one-off grant to assist Olympic athletes to reach the highest level. The WA Institute of Sport received funding in 1995 of \$1.5m and in 1999, \$3m, as well as \$2m for its improved headquarters at Challenge Stadium. In addition, to help our athletes prepare for the Olympics in Sydney, there have been three \$150 000 top-ups for our international athletes. The \$850 000 grant was a one-off. Why say we will lose when that money goes? We have gained because we have been given money for nothing. The program is well funded and is achieving remarkable results. The member for Rockingham should have been more thorough with his background research and, for the sake of sport in Western Australia, he should get his facts right and not create unnecessary mischief.

He was wrong again when he alleged that the new system bringing the Coaching Foundation of Western Australia (Inc), the Women's Sport Foundation of WA (Inc) and the Aboriginal Sports Foundation under one roof at Perry Lakes and under the control of the Ministry of Sport and Recreation, would be detrimental to sport. He even said that the Western Australian Sports Foundation "believed it to be a very bad idea". I have here what the Western Australian Sports Foundation really said in a letter from the foundation to Mr Ron Alexander, the chief executive officer of the Ministry of Sport and Recreation, dated 8 July 1999. The third paragraph reads -

Further to your announcement on the restructure of the portfolio, the Board agreed to vocalise support for your plans on the understanding that the functions of the Womensport and Coaching Foundations will not be lost once brought back into MSR. The Board agrees with a general rationalisation of government agencies in sport.

That letter can be tabled for the education of the younger member on the other side of the House. So much for his research again!

He was right when he said that in 1990 the former member and former sports minister, Hon Graham Edwards, set up three specific bodies funded by the Lotteries Commission. Hon Graham Edwards had excellent vision because women in sport had to be recognised. As a matter of fact, I was privileged to go to the launch on that day. I remember Yvonne Rate was getting paid about \$60 000 a year. Everyone at the time thought, "Fancy paying a woman that amount of money for this kind of a job." However, the job was right; women had to be recognised for what they were doing in sport. There was a ratio of 15:1 articles in the paper about men as opposed to women, when women were equally as good. We were talking about Australian football and forgetting about netball. Netball has just as much participation and at A grade state level netball is the league football of Western Australia. Hon Graham Edwards saw all that, and I commend him for his vision.

He realised that he could tap into the lottery funding by setting up separate foundations in all areas of the State. What he did, being a visionary for sport and a hands-on minister, was good for the game. However, he did not know how to allocate money. He was not an accountant and had never dealt with portfolios with allocations of millions of dollars. He did not have the vision to know that in doing what he did, although he was right in one area, he was sacrificing money for sport in other areas. Setting up individual foundations all over the State cost sport money. It has taken nine years for us to catch up, but at last we have realised that these three foundations should come under one roof and under one heading. As a result the costs of administration, computers and personnel will be reduced, and the profit will rightly go back into sport in Western Australia.

The member for Rockingham said that Ron Tindall did a good job at the Coaching Foundation of Western Australia. However, the member's speech was a mischievous, king-hit speech, without proper research and designed to create trouble. All it did was show up inadequacies in the shadow Sport and Recreation portfolio. We need only read his questions on notice to know he knows nothing about the subject.

Mr Osborne: I am aware that today you are wearing an interesting tie. Does the member for Rockingham know what it is?

Mr McGowan: It is known as a has-been tie.

Mr MARSHALL: I do not want to embarrass the member for Rockingham because we have established his knowledge of sport is minimal. However, for the sake of some "father-son education in life" this is the Tennis International Club tie that is given only to people who have represented their country or played two or three grand-slam events. I am sorry the member for Bunbury raised that; but it was a bit of education trivia.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Will the member for Dawesville please return to his main speech.

Mr MARSHALL: Ron Tindall retired from his position with the Coaching Foundation and his replacement is John Dimmer, a person who is highly respected throughout Western Australia for his coaching ability. Has the member for Rockingham heard of him? He should have. John has been on the main sporting pages of *The West Australian* during the past five weeks. The member for Rockingham, who is the shadow Minister for Sport and Recreation, does not know who he is.

During question time I looked across at members on the other side and wondered who could replace the member for Rockingham, who is a failure in his shadow portfolio. The member for Fremantle, who was born in Fremantle, a traditional sporting town, may know something about sport. He knows something about the Dockers because his nephew played for them. I looked across the House and realised that I was looking at B graders in sport. For the sake of the member for Rockingham and the member for Joondalup, John Dimmer was the coach of the Westar Rules premiership side, the West Perth Falcons. He has been coaching people in sport for most of his life. He is a physical education teacher who has a university degree. He will be taking over the coaching coordination of the foundation and will be a strong and effective leader. His office will be in the Ministry of Sport and Recreation and therefore will not be a drain on the extra funds that are being allocated.

The member for Rockingham voiced some concerns about women in sport. He should be concerned; this is an important portfolio. He said that if the Women in Sport Foundation of WA were placed under the ministry, the profile of women in sport would disappear. How stupid can someone be? We are in an era of equal opportunity. The State's female athletes competing internationally slightly outnumber the male athletes. Where is he coming from? When will he get out of bed and stop reading the comics in the morning? Of course women in sport will not disappear.

He also said that 11 staff were under threat. He did not say the staff of the Coaching Foundation numbered two full-time and nine 0.5 FTEs, most of whom are scattered throughout the regional areas of Western Australia, and that the programs will not change.

Last year the Women's Sport Foundation received \$150 000 from Healthway and \$223 000 from the Ministry of Sport and Recreation. That is a lot of money for one foundation. It is worthwhile, but with the administration of those three foundations under the one banner, some of that money can go back into sport. I am convinced that this is the right course.

Contrary to what the member for Rockingham believes, the Aboriginal Sport Foundation will not "be abolished and go out the door." What an immature statement that was. The foundation was working from Clontarf with a budget of approximately \$50 000 and one chief executive officer. I am responsible for the interlinking of the meetings with the likes

of Larry Kickett and Barry Cable, who are directors of the foundation. Two years ago when they were asked whether the taxpayers were getting the best value for money and whether it would be more beneficial if they came under the banner of the Ministry of Sport and Recreation, they were in complete agreement that a move to Perry Lakes under the one umbrella would be more beneficial.

At present at MSR they have two full-time staff and are about to employ a third full-time staff member. That will amount to three full-time Aboriginal officers with six other officers working full-time in the country under one umbrella, with all the research devices and with the other champion sportsmen there to assist them. The Aboriginal Sport Foundation will win, win, win. The trouble is the member for Rockingham has been listening to the few who will be affected by the change and he fell for it without doing any research.

Of course if people working in an area in which they feel comfortable are asked to move to another area in which they must become invigorated and put in extra effort, they will feel dissatisfied. The member for Rockingham has been conned. I am disappointed because I thought he had the makings of someone who was going somewhere. Unless he starts listening, he will not make it. He should be able to reason for himself. Coles-Myer is one of the biggest companies in Australia. I ask my colleague, with his barrister's degree from the Navy - that is about the only thing he has done in his life - what would happen if Myer had a clothing shop in Barrack Street, its sporting centre in King Street and its boutique in William Street? Would people shop at Myer? Would he shop at Myer? He would be all over the place; he would be worn out and broke from paying taxi fares before he made a purchase. Coles-Myer is clever, as are most national companies; the goods are under one roof. In doing so, the company keeps down its costs.

The shadow Minister for Sport and Recreation attacked the community sporting and recreation facilities fund. In doing so he showed a complete lack of understanding of the system. I trust he listened to the Premier's explanation during question time. I have coached people like him for many years, who have been written off by some coaches because they were unable to see the hidden fire. Those people reach potential at a late age. In Parliament we are only as good as our next vote. As a friend and colleague who has much potential, I hope the member for Rockingham listens and comes of age eventually.

This Government has introduced many initiatives. I feel embarrassed when the member for Rockingham tries to make political mileage at the expense of our athletes.

Mr Barnett: At the next election we should perhaps all go to Rockingham as a team and help him out.

Mr MARSHALL: I would be happy to do that; I like the guy.

Mr Barnett: We will all doorknock.

Mr MARSHALL: Every time I listen to him, I remember the story of the young bull and the old bull.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Dawesville should get back to his speech.

Mr MARSHALL: The old bull can leave the young bull for dead. I hope the member for Rockingham grows up quickly and learns more about our state sporting objectives. If he does not, I am sure he will self-destruct. During his speech he said he played sport. I remember him playing squash in the Queensland under-13 team. I would like to hear what other sport he has been involved in. If he has been involved, why is he not participating in the parliamentary bowls carnival, or the parliamentary cricket, tennis or golf teams? I have never seen him there. If he is that good, he should put on a jumper and join us, and then we will teach him what is going on in the world.

The member said that sport in Western Australia was not prospering. That again was grabbing at straws. We know that sport has received a lot of competition from television, computerised games and education. There is great competition for the junior sports dollar, but sport is prospering, whether it be soccer, football, tennis, cricket or swimming. A junior yacht club in my electorate started last week. It had a membership drive and recruited 65 people. Junior lifesaving has also started, and it has recruited 70 youngsters. I suppose this is okay because the member does not know his subject. However, junior sport is flourishing. There is a fight for the junior sports dollar, because more sports now want to establish junior clubs in their areas.

The member mentioned a lack of initiative by this Government. The club development scheme was a good one, because it did what the member mentioned: It gave amateur officials the equipment to harness the junior clubs. For instance, they got money for computers; therefore, they were able to get their finances and mailing lists in order. They got photocopiers; therefore, they could send out newsletters. They also got answering machines. Previously when a parent rang the secretary and no-one answered, that parent would not sign up his child for the sport. However, now parents can leave a message on the answering machine. There is an officiating program, and it is fantastic.

The country enrichment program is going at 100 miles an hour; it is like a bushfire taking off. Kalgoorlie has been exposed to an interstate football game at Westar Rules level, Perth Glory has been to Geraldton, and the hockey players have been to Busselton. This is broadening the horizons of our talented youth. Once they see a champion - the member for Rockingham would not be able to recognise that - they know that they can copy that champion and make the grade.

Finally, I will refer to a copy of a press release on the artificial reef, which all members opposite deemed would never happen. It has happened.

Dr Gallop: It was our idea.

Mr MARSHALL: It was the Opposition's idea. However, it took a long time, and the Opposition never went on with it because it was told it would not happen because it was too difficult. The press release states -

The \$1.35m reef was built from limestone 250 metres off shore at the boundary of Cottesloe and Mosman Park Shires . . .

Before the reef was built, surfable days based on data over five years, using a theoretical calculation, were predicting 5 - 8 breaks per year.

When established it was anticipated that Cables would break 49 - 70 times per year, but during the months of May, June, July the wave broke 63 times.

When the weather improves, it will be even better. It continues -

The reef was predicted to break 1.3 times in May but recorded 17; June 3.5, showed 26 and in July the 9.8 prediction returned 20 breaks.

This is a wonderful success story. It has been praised by the surfing fraternity. The next time the member for Rockingham speaks, he should get his facts straight and not embarrass the House.

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Leader of the Opposition) [3.13 pm]: I take this opportunity to say a few things about the goods and services tax and its impact upon Western Australia. Since the GST was announced, the Premier has been promoting the new tax system as one that will be efficient and fair. He also said that it would involve less complexity. He continues to run these lines, despite evidence to the contrary.

The first thing that the Premier has been unable to do in relation to the GST is to provide any detail on how the tax changes will affect Western Australians. The Opposition has raised a number of questions and issues, yet all the Premier can do is give glib assurances that we will not be worse off. We asked the Premier which government taxes and charges would have a GST. He refused to provide that information and, instead, provided us with a list of those that would not have a GST. We asked the Premier for a detailed analysis of the impact of the GST on the Western Australian economy, and in response we received nothing of worth from him. We asked the Premier what would be the impact of the GST on key industries in Western Australia, and again we received nothing. Nor, indeed, have the relevant government ministers done anything about this. However, whether or not the Premier likes it, the detail of the GST is starting to emerge from within the community. Whether it be a pensioner paying for his car insurance, the community sporting club raising sponsorships or the small business trying to comply with the new arrangements, it is clear that the new tax system is regressive and, more importantly, very complicated.

Legislation introduced by the Government into the Parliament last month has given us an insight into the complexities and hidden nasties of the GST in Western Australia. In that legislation, the Premier decided to impose a tax on a tax. The legislation requires that stamp duty be applied to GST-inclusive prices. This means that Western Australians must pay stamp duty on the GST. The Premier had made a virtue of not levying the GST on stamp duty. Instead, however, he has levied stamp duty on the GST. Under this policy, anyone taking out an insurance policy or purchasing a new home will have to pay stamp duty on GST prices.

The Property Council of Australia has claimed that this will add an extra \$518 to the cost of purchasing a new home in Perth. People wanting to insure their own home will similarly be hit. In fact, those taking out home insurance will be hit with a tax trifecta: A tax on a tax on a tax. Western Australians taking out home insurance will have to pay, first, a fire levy on top of the basic premium - after the Government backbenchers refused to allow the Minister for Police to remove the levy from insurance premiums and move it onto local government rates; secondly, a GST on the basic premium plus the fire levy; and, thirdly, stamp duty on the basic premium plus the fire levy plus the GST. So much for the new efficient tax system.

Let me take the example of a typical \$100 000 home insurance premium. Before the GST, the basic premium cost \$168. When the fire levy and stamp duty are added, the total cost of the premium increases to \$219. After the GST, the total cost of replacing a person's home will increase as the cost of housing increases; therefore, the sum for which the home is insured must increase. For argument's sake, if a home must now be insured for \$110 000, the cost of the basic premium will increase to \$178. I base that information on advice we have received from the insurance industry. On top of that basic premium, the fire levy must be added, which will be around \$37, taking the total cost to \$215. On top of this, one must add the GST, which will be \$21, giving a total cost of \$237. On top of this, there is the stamp duty, which will now be \$19. All up, after the GST, the total cost of the insurance premium will increase to \$256. This compares with the pre-GST premium of \$219 - an increase of \$37 or 17 per cent.

This example was further demonstrated when a local pensioner group wrote to me yesterday. The Senior Citizens Welfare Association from Victoria Park recently received its home and contents insurance bill for the next 12 months. Last year, the total cost of the home and contents premium for the community centre was \$5 647. That included the basic premium, the fire services levy and stamp duty. This has increased by \$296 to \$5 943. Therefore, the basic premium has increased by \$114, the fire services levy has increased by \$38, the stamp duty has increased by \$12, and the GST impact is \$133. It must be remembered that this is only the four-month impact of the GST, as the insurance covers October 1999 to October 2000.

These hikes do not extend only to home insurance; they will also affect motor vehicle insurance. The Premier has given assurances that motor vehicle insurance will not rise because the price of motor vehicles is expected to fall slightly under the GST. However, what the Premier failed to note was that even though the basic premium may fall slightly - I emphasise the word "may" - a new 10 per cent GST will be placed on the premium. The total cost of the premium is expected to increase, not decrease.

I will give another example. A pensioner recently contacted my office to inform me of an increase in his motor vehicle insurance as a result of the GST. The cost of insuring his 1995 Holden Apollo increased from \$423 to \$446, a \$23 increase,

even though the sum for which it was insured fell. Again, this is only the four-month effect of the GST. How does the Premier reconcile that with his claim of falling insurance costs? Again, the Premier's rhetoric does not match the reality in the marketplace.

I turn now to the revenue impacts of the Government's proposed stamp duty arrangements. Current government forecasts claim that this new tax on a tax will provide a \$15m windfall each year to the state budget. In his defence of this massive revenue grab, the Premier claims that every other State is pursuing the policy of a tax on a tax. Again, the reality does not match the rhetoric. One State has already confirmed with my office that it has not yet made the decision on the interaction of the state taxes with the GST. The Premier is also trying to convince Western Australians that it is a nil policy change, because stamp duty is already applied to wholesale sales tax-inclusive prices. If it is a nil policy change, how can the Government be earning an extra \$15m from the change? I am sure the Premier would love to earn an extra \$15m every time he decided not to change policy. The reality is, however, that wholesale sales tax is not currently applied to a range of products which will incur the GST and stamp duty, including homes and insurance policies.

As a result of this policy change, a number of industry groups have criticised the Premier on this massive revenue grab. It was reported in *The West Australian* that the President of the National Farmers Federation, Ian Donges, said that -

. . . the move would raise costs for every household in Australia and was a sign of greed and hypocrisy.

For most business people who undertake numerous financial transactions in the course of their business, such as farmers, this represents an outrageous impost . . .

A media release issued by the Property Council of Australia Ltd included comments by Mr Verwer, the chief executive, as follows -

The West Australian Government is attempting to gain a direct financial advantage from the new tax system at the expense of business and the general community by introducing this insidious legislation.

The Government cynically believes it's immune from the ACCC's strict guidelines which say the full effect of any tax cuts should be passed on through lower prices.

That's why the Property Council believes the ACCC should investigate this matter. If the commission does not have the power to act against a monopoly like a government then its clout must be increased.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia agrees with the sentiment from the Property Council, and it claimed in *The West Australian* that -

Applying stamp duty to the GST-inclusive value is no different to a retailer applying profit margins to the cost of goods including GST, which is illegal under Australian Competition and Consumer Commission guidelines . . .

The last issue I want to raise is the amount of extra revenue the Government will receive as a result of this tax on a tax. As stated previously, the Government forecasts that it will receive an extra \$15m from this policy. The Premier believes there will be increases and decreases in stamp duty revenue. In respect of stamp duty on insurance, he claimed in the Parliament that stamp duty on motor vehicle insurance is estimated to reduce, on building insurance to rise, on home contents insurance to reduce and on workers compensation and life insurance to increase. As has been demonstrated, this is unlikely to happen. Even if the basic premium were to fall slightly, like in the case of motor vehicles, the GST impact would increase the cost of the premium and, therefore, the stamp duty revenue. I challenge the Premier to substantiate his claim about the cost of stamp duty on motor vehicle insurance, building insurance, home contents insurance and workers compensation and life insurance.

It must also be remembered that over 50 per cent of stamp duty revenue is in the form of stamp duty on property conveyancing. Industry sources are telling us that the Government is expected to receive an extra \$25m in increased revenue from stamp duty on business property conveyancing. This will then be added to the extra revenue from stamp duty on residential property conveyancing, insurance premiums, mortgages and other business stamp duties. The only stamp duty revenue that may fall is revenue from motor vehicle licences, but this will in no way compare with the increases gained from the other stamp duties. Given all of this, the Premier's forecast of \$15m is looking decidedly shaky. However, the Premier has now conceded that the amount of \$15m is just a rough forecast.

The Premier claimed in yesterday's *The West Australian* that once the arrangements are in place, he may consider reducing the rates if there is increased revenue. Of course, that is after he has raided the pockets of Western Australian taxpayers in the next few years. It really is a worthless promise given by a Premier who is under pressure from all sectors of society, but most importantly from his traditional supporters in the business sector.

It is not difficult to understand why the Government has had to grab revenue in this way. The Intergovernmental Agreement on Tax Reform signed by the Premier is bad news for Western Australian finances. The Opposition has maintained that Western Australia will be severely worse off in the first years after the introduction of the GST. The compensation being offered by the Commonwealth is simply not enough and will leave a massive hole in the budget. We still believe that the GST package will leave our budget \$470m short in the first year, before compensation. We understand that the compensation being offered by the Commonwealth will be inadequate to fill that gap.

Mr Court: How do you know that?

Dr GALLOP: We have made our estimates of what revenue will come in under the current system as opposed to what the Premier will get under the GST.

Mr Court: If you are right, we will get that compensation.

Dr GALLOP: No. It all depends on the way these things are estimated, and the Premier knows that. That is always the basis of arguments with the Commonwealth. This is one of the reasons that the Government has had to grab this extra revenue. Instead of going back to the Commonwealth for more compensation, the Premier is raiding the pockets of Western Australian taxpayers. However, that plan is backfiring, because the Commonwealth is threatening to reduce the compensation by the amount of extra stamp duty sought by the State. Treasurer Peter Costello said in the House of Representatives on Thursday, 21 October 1999, that -

If they -

That is, the States -

- have taken more revenues than they should have, all that means is that the amount that we guarantee that we will advance under the guarantee is less.

Therefore, we could lose out twice: First, by paying more to the State Government as a result of this tax on a tax; and, secondly, by receiving less from the Federal Government.

Those important issues need to be addressed by the Premier. The first issue is the tax on a tax, and we will continue to pressure the Government with regard to that matter. Our view is that if the Premier does have a tax on a tax, there is danger that we will lose compensation from the Commonwealth and, therefore, this State will be hit twice.

We have noted that not all the States have yet entered into that agreement -

Mr Court: Which State has not?

Dr GALLOP: Queensland has yet to agree to that proposal. We have checked up on that.

Mr Court: So the other Labor States are going into it?

Dr GALLOP: We have checked with Queensland, and it has yet to agree to it.

The final issue I want to raise is the Government's deficit. Just as the Premier continues to deny the real impact of the GST on Western Australian finances, he continues to deny that his Government has a serious deficit problem. Only last week the rating agency Standard and Poor's (Australia) Pty Ltd gave Western Australia a warning that if the deficit trend continued, Western Australia's credit rating could be at risk. The news release from Standard and Poor's claims that -

The general government sector underlying deficit in fiscal 2000 at 5.8% of revenue is the largest in the span of data available to Standard & Poor's.

A long list of experts are now claiming that the Government has a deficit, including Standard and Poor's, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia, and the Institute of Public Affairs. Even the Treasurer's budget papers show that not only are the State's finances in deficit, but also he is not achieving the targets he set for himself in relation to government finances. Yet the Treasurer cannot bring himself to say the "d" word, again demonstrating his willingness to ignore reality. This Treasurer is still in deficit denial.

MR COURT (Nedlands - Treasurer) [3.31 pm]: I thank members for their contribution to this debate. A number of issues were raised which I handled during the course of the debate. One or two issues were raised that I did not respond to, and I said I would provide the information requested. I now place it on the record. The Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 3) 1999 relates to supplementary and new item recurrent expenditures in the 1997-98 and 1998-99 financial years. The total for 1997-98 is \$247 281 850.40. The main areas of expenditure were: Health, \$80.8m; WA Building Management Authority, \$39m; Education, \$25m; Justice, \$21.5m; and Police, \$15.2m. The total for 1998-99 is \$348 154 996 comprising mainly: Health, \$105m; Education, \$60.5m; Treasury - Electricity Commission, \$65.6m; Transport, \$32.2m; and Justice, \$18.1m. The member for Armadale queried the amount of \$610 000 for the WA Coastal Shipping Commission. It related to settlement of a legal claim against the commission.

The expenditure relating to Bill No 3 is extraordinary and unforeseen, to the extent that it was not known at the time the budget was brought down. The Government receives the appropriations and if additional expenses arise which are not covered by those appropriations, those moneys must be put through in a Bill. On the issue of debt management, the Leader of the Opposition would love a Labor Government to be given reports by a rating agency along the lines of those this Government has been getting. It has been getting these reports for six years, even though WA's rating was not upgraded for four years.

The Leader of the Opposition highlighted the cash deficit figure, but he conveniently ignored the explanation for that; that is, WA has the largest capital works program this State has ever run. The previous Government did not have a consolidated fund; it had a recurrent fund and a capital works fund and flicked money from one to the other. When those funds were combined, the Government was running with significant deficits. This Government has always run in surplus, except during the first year it took office.

I place on record that the total public sector debt at 30 June 1993 was \$8.466b, compared with just over \$5b at 30 June 1999. It is a reduction of \$3.5b. Total public sector debt has fallen almost 50 per cent per head of population. Those were the main issues raised during the debate.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*Consideration in Detail***Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.****Clause 3: Appropriation for recurrent services and purposes -**

Mr RIPPER: This clause deals with the total amounts appropriated under two schedules. Schedule 1 lists expenditure in 1997-98, and schedule 2 lists expenditure for 1998-99. A large number of detailed items are included in each schedule, and I propose to confine the debate essentially to the schedules.

Clause put and passed.**Schedule 1 -**

Mr RIPPER: The amount allocated for Resources Development is \$6.8m. I understand this was for the purchase of land for the Oakajee industrial estate and other matters associated with the Oakajee port. Given the lack of progress with the supporting project - the Kingstream steel project - will the Treasurer advise of the current status of Oakajee developments? Will he also advise why the funding was not envisaged when the 1997-98 budget was brought down?

Mr COURT: The outlays are higher than estimated mainly due to a grant of \$10m to the Western Australian Land Authority for the purchase of land for the Oakajee industrial project, and costs of feasibility studies associated with the proposed Oakajee port project of \$1.350m. These expenses were partially offset by the commencement of the Australian united steel industry assistance scheme being delayed to 1998-99, which involved \$4.8m. As to where we are at the moment with either the Oakajee project or the Mt Gibson project, the member should refer those questions to the minister who has responsibility for them. In simple terms, the Taiwanese partners did not deliver; the price of steel fell to very low levels. Last night I talked to some officials from Broken Hill Proprietary Co Ltd who said that the price of steel has shown some positive movement upwards - in the right direction - in recent months, although it is still below the belt.

I mentioned to this House that I did meet people from Ferrostaal Australia Pty Ltd, SMS and Demag Pty Ltd, which are actively involved, and have been for many years, in building steel plants. They are very bullish about the ability of this State to be a low-cost producer and made the point that only low-cost producers survive in this very competitive business. In recent years, even some of the new plants that have been built in locations where there are high energy costs etc, will not survive. I cannot give any more information about what might happen with that or the Mt Gibson project.

Mr RIPPER: As the Minister for Resources Development is in the House, perhaps he could tell us exactly what is happening at the moment with the Oakajee development. Is money being spent on it, or is the project at a standstill?

Mr Barnett: All I will say is that money is being spent, but not at a furious rate. We are negotiating the purchase of properties and compensation areas in the buffer zone.

Mr RIPPER: Is any construction or anything like that being undertaken?

Mr Barnett: No, but all the planning, acquisitions and negotiations over the transport corridor are taking place.

Mr KOBELKE: With respect to the \$25m attributed to the Education Department of Western Australia, why was the increase in the enterprise salary expenses of \$21.5m not foreseen at the time of the 1997-98 budget?

Mr COURT: The expenditure increase of \$25m is due to enterprise agreements salary expenses of \$21.5m and various other increases which amounted to \$3.5m. It is always difficult to estimate what a salary outcome will be. It costs money.

Mr RIPPER: There is an allocation to Agriculture Western Australia to meet higher debt servicing costs. Can the Treasurer explain how much debt the department is currently carrying and why there has been a blow-out in these debt servicing costs at a time of reducing interest rates?

Mr COURT: In relation to the level of debt, I cannot give the member the answer. I will try to get the information while this debate is taking place.

Mr KOBELKE: On the same point: Is it a regular occurrence that funding must be topped up for the debt going out, or is it normally managed in a different way within departments? The Treasurer indicated, when answering another question, there are variations in matters across most departments. Why has this one had to be brought to account with respect to the appropriation Bill, which does not seem to be a regular occurrence and is not reflected in other areas?

Mr COURT: The amount is relatively small; only \$21 000. Because the department did not have the appropriation, it must be covered. I cannot say to which projects it relates. Agriculture Western Australia has had a reasonable capital works program, new facilities and the like. It is a relatively small amount of money.

Mr McGOWAN: I refer to the expenditure in relation to the Ministry of Sport and Recreation and the Western Australian Sports Centre Trust. What were the \$400 000 for the trust and the \$279 000 for the Ministry of Sport and Recreation spent on? What activities were undertaken that required the extra expenditure?

Mr COURT: This was mainly attributable to a shortfall in the World Swimming Championships of \$342 000 and additional premiums for risk cover of \$58 000. In the Ministry of Sport and Recreation, the overrun is due to the provision of additional funding to reinstate the surf fund agreement with Surf Life Saving Western Australia to the previous funding level of \$200 000 and additional risk cover premiums of \$79 000.

Mr McGowan: I seek some clarification: The Treasurer referred to \$342 000 extra dollars in relation to the World Swimming Championships.

Mr COURT: That was for the Sports centre trust.

Mr McGowan: What was our total liability in that matter and why did it blow out by \$342 000?

Mr COURT: I do not have the information about the budget for the World Swimming Championships. If the member wants to ask me another question, I can get the information. He asked what the money was used for, and I have given an explanation. If he wants detailed information about the World Swimming Championships, I am sure all that information can be provided.

Mr RIPPER: I noticed an appropriation to the Department of Minerals and Energy, part of which is for voluntary severance payments. This is a department which is short of staff. There are not enough people in the department to deal with all the native title issues that must be handled. There seems to be a reduction in staff, yet moneys have been allocated for voluntary severance payments. Why would we pay these moneys for redundancies in this department, given its shortfall in staff members; for example, case managers who are necessary to negotiate all the outstanding minerals title matters and the associated native title issues?

Mr COURT: The Department of Minerals and Energy has had significant investment in information technology in recent years, which has led to greatly increased productivity in a number of areas and also changing requirements of the type of staff. It is not abnormal to have some voluntary severance in agencies that are undergoing that sort of change. We are talking about payments of \$200 000.

Mr McGOWAN: I refer to the item for the Western Australian Tourism Commission which shows additional expenditure of \$190 000. What did that relate to over and above the budgeted figure?

Mr COURT: The expenditure overrun is attributed to the additional revenue for the Heineken Classic and Rally Australia events.

Mr RIPPER: Why was additional funding necessary for both those events? What was the total funding for the Heineken Classic from all government sources?

Mr COURT: I cannot give the answer here for the Heineken Classic. The position with the World Swimming Championships and Rally Australia is similar. If the member wishes to ask a question on the funding of the Heineken Classic and what has gone on each year, I can provide that information for him. I will find out the information for that year and get it to him.

Mr Ripper: So you will find out why the additional funding was necessary and how much government money has gone into those events?

Mr COURT: Yes.

Mr KOBELKE: The previous item related to Minerals and Energy. The explanatory memorandum has additional RiskCover premiums of \$312 000. Is the Treasurer able to provide some explanation of that item and then give us some understanding of all allocations across the Bill No 3 that relate to RiskCover or workers compensation insurance premiums? They occur in a number of places. My quick tallying of them shows that they are in the order of \$25m to \$30m for the 1997-98 financial year, as I noted in my contribution during the second reading debate. It does not seem to appear in the 1998-99 figures. I interpreted that as meaning that the blowout or the very big increase in costs occurred in 1997-98 and that, therefore, the Government needed these extra payments, and by the 1998-99 year the departments had adjusted their budgets to cover it. Can the Treasurer correct me or confirm that I am correct in saying that the problem basically occurred in 1997-98 because of the drastic increase then and that in 1998-99, although there was still a problem, the departments had adjusted their budgets, and therefore it is not picked up in this Bill? As a second part of the question, can the Treasurer give us some understanding of why this arose in Minerals and Energy and then, as a third part, move generally across the whole Bill and explain whether what was done for the blowout in cost for Minerals and Energy is reflected across the other portfolios or whether there are differences between the different portfolios? Will he then give the total picture of the additional costs of RiskCover which are met by this Bill?

Mr COURT: The additional RiskCover premium was \$312 000 in Minerals and Energy. This was new in 1997-98. An incentive scheme was developed based on the department's performance, so the figures for 1997-98 represent the first year. This was indexed in the future budget.

Mr Kobelke: Across the appropriation Bill, what was the additional funding to RiskCover that appears on numerous occasions? Can the Treasurer give a global figure?

Mr COURT: The adviser will add it up during the debate.

Mr KOBELKE: If I might tease out the Treasurer's answer, it might answer the other question I asked. He suggested the \$312 000 was an incentive program. Could I have some explanation of what he means by that? I was suggesting to him that the \$312 000 was due to the increase in premium rates, which the Treasurer was aware had happened generally, and I assume had happened in RiskCover.

Mr COURT: Basically the premiums are based on the departments' claims performance. If they are not performing, they need the additional funding for premiums. If they perform better, they get the benefit.

Mr KOBELKE: What the Treasurer is saying makes sense in respect of the general principle of workers compensation insurance and premiums, and I accept it as that. However, if what he says is the answer to my question, it opens up other

matters which we need to have a look at. As I understand it, the Treasurer is saying that because the Department of Minerals and Energy's record was poor, its premiums went up. If that is the reason across all of the items in this budget, it would seem to imply an appalling health and safety record across government agencies.

Mr Court: That figure is for the base year. Thereafter it depends on how departments perform. If their claims are lower, they get a benefit; if they are higher, they pay a higher cover.

Mr KOBELKE: I understand that, but we have had lengthy debates in this Parliament about the workers compensation system. I am trying to get some understanding of the composite factors that are driving this cost increase; that is, is it due to a worse health and safety record, to a higher level of claims because of the new legislation, or to some change in the RiskCover system and the method by which payment is made? It may simply be due to reorganisation within the Department of Minerals and Energy and other departments which has meant that these costs have been brought to book in a different way. I am not clear on what are the various elements driving that cost increase.

Mr COURT: The first year relates to additional RiskCover premium; that is, the total RiskCover premium in the first year.

Mr Kobelke: Is that because it did not go into the books when accounting the budget that was brought down?

Mr COURT: Yes. I am sorry, I said this was the total. The adviser has explained that in the first year Treasury officials made their best estimates. They got advice from the insurance commission, looked at the performance of agencies and then made an estimate. This top-up had to be put in place because their estimates were not right. The adviser is adding up the total figure. In other words, it was an estimate across government in each of the agencies. The figure the adviser will give will show the difference.

Mr KOBELKE: I thank the Treasurer for trying to spell this out for me. I gather from what he is saying that the current arrangements for RiskCover and workers compensation insurance had their first full year in 1997-98. Prior to that the arrangements for workers compensation insurance coverage were through a different means. Therefore, when bringing down the budget for these agencies for 1997-98, which would have been done before the financial year started, Treasury had to estimate the level of premiums that would be required under the new insurance system. Therefore, there was no continuity from the previous arrangement. It was on that basis -

Mr Court: The new scheme was fully funded. The previous scheme was not.

Mr KOBELKE: Was the money previously paid out of Treasury without being accounted for in the departments' budgets? Did it go from Treasury to RiskCover rather than come through the departments' budgets?

Mr Court: An accumulated liability of \$100m ran through many Governments, including the previous Labor Government. A liability accrued. The Government has now gone to a fully funded scheme.

Mr KOBELKE: Was that liability attached to RiskCover and not the agencies? Is it in the Bill because the agencies have been asked to carry the responsibility - which would be right- for the liability?

Mr COURT: Treasury picks up the liabilities when they are due.

Mr Kobelke: Is that the past liabilities?

Mr COURT: Treasury is picking up all the sins from the past.

Mr Kobelke: For 1997-98, which is the period to which this Bill refers, are the liabilities picked up in the budgets of individual agencies?

Mr COURT: Not the outstanding liabilities.

Mr Kobelke: Are the liabilities accumulating in that year picked up?

Mr COURT: Yes. The outstanding liability from past sins is paid by Treasury.

Mr Kobelke: Is that about \$100m?

Mr COURT: It is about \$10.7m in the Bill. As it emerges, the government insurance fund's unfunded liability as at 30 June 1998 is \$10.7m.

Mr Kobelke: Does that fund cover only workers compensation?

Mr COURT: The government insurance fund covers all other insurances but is predominantly workers compensation.

Mr Kobelke: Does the Premier have a figure for the total amount for 1997-98? I am not sure if he gave it earlier.

Mr COURT: My adviser is adding that up now.

Mr RIPPER: Schedules 1 and 2, which deal with 1997-98 and 1998-99, contain additional appropriations for the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Mr Court: The member means Schedule 2.

Mr RIPPER: I mean Schedules 1 and 2. There are allocations for the Anti-Corruption Commission in both financial years. For 1997-98 the allocation is \$4.9m and for 1998-99 the allocation is \$4.58m. Why does the Anti-Corruption Commission require significant additional allocations in those years? Has the Government now got the base budget for the Anti-

Corruption Commission right or will it be a regular feature of appropriation Bills and the Treasurer's Advance Account in future?

Mr COURT: No, the Government has not got the base right. I hope it will not be a feature in future appropriation Bills. However, the Government told the Anti-Corruption Commission it would not be held back from what is required to run an effective commission. These situations are difficult because it is an independent body. Someone might complain if the Government was seen to be penny-pinching in the Anti-Corruption Commission's budget. On the other hand, all agencies must control expenditure.

Mr RIPPER: Two payments in Schedule 1 relate to community service obligations. One is to the Electricity Corporation and the other to the Water Corporation. Can the Government explain why it was necessary to make additional payments for community service obligations and which obligations required the additional funding?

Mr COURT: Those community service obligations are formula-driven. Most of them are to do with the provision of country services. I cannot supply the specific makeup. The Water Corporation has been allocated \$19 000 and it is formula-driven.

The member asked a question about borrowings by Agriculture WA. In 1997-98 it was \$9.508m. We have not got the other figure yet.

Mr KOBELKE: Has a tally been done on the total payments in Schedule 1 relating to RiskCover?

Mr Court: Not yet, but we will supply it.

Mr KOBELKE: The explanatory memorandum indicates voluntary severance payments of \$200 000 in the Department of Minerals and Energy. Those sorts of redundancy payments appear in several of the portfolio budgets.

Mr Court: I have already been asked that question.

Mr KOBELKE: Globally?

Mr Court: Yes.

Mr KOBELKE: Has the Premier supplied a global figure within Schedule 1 and then within Schedule 2?

Mr Court: Does the member want a global figure for voluntary redundancies?

Mr KOBELKE: I want a figure for the moneys allocated in Schedules 1 and 2 to redundancies or severances.

Mr Ripper: I asked for a figure only for the Department of Minerals and Energy.

Mr COURT: I have explained the figure for the Department of Minerals and Energy, but if the member wants the global figures, my advisers will add those up.

Mr McGOWAN: The explanatory memorandum for the budget of the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet in Schedule 1 refers to an extra \$1m for a fit out of new parliamentary electorate offices. What was that for? The memorandum also refers to \$500 000 for the Royal Commission into the City of Wanneroo. What is the money for, considering that the royal commission wrapped up more than a year ago and there has been little ongoing action in carrying out the recommendations?

Mr COURT: Does the member mean the money for the royal commission?

Mr McGowan: I am talking about the major expenses for the royal commission, considering it finished a while ago, and the \$1m that has been allocated to parliamentary electorate offices. Was that money for electorate offices or ministerial offices?

Mr COURT: It was for parliamentary electorate offices. The expenditure for the royal commission was in the 1997-98 bills paid in that year.

Mr McGowan: There was an election in December 1996. Why has the Government recently spent \$1m on electorate offices?

Mr COURT: The Opposition keeps changing offices. One of its members has moved five times.

Mr McGowan: Did that cost \$1m?

Mr Kobelke: Which member was it?

Mr COURT: The opposition member responsible for expenditure controls, Hon Tom Stephens! I think he has moved four or five times.

Mr Kobelke: You have expanded it a bit; it is two or three.

Mr COURT: It might be five. I will check. I know it was many times.

Mr Ripper: He has been a member for a long time.

Mr COURT: There is a large expenditure after an election as leases often run over for a year or two and then members decide they want more salubrious premises. We are therefore under constant pressure from members on both sides of the House. I believe we are scrupulously fair in the way we handle those relocations; however, that is what it costs.

Mr McGowan: The \$500 000 for the Royal Commission into the City of Wanneroo was incurred a long time ago.

Mr COURT: That royal commission of the Opposition's, when it was in government, cost a fortune.

Mr KOBELKE: On the same point, the Treasurer referred to extra costs. Although I am moving slightly beyond the scope of this Bill, it is an appropriate time to draw to the Treasurer's attention the problems that members are having with technology in our electorate offices. A technical decision was made to change the computer software from WordPerfect to Microsoft Office. However, the personal computers provided to members of Parliament, which are extremely useful, have the WordPerfect system installed in them. Members have therefore ended up with the ridiculous situation of having a different system on their laptop computers from the system in their electorate offices, with no plan for funding to change the system. I believe that has now been put in place but there has been a long period of uncertainty with incompatible systems in the same office. These matters must be better planned so that changeover of systems on all the machines in one office can occur concurrently without having incompatible software.

Mr COURT: I cannot answer that question specifically. However, I know that there is a constant roll-out of technology in the offices. We agree to a certain type of phone and then another phone is introduced; we agree to a type of photocopier and that changes; and we agree to a certain type of computer and that changes. I am aware of the issue of the laptops. It is a constant problem we will have with the advances in technology.

Mr KOBELKE: The Heritage Council required top-up funding of \$76 000, which the explanatory memorandum stated was due mainly to a compensation payment of \$70 000 to George Weston Foods Limited in respect of a stop work order issued by the Heritage Council to the Cottesloe flour mill site. Can the Treasurer explain how that payment arose and whether lessons have been learnt to ensure that the incurring of additional costs of this nature is not repeated?

Mr COURT: Yes, it is an issue. The minister is not present in the Chamber but he will be bringing into the Parliament legislation to address those issues. In other words, we are proposing to resolve the issue with amendments to the heritage legislation.

Mr Kobelke: You don't know anything about how this problem arose?

Mr COURT: Not in this case. It appears that a heritage listing was placed on the buildings after approvals were granted to the project. That seems to be the way the legislation works currently, which is of concern to the Government and the reason for bringing to the Parliament amendments to the legislation. The top-up of funds for risk cover across all areas was \$16.2m, Health being the largest component. We are working on the figure for voluntary redundancies.

Mr RIPPER: The explanatory memorandum to schedule 1 notes that an additional \$21.5m was allocated to the Ministry of Justice in 1997-98, and the explanatory memorandum to schedule 2 notes that an additional \$18.1m was allocated in 1998-99. These are considerable additional injections of funds to the Ministry of Justice. The explanatory memorandum states that outlays were higher than estimated, mainly due to major overruns in core activity demand increases in offender management of \$3.6m in 1997-98 and \$15.025m in 1998-99. In each of those financial years there were demand increases in the core activities of the Ministry of Justice which seem to relate to increases in the prison muster. Is the Government considering the accuracy of its predictions? Two budgets in a row have shown that demand has obviously been way ahead of predictions at budget time. Can the Treasurer advise me of the difference between the predictions of the demand for Ministry of Justice services - that might be a euphemism - and reality?

Mr COURT: We cannot place prisoners on waiting lists; they must be accommodated. We have been developing some modelling because this is a matter of concern. The numbers of prisoners have increased due to sentencing. The police have a lead time between catching and charging an offender and the time the offender enters the prison. Health, education and the prison systems have been pressure points for the Government but the latest briefing on this issue indicates that we are reasonably comfortable with the modelling.

Mr RIPPER: Is the Government concerned at the cost of running the prison system? An additional allocation of \$21m was made in 1997-98 and \$18m in 1998-99. Given the way the system is heading, will the Government also have to provide allocations beyond the budget provision for 1999-2000? I am concerned about the forward estimates for the growth in expenditure on prisons. Is the Treasurer contemplating any moves to control this growth?

Mr COURT: It is still a pressure point for the Government. We were concerned about these blow-outs and Alan Piper of the Ministry of Justice has a short term program to deal with them. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has seen what we are doing in different prisons to handle the muster.

Mr Ripper: You mean seatainers?

Mr COURT: Yes, the program has been very successful. A new prison is under construction. The muster will be a pressure point for about another 18 months, but it must be regarded as a pressure point in the current budget with those high numbers.

Mr Ripper: Are you contemplating an additional allocation in 2000?

Mr COURT: Mr Piper has the situation under much better control than it had been previously.

Mr KOBELKE: Under schedule 1, which is for 1997-98, \$21.5m is allocated to Justice. That is mostly itemised, but at the bottom of the statement in the explanatory memorandum it has other amounts totalling \$6.2m. What key items make up the \$6.2m? It is a large proportion of the total allocation and there is no explanation for it.

Mr COURT: I will get that information for the member and provide it when this debate resumes.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Court (Treasurer).

WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND REHABILITATION AMENDMENT BILL (No. 3) 1999*Returned*

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

WATER SERVICES COORDINATION AMENDMENT BILL 1999*Council's Amendments*

Amendments made by the Council now considered.

Consideration in Detail

The amendments made by the Council were as follows -

No 1

Clause 7, page 5, line 21 - To insert the following new subclauses -

- (3) The Minister must, within 14 days after a direction is given under subsection (1), cause a copy of it to be laid before each House of Parliament or dealt with in accordance with subsection (4).
- (4) If -
 - (a) at the commencement of the period referred to in subsection (3) a House of Parliament is not sitting; and
 - (b) the Minister is of the opinion that that House will not sit during that period, the Minister is to transmit a copy of the direction to the Clerk of that House.
- (5) A copy of a direction transmitted to the Clerk of a House is to be -
 - (a) taken to have been laid before that House; and
 - (b) taken to be a document published by order or under the authority of that House.
- (6) The laying of a copy of a direction that is taken to have occurred under subsection (5)(a) is to be recorded in the Minutes, or Votes and Proceedings, of the House on the first sitting day of the House after the receipt of the copy by the Clerk.

No 2

Clause 7, page 5, lines 22 to 24 - To delete the lines and substitute the following lines -

be included in the annual report submitted by the accountable officer of the department under section 62 of the *Financial Administration and Audit Act 1985*.

Dr HAMES: I move -

That the amendments made by the Council be agreed to.

This clause was raised by the members of the Opposition, mostly the Democrats, in the upper House. They wanted an arrangement whereby if I, as the minister, gave a direction to the Plumbers Licensing Board, there would be a requirement that the direction be tabled in Parliament. The original request from the Democrats was that that be done within just a few days. We finally agreed that it be within 14 days after the direction is given. It is standard practice that when ministers are required to give a direction, they must table that direction in the House within 14 days. If the House is not sitting, that direction must be transmitted to the Clerk of the House. I understand the Opposition accepts these amendments.

Dr EDWARDS: The Opposition supports both amendments made by the Council. The first amendment is to the clause which deals with the minister's giving directions. The time frame of 14 days is better than that which was initially proposed when the amendment was first put forward in the other place. This is a standard period. It is a standard sort of clause. The second amendment is consequential to the first amendment.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendments agreed to and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

MIDLAND REDEVELOPMENT BILL 1999*Suspension of Standing Orders*

On motion by Mr Barnett (Leader of the House), resolved with an absolute majority -

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as is necessary to consider forthwith Council message No 12 regarding the Midland Redevelopment Bill 1999 in detail.

Council's Amendments

Amendments made by the Council now considered.

Consideration in Detail

The amendments made by the Council were as follows -

No 1

Clause 20, page 12, line 29 - To insert after the word "the" the word "cultural".

No 2

Clause 20, page 12, line 29 - To delete the word "and".

Mr KIERATH: I move -

That the amendments made by the Council be agreed.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendments agreed to and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

MR BARNETT (Cottesloe - Leader of the House) [4.52 pm]: I move -

That the House at its rising adjourn until 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 16 November 1999.

The effect of this motion is that we will have a two-week break and then return for a further two weeks of scheduled sittings. I foreshadow that it may be necessary to sit on the Wednesday evenings during those two weeks, particularly in the last week. I also foreshadow that the time for private members' business will be reduced in the last sitting week, perhaps to an hour or an hour and a half as is customary practice. Depending on the progress of legislation - if I can use the word "progress" - in the other House, it may be necessary for us to schedule an additional date at which we will return to deal with some amendments from the upper House, but I will advise members of that date as soon as it is determined.

MR KOBELKE (Nollamara) [4.30 pm]: The Opposition wishes to comment on the move by the Leader of the House to take out of the parliamentary session a full sitting week. This reflects the fact that the Government does not have any business. The Government does not see that we have a major problem with crime on the streets and in the homes of people in Perth and throughout Western Australia, and people want something done about it. The Government does not seem to have the will to do anything about it. The Government has for years been talking about introducing legislation to deal with prostitution. Where is the prostitution Bill? The Minister for Police has been talking of a review of the Police Act. The new police service Bill has had years of gestation, and we are yet to see it in the Parliament. The Government has talked about a Bill to deal with the proceeds of crime. Where is that Bill? It is not in the Parliament. The Government has talked about a covert agents' Bill. Where is that legislation? The Government spoke about, and had people working on, a fire levy Bill which would transfer the insurance collected to local councils. That has stalled. That is just one portfolio. I can go through portfolio after portfolio in which the Government has not only promised, but has also made a commitment to do something about these major problems; yet it has done nothing. It is the second last year of the Government's term in office, and it cannot even fill the timetable it has laid down for its own legislation.

Mr Barnett: I will tell Mr Kobelke one interesting fact. Since we resumed after the prorogation, which was midyear, this House has sat for 50 hours more than the upper House. That is the reason the gap in the legislative timetable has occurred.

Mr KOBELKE: That is the minister's excuse. I will deal with this House before I turn to the minister's weak excuse with respect to the other place. We have no work on the Notice Paper in the Legislative Assembly, so this House will not sit for a week. That week has been taken out of the parliamentary timetable because we have no legislation on the Notice Paper that we can deal with.

I will refer to two particular Bills. The Heritage Bill has been introduced in this Chamber and debate has commenced, but the Government cannot proceed with it because it must go back and fix it up. It is so flawed that the Government cannot proceed with it. Similarly, the Government cannot proceed with the Culture, Libraries and the Arts Bill 1998 and the Culture, Libraries and the Arts (Consequential Provisions) Bill 1998 because they are so fundamentally flawed it is not worth taking them further. The debate has ceased, but they continue to sit on the Notice Paper. I could go on and on with the failure of the Government to bring forward legislation that is needed for good governance in this State.

I will now turn to the weak excuse by the Leader of the House that somehow there is a logjam in the other place. If there is any logjam in the other place it is due to mismanagement between Hon Norman Moore and the Leader of the House in this place. The Leader of the House in the other place gave the Opposition a list of Bills that the Government wanted through by the end of the year. That list has on it a number of Bills that have not even been introduced in that place. There is a range of Bills that the Opposition is happy to expedite through the Legislative Council, but the Government has failed to bring them on. It is mismanagement by the Government in this and the other place that has caused a number of Bills to sit on the Notice Paper. It has nothing to do with any filibuster or waste of time by the Opposition. In fact, a motion moved by the Opposition in the other place under its standing orders is being filibustered by the Government in order to hold up the proceedings.

The major issue is mismanagement by the Government between the two Houses and a lack of adequate legislation to deal with the pressing problems that need to be addressed and resolved in Western Australia. I know it is a bit of a joke for the Leader of the House, and his party has its problems. We are all aware that political parties have their problems. However, the problem here is the mismanagement of business through the Parliament between the Leader of the Government in this

place and the government leader in the other place, and the total inability of the Government to get its legislation through its party room and into the Parliament.

Mr Barnett: The other place is dealing with a Bill to do with prisons. Hon John Halden has been speaking for three hours. How rivetting would a three-hour speech by Hon John Halden be?

Mr KOBELKE: It has been so rivetting that the Leader of the House has been up there listening to him.

Mr Prince: We spent over 40 hours on it here.

Mr KOBELKE: We passed it through this House.

Mr Prince: What has he got to say that has not been said by you lot 10 times over?

Mr KOBELKE: It is serious legislation, and the Opposition has major problems with it.

Mrs Roberts: The Minister for Police cannot talk about people speaking for long periods, because he has a reputation for talking more than any other minister.

Mr Prince: But I say something that is worthwhile.

Mr KOBELKE: The minister's interjection is self-praise, and we have a judgment about self-praise.

It is a serious issue when there are so many pressing problems, and when promises are made by the Government to deal with matters that require legislation, yet because of a logjam in its party room it is not able to get that legislation into the Parliament. That is the reason that the Legislative Assembly is having a whole week taken out of its sitting program for this year.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.37 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

EASTERN GOLDFIELDS HIGH SCHOOL, YOUTH SUPPORT PROGRAM

485. Ms ANWYL to the Minister for Education:

I refer to the Eastern Goldfields High School Council President's recent comments to media that the Minister has not agreed to increase the staff available at the school and ask -

- (a) is it correct that the Youth Support Program will not be offered next year;
- (b) how many students currently access the program;
- (c) how many teachers are employed in the program;
- (d) how many extra teachers have been requested for the program in 2000;
- (e) what other programs are available for students at educational risk; and
- (f) will these programs continue in 2000 and how many teaching positions will be allocated to each?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (a) The decision to offer the Youth Support Program for 2000 will be taken by the principal. Student data, staff input and parent input will be used to identify those key programs to be funded and staffed from the school's staffing formula and budget.
- (b) Six to eight students can be accommodated at any one time in the Youth Support Program. Students access a Teacher Assistant for support upon their return to mainstream.
- (c) There is a 1.5 FTE (full-time equivalent) teacher and a 1.0 FTE Teacher Assistant involved in the Youth Support Program.
- (d) It is likely that the program will seek a 1.0 FTE teacher above the staffing formula.
- (e) Other programs for students at educational risk at Eastern Goldfields Senior High School include:
 Resourceful Adolescent Program in conjunction with Curtin University. Available to all Year 8 students (350).
 Promoting Adolescent Sexual Health. Available to all lower school students via intensive workshops.
 Preventing Abuse in Relationships for all Year 10 students (320).
 Sports Challenge for a target group of 77 students identified as being at education risk.
 Body Image Program for Year 9 students.
 Homework Classes (after school) accessed by approximately 20 Aboriginal students.
 GURD, a drug education program conducted by school-based police officer.
 A Reading Resource Teacher provides support in literacy and numeracy to students through team teaching, testing of students and providing withdrawal programs for students not working to potential.
 A Talented and Gifted program operates for Years 8-10 students.
 Fast Track assists Year 11 students with literacy, numeracy and life skills and may lead to traineeships, employment and/or further studies. Fast Track is staffed and funded in a manner similar to that for vocational students and consequently the school receives a higher level of staffing (through the staffing formula) to cater for the Fast Track students.
 The school has allocated one teacher and a Student Services Coordinator (Level 3) to implement pastoral care programs, attendance strategies and behaviour management to assist students at educational risk.
 A teacher provides technical support for the Learning Technology project which targets students at risk.
 A Level 3 Coordinator in Careers and Vocational Education assists students (including those at educational risk) in work placements, career counselling and subject selection.
 A school psychologist from the Goldfields District Education Office provides counselling, student management programs and advice in social and academic strategies and support.
 A Chaplain, funded by the church community, provides pastoral, spiritual and emotional support to a broad cross section of students.

A unique Year 7-8 transition program titled "Tools for Change" funded by the Western Mining Corporation and supported by school staff, provides the opportunity for Year 7 students to familiarise themselves with the senior high school, establish goal setting skills and develop conflict resolution skills.

The school has established working relationships with tertiary education providers and mining companies in order to provide school to work programs for students and to improve access to further study.

Two school-based police officers provide support for education programs, give advice on the law, and conduct extra curricular activities such as competitions and social evenings.

District Based programs include:

Intensive Behaviour Management (IBM) Program. This program accepts referrals for students in Years K to 8 who are considered to be moderately to severely at risk due to their behaviour. The IBM program is based on the SPER model that operates in the metropolitan area. An intensive behaviour management plan is developed with teachers. A student support worker is allocated as an additional resource in the classroom to support the program. A district based School Psychologist coordinates the program. Counselling and support are offered to families and students as required.

The District Office provides the FTE for the School Psychologist. The Behaviour Management in Schools (BMIS) program funds the 1.0 FTE Student Support Worker.

Interagency Program (IAP). This is a project funded and supported by seven agencies located in Kalgoorlie, including the Education Department. The program is currently run on a part-time basis and seeks to engage 9 to 15 year olds severely at risk. Typically these are students who have been identified through poor attendance, substance abuse, low levels of family support, and are offending or at risk of offending. The program is off-site from the senior high school campus and focuses on improving the literacy, numeracy and life skills of students. The aim is to improve the students' skills and to link them back into either a school or vocational program. A teacher is employed on a part-time basis and coordinates the literacy and numeracy program. The Education Department contributes to this program through the District Students At Educational Risk (SAER) program and currently funds the teacher position.

- (f) Programs involving the Chaplains, school-based Police and School Psychologist are funded and staffed from sources outside the school and will continue in 2000. The future of other school programs will be determined by the principal and staff in conjunction with the school decision-making group. With reference to District based programs:

Interagency Program. The management committee for the IAP is currently exploring the option of running the program full-time in 2000 subject to funding and community support. The program currently employs a teacher on a casual basis and would be looking to increase this position to full-time in 2000. Funding from a variety of sources will be sought for this.

Intensive Behaviour Management Program. It is the intention of the district to run the IBM program in 2000. The district provides the FTE allocation for the School Psychologist. The Behaviour Management in Schools (BMIS) program funds the 1.0 FTE Student Support Worker.

Curtin University-Flexible Delivery Centre. The Goldfields District Education Office is currently exploring with Curtin University the possibility of secondary students accessing the TAFE general education course through the Centre for 2000. This program would allow a limited number of high school students to access a supported adult education model as an alternative to mainstream secondary education. Funding for a supporting mentor program will be provided through the District Students at Educational Risk (SAER) program on an individual basis.

SOUTH THORNLIE PRE-PRIMARY CENTRE, ASBESTOS ROOF

610. Ms McHALE to the Minister for Education:

I refer to the Pre Primary Centre at South Thornlie Primary School and ask -

- (a) will the Minister confirm that the centre has an asbestos roof;
- (b) if the answer to (a) above is yes, how old is the roof and in what condition;
- (c) has the asbestos roof been assessed for replacement; and
- (d) if the answer to (c) above is yes, when is this scheduled to be undertaken?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (a) Yes.
- (b) The roof is in good condition. The pre-primary was completed in 1975.
- (c) Yes.
- (d) The roof will be included within the Government's \$20 million accelerated roof replacement program within the next two years.

REGIONAL HEADWORKS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME, ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS

694. Mr RIEBELING to the Minister for Commerce and Trade:

(1) For the 1996-97 and 1997-98 financial years, will the Minister provide the following details of the Regional Headworks Development Scheme assistance recipients -

- (a) the name of each recipient;
- (b) the amount received; and
- (c) the particular utility or service for which assistance was sought?

(2) Will the Minister state how many applications for assistance were made in 1996-97 and 1997-98?

Mr COWAN replied:

- (1) 1996-97.
- | | |
|------------|-----------------------------|
| Recipient: | Lancelin Lodge |
| Amount: | \$44 862 |
| Services: | Water and sewerage. |
| Recipient: | Stirling Range Bream |
| Amount: | \$10 324 |
| Services: | Power. |
| Recipient: | Pinnacles Beach Backpackers |
| Amount: | \$4 370 |
| Services: | Water. |
| Recipient: | Margaret River Trust |
| Amount: | \$27 573 |
| Services: | Water and sewerage. |
| Recipient: | Gunbarrel Grapes |
| Amount: | \$34 275 |
| Services: | Power. |
| Recipient: | Supersorb |
| Amount: | \$36 000 |
| Services: | Power. |
| Recipient: | Shire of Kellerberrin |
| Amount: | \$5 625 |
| Services: | Power. |
| Recipient: | Shire of Mt Marshall |
| Amount: | \$26 618 |
| Services: | Power and water. |
| Recipient: | Shire of Capel |
| Amount: | \$40 872 |
| Services: | Power and water. |
| Recipient: | Shire of Cunderdin |
| Amount: | \$48 970 |
| Services: | Power and water. |
| Recipient: | Shire of Moora |
| Amount: | \$33 750 |
| Services: | Power. |
- 1997-98
- | | |
|------------|------------------------------------|
| Recipient: | Mount Lesueur Marron and Fish Farm |
| Amount: | \$22 203 |
| Services: | Power. |
| Recipient: | Oakridge Glen Pty Ltd |
| Amount: | \$11 368 |
| Services: | Power. |
| Recipient: | Redland Bay Pty Ltd |
| Amount: | \$28 125 |
| Services: | Power. |
| Recipient: | Supersorb Pty Ltd |
| Amount: | \$8 000 |
| Services: | Power. |
| Recipient: | Shire of Boddington |
| Amount: | \$49 800 |
| Services: | Power. |
| Recipient: | Shire of Toodyay |
| Amount: | \$50 000 |
| Services: | Power and water. |

Recipient: Shire of Morawa
 Amount: \$50 000
 Services: Power, water, sewerage, and telecommunications.

Recipient: AD & DA Judd
 Amount: \$22 188
 Services: Power and water.

Recipient: Anitkeb Holdings
 Amount: \$15 432
 Services: Power.

Recipient: Aridland Seeds
 Amount: \$6 294
 Services: Power.

Recipient: Daystar Cottages and Cabins
 Amount: \$3 741
 Services: Water and sewerage.

Recipient: Dongara Grain Cleaners
 Amount: \$29 159
 Services: Power and water.

Recipient: Dongara Professional Fishermen's Association
 Amount: \$124 162
 Services: Power.

Recipient: Earthheal
 Amount: \$6 450
 Services: Power.

Recipient: Fairbridge WA
 Amount: \$255 183
 Services: Water.

Recipient: Gingin Freshwater Lobsters
 Amount: \$13 719
 Services: Power.

Recipient: Rural Traders Perenjori
 Amount: \$3 679
 Services: Water.

Recipient: Stirling Range Bream
 Amount: \$3 375
 Services: Water

Recipient: Zarephath Wines
 Amount: \$6 825
 Services: Power.

- (2) 1996-97 35 applications.
 1997-98 30 applications.

EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY, CHURCHLANDS CAMPUS

755. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has the Government agreed to the sale of the Churchlands Campus?
- (2) What conditions have been attached to the sale?
- (3) What is the most recent valuation of the land?
- (4) Will the Minister table any relevant correspondence?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (1) This is essentially the responsibility of Edith Cowan University, however, the matter has not come before Cabinet at this stage.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Valuation of the land is dependent on planning approvals and I am advised that the University has not sought a formal valuation at this time.
- (4) Not applicable.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

760. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Education:

- (1) How many school psychologists are currently employed by the Education Department of Western Australia?

- (2) How does this number compare with 1998?
- (3) What is the ratio of school psychologists to students?
- (4) How many high schools have a full-time psychologist?
- (5) Which schools have full-time psychologists?
- (6) Will the Minister advise -
 - (a) how many schools employ extra school psychologists from their own budgets;
 - (b) which schools;
 - (c) for how much time per week; and
 - (d) at what cost?

Mr BARNETT replied:

I am advised as at 30 September 1999:

- (1) 251 (161.6 FTE).
- (2) In 1998 there were 248 (159.1 FTE).
- (3) The ratio of School Psychologists to students is 1:1550.
- (4) Eight.
- (5) North Lake Senior Campus
Geraldton Secondary College
Carine Senior High School
Churchlands Senior High School
Mount Lawley Senior High School
Ballajura Community College
Lockridge Senior High School
Hampton Senior High School
- (6)

(a)	27.	
(b)-(c)	East Maddington Primary School	0.3
	Carlisle Primary School	0.1
	Gibbs Street Primary School	0.3
	Queens Park Primary School	0.2
	East Maddington Primary School	0.1
	Kwinana Senior High School	0.2
	Leeming Senior High School	0.1
	North Lake Senior Campus	0.6
	Lynwood Senior High School	0.3
	Hampton Senior High School	0.4
	Cyril Jackson Senior Campus	0.6
	Balga Senior High School	0.4
	Ballajura Community College	0.2
	Lesmurdie Senior High School	0.2
	Northam Senior High School	0.1
	Mukinbudin District High School	0.2
	North Merredin Senior High School	0.2
	Kellerberrin District High School	0.1
	South Merredin Primary School	0.1
	Churchlands Senior High School	0.2
	Carine Primary School	0.2
	Warwick Senior High School	0.2
	Mount Lawley Senior High School	0.2
	Lockridge Senior High School	0.4
	Mirraboooka Senior High School	0.2
	Governor Stirling Senior High School	0.2
	Swan View Senior High School	0.4
- (d) \$181.17 per day (0.2 FTE = 1 day).

SCHOOLS, LETTER FROM FEDERAL MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

858. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that the Federal Minister for Education, Hon. David Kemp, has produced an open letter to parents dated August 1999 dealing with the amount of additional resources the Federal Government is putting into the non-Government school sector?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that the letter/brochure has been distributed in a number of Government schools?

- (3) Did the Minister/State Government authorise the distribution of the letter?
- (4) Given that the letter deals with the highly political issue of funding non-Government and Government schools, does the Minister/Government condone the type of politicking engaged in by the Federal Minister being distributed to schools?
- (5) If so, how does the Minister distinguish that type of politicking from the type of politicking the Government does not allow in State schools?
- (6) If the Minister does condone the politicking by the Federal Minister, is it because he is on the same side of politics as the Minister?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (1)-(2) The August 1999 letter was an open letter about Federal funding of government schools from the Federal Minister for Education to parents of government school students. It was sent to all government school principals throughout Australia for possible inclusion in government school newsletters. A brochure entitled "Federal Assistance For Government Schools" accompanied the letter. That letter is not to be confused with a separate June 1999 open letter about Federal funding of non-government schools jointly signed by the Prime Minister and Federal Minister to parents of non-government school students that was sent to all non-government school principals throughout Australia for inclusion in non-government school newsletters. A brochure entitled "New Federal Funding Model For Non-Government Schools" accompanied the letter.
- (3) Authorisation for distribution of the August 1999 letter to government schools was not requested. The Federal Government, as a substantial funder of schools and educational programs in schools, routinely disseminates information about its funding programs and initiatives.
- (4)-(6) The separate letter for each school sector aimed to clarify the extent of funding announced by the Federal Government in the 1999 Federal Budget. All of the information had been made public in earlier budget papers, but was arguably less accessible to many schools and parents. The dissemination of this information is not politicking. The decision of whether to include the information in the newsletters of government schools was made by individual principals.

GERALDTON ABATTOIR, BONING AND LOADING FACILITY

859. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Primary Industry:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of a news item on 7 September 1999 concerning the Geraldton abattoir hoping its new boning and loading facility will allow it to almost double its workforce?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that Geraldton Meat Exports believes the new \$500 000 facility will also allow it to double production?
- (3) What financial assistance did the Government provide to enable the abattoir to establish the new facility and/or expand its workforce?

Mr HOUSE replied:

- (1)-(3) Yes, I am aware of this project and advise that a check of the records at Agriculture Western Australia and my Ministerial Office has shown that Geraldton Meat Exports did not apply for funding from the Primary Industry portfolio.

PETROL PRICES, PERTH-BUNBURY

1048. Mr McGINTY to the Minister for Fair Trading:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the price difference of petrol between Perth and Bunbury?
- (2) What is that difference and what has the difference been over time?
- (3) Does the Minister believe a fuel price differential is warranted between Perth and Bunbury?
- (4) What action does the Minister believe appropriate to achieve petrol price parity between Perth and Bunbury?

Mr SHAVE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Ministry of Fair Trading have contacted the RAC who advised that for the month of September the average price of unleaded petrol was 78 cents per litre in Perth and 85.8 cents per litre in Bunbury.
- (3)-(4) Petrol pricing matters are the responsibility of the Federal Government. It is not the State Government's policy to regulate retail petrol prices or to manipulate price differentials throughout Western Australia. I have supported a move by all Fair Trading Ministers for the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to investigate how movements in the barrel price of crude oil are translated into retail prices in Australia. In particular, the ACCC is to consider whether recent retail prices have been affected by factors other than the crude oil price increases.

PLANNING, BECK FAMILY

1145. Ms MacTIERNAN to the Minister for Planning:

- (1) In late 1997 did the Ombudsman twice find flaws in the Ministry of Planning's procedures which caused the Beck family to suffer financial losses and recommended that an ex gratia payment be made?
- (2) Did the Minister reject this recommendation?
- (3) If so, was the Minister's rejection of the recommendation made on the basis that the Ministry of Planning had advised the Minister that they had done nothing wrong?
- (4) If so, does this make a mockery of having a third party scrutinise the conduct of a Government agency?

Mr KIERATH replied:

- (1)-(4) No. The Ombudsman in one letter to the Ministry for Planning dated 5 November 1997 stated that the Ministry should consider making an ex gratia payment. I was not consulted on this matter.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

WELLINGTON DAM LAND, OFFER AND ACCEPTANCE

408. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Water Resources:

I refer to my question yesterday on the purchase of the Wellington Dam land and the offer and acceptance signed on 13 April 1999.

- (1) Was an earlier offer and acceptance document signed?
- (2) If yes, why was this set aside and a new document drawn up?

Dr HAMES replied:

- (1)-(2) The Leader of the Opposition asked me the same question yesterday, and I asked him whether he had any information that I did not have. I have checked with the Water Corporation, which has advised me that the first offer was for \$6m. I have been given to believe by the Water Corporation that the only other offer and acceptance form is the one that was finally accepted.

WELLINGTON DAM LAND, EARLIER SALE CONTRACT

409. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Water Resources:

Given that the minister's answer was no, was an earlier sale contract document signed and set aside; and, if so, why?

Dr HAMES replied:

I do not know what the Leader of the Opposition is referring to. As I said, the initial offer was \$6m. That was our opening bid. That was set aside because it was not accepted by the vendor. It was only when that final price was negotiated -

Dr Gallop: We are talking about Mr Jones' deal with Mr Johnson.

Dr HAMES: I am aware of that. I am not aware of any other offer apart from the final signed document. If the Leader of the Opposition has another document, I would be pleased to see it.

Dr Gallop: Why don't you go down there and check it out?

Dr HAMES: I have done that, and that is the information I have been given.

HEALTH SERVICES, INFORMATION GUIDE

410. Mr OSBORNE to the Minister for Health:

In view of recent comments by the Health Consumers' Council WA that around 60 per cent of its callers seek assistance to locate publicly funded health services, can the minister advise what steps are being taken to better inform people of the wide range of services that exist within Western Australia's health system?

Mr DAY replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The Government shares the concern that many people in Western Australia may not be fully aware of the range of health services that are available to them, where those services are available and how to access them. The reality is that Western Australia has a high quality health system that is equal to any in the world. One of the challenges is to make those services available as close as possible to where people live, and also to let people know how they can access them. The Government, through the Health Department of Western Australia, has produced for the first time the "Western Australian Health Services Guide", in a metropolitan edition and also a rural edition.

Mr Riebeling: What about PATS?

Mr DAY: It includes information on the patient assisted travel scheme as well. It includes extensive information about a broad range of services that are provided by the Government of Western Australia including emergency and crisis services, hospitals, alcohol and drug services, family, dental, sexual and mental health services, Aboriginal health, public and environmental health services and also information about disability services and Family and Children's Services. The guide is being distributed to all homes in Western Australia over the next two weeks. It will go a long way to ensure that people have information about the high quality services that are available to them on a local basis.

DERBY TIDAL POWER PROJECT, CABINET CONSIDERATION

411. Mr RIPPER to the Minister for Energy:

- (1) Will State Cabinet have the courage to consider and announce decisions on the Derby tidal power project when it meets in Derby on Monday?
- (2) Will the minister at least have Cabinet set aside the recommendation of his steering committee against this project?
- (3) Will the minister's further thorough inquiries referred to in today's edition of *The West Australian* include genuine approaches to the Federal Government seeking financial assistance for the project?
- (4) If not, why not?

Mr BARNETT replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)-(4) As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition well knows, a formal tender process was conducted for the supply of electricity to the west Kimberley region - Derby, Broome, Fitzroy Crossing and other centres in that area, including Aboriginal communities. That has been a properly conducted tender process. Initially 12 proposals were received. A short list of six put in formal tender documents. That was reduced to a short list of two preferred bidders, with two bids being placed in a reserve category. The proposed tidal power project was one of the two placed in the reserve category. The committee that has been overseeing the tender process is chaired by Des Kelly and involves the Office of Energy, Western Power and a series of technical and financial consultants. The recommendations it has made to me set out who the committee has ranked as the preferred bidder; in other words, the end of tender process is who they have placed No 1. I will now pursue a number of issues, as I would in any other tender process. There will not be a decision about the power supply situation for the west Kimberley at the cabinet meeting to be held next week.

Dr Gallop: Very convenient.

Mr BARNETT: It is interesting that the Leader of the Opposition said that. The one thing the Government will do properly is to conduct tenders to the letter of the law and the process. Presumably the Leader of the Opposition would suggest that the Government make a panicked political decision. We are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' funds and we have a responsibility to look at how they are used. We are also talking about the reliability and the cost of power supplies in the Kimberley region. I have not yet formed a position. I have received a recommendation from a committee that has overseen a tender process. I will alert Cabinet as to what that recommendation is, but we will not be in a position to make a decision. I will not make any recommendation to Cabinet because I have not yet assessed it, and I will require answers to the many questions that I will have relating to that project, including the tidal project.

Mr Thomas: It did not worry you in east Kimberley.

Mr BARNETT: I do not know why members opposite chip in like that. I ask them whether they will support the Derby tidal project at any price?

Mr Ripper: We think it should be on the active list for consideration, and should not have been on the reserve list.

Mr BARNETT: It is.

DERBY TIDAL POWER PROJECT, COMMONWEALTH ASSISTANCE

412. Mr RIPPER to the Leader of the House:

What has been the Prime Minister's response to the letter from the Acting Premier of 29 September seeking "the actual level, nature and mechanisms of financial assistance that may be provided by the Commonwealth in relation to this project"?

Mr BARNETT replied:

I saw a copy of the letter that was sent to the Prime Minister after the fact. I have no idea whether the Prime Minister has responded.

COMMUNITY SPORTING AND RECREATION FACILITIES FUND, REGIONAL AREAS PROJECTS

413. Mr MARSHALL to the Premier:

The member for Rockingham asserted in the House this week that the Government was not allocating an equitable share of the community sporting and recreation facilities fund to projects in regional areas. Is this the case, or has the member made a mistake?

Mr COURT replied:

I did check out the allegation that the moneys had not been properly allocated to regional areas. I have pulled out the statistics for the community sporting and recreation facilities fund since 1995. Since 1995, 63 per cent of all of the funding by dollar value has gone into regional areas, and nearly 69 per cent of the projects funded have been in regional areas. The reason that I have taken the figures from 1995 onwards is that just before the 1993 election, the then Labor Government allocated three years of funding as some sort of electoral ploy. Members will note that in 1996 we did not do that. We kept the credibility of this fund in place by not announcing projects three years out. This fund has been a great success. As members can see, it has been very supportive of projects throughout regional areas.

The Leader of the Opposition made a comment about funding for a swimming pool in the City of Perth. I found his comment interesting. He asked for a briefing on the belltower project and everything associated with it, and that briefing was provided. I was present for some of the briefing, and I do not think the Leader of the Opposition could say that the officials held back on anything. They told the Leader of the Opposition everything he wanted to know about that project. The next week in the Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition did not raise any questions about it. He waited until I went away, and he then started asking questions about things -

Dr Gallop: Smack, smack, smack!

Mr COURT: The Leader of the Opposition should hang on! He started asking questions about things that he had been fully briefed on.

Dr Gallop: But the public had not been fully briefed, had it?

Mr COURT: This is interesting. I went to make some inquiries about all of these funds that are going into the City of Perth. The City of Perth has received three allocations amounting to about \$60 000 over a five-year period. They included \$3 600 for a bowling club, \$6 600 for another bowling club, and \$50 000 to the Western Australian Dart Council for its headquarters upgrade. I would hardly say that that fund has been pumping a lot of money into the City of Perth! In fact, if I were the member for Perth, I would be asking why the city has not been getting more funding from the community sporting and recreation facilities fund.

With regard to the swimming pool, which I believe would be a terrific addition to the foreshore, that proposal has not even reached a planning stage. However, about 100 years ago there were swimming baths in the City of Perth, and 100 years later I do not know why people cannot go for a swim there.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ABOLITION, GOVERNMENT POLICY

414. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Affairs:

Was the deputy Liberal leader articulating government policy when he said on ABC Radio this morning that the upper House should be abolished and the Western Australian Parliament reduced to one Chamber of 80 members?

Mr SHAVE replied:

I do not know whether the member did say that. I assume he did not, but if he did, I am sure it was taken in the wrong contest -

Dr Gallop: Contest! You got that right! The contest is between you and him!

Ms MacTiernan: That was a Freudian slip!

Mr SHAVE: - because I know, and he knows, that that is not the Government's policy.

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Armadale, I have five little ticks here for your interjecting.

RANFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL, TRANSPORTABLE CLASSROOMS

415. Mrs HOLMES to the Minister for Education:

In view of the fact that in 2000 Ranford Primary School will have 14 classes in years 1 to 7 but has only 12 permanent classrooms, can the minister please confirm that the allocation of two transportable classrooms, as recommended by the district office, will be made available to the school?

Mr BARNETT replied:

I thank the member for Southern River for the question and for her support in seeing Ranford Primary School come to fruition. Ranford Primary School is of an extraordinarily high standard, and what particularly struck me about yesterday's opening was the degree of organisation the school had gone to. I guess there were 300 parents at that opening. The performance, appearance and conduct of the students, for a school in its first year of operation, was outstanding. The school has an outstanding principal and merit-selected staff, and members may be interested to know that it is setting such an exceptional standard that 9 per cent of its student intake has come from private schools. Students have left the non-government sector to come to that school, which is a testimony to the excellence of the school. The school population is growing very quickly. It will have available those two additional transportable classrooms next year. That is important. I say to members opposite - I do not mean this in a political sense - that the quality of the schools that have been developed in this State is quite outstanding. Those schools are absolutely excellent, and Ranford Primary School is probably one of the best examples I have seen.

GLOUCESTER PARK, SITE ASSESSMENT

416. Ms MacTIERNAN to the Minister for Planning:

- (1) Can the minister confirm that the planning manager of the East Perth Redevelopment Authority sent a memorandum to Mr Wally Cox on 5 May 1998 outlining a site assessment for Gloucester Park?
- (2) Can the minister also confirm that the assessment stated that if the 12 hectare site were divided into 429, 200 square metre residential lots, the return would be \$64m?

Mr KIERATH replied:

I fear at the outset that this is probably a trick question, but I will give some direct answers and then some explanation.

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Depending on a number of assumptions, the return may be \$64m.

Ms MacTiernan: Did the assessment state that it could be?

Mr KIERATH: There was no assessment. The East Perth Redevelopment Authority is a planning control agency, not a development agency. There is no doubt that the development of Gloucester Park is under the control of the Western Australian Trotting Association. It is the developer. The East Perth Redevelopment Authority can never be the developer; it can only be the planning control agency. It is true that the trotting association has been looking at "what if" situations and scenarios, where if it did sell out of there and went somewhere else, what would be the situation. I am advised that the person to whom the member referred did give it what we would call "a quick look", which is a guess, a comment, by a person in the planning situation, but it is not an assessment in any manner, shape or form from a development point of view. That role will lie solely with the owner of the land, the Western Australian Trotting Association, which will be the developer of the land. It will not lie with the East Perth Redevelopment Authority. I remind the member to take that into account when she comes up with a supplementary question.

GLOUCESTER PARK, SITE ASSESSMENT

417. Ms MacTIERNAN to the Minister for Planning:

I ask a supplementary question. Will the minister now read the content of the memorandum that he referred to and acknowledge that it did claim to be an assessment and that he misled the Parliament in his answer to question on notice 846 when he denied that the East Perth Redevelopment Authority had undertaken any assessment of the viability of redeveloping Gloucester Park?

The SPEAKER: Order! Unfortunately the minister will not get that question. I rule it out of order, and I remind the House that supplementary questions are all about a question, not a whole lot of rambling and stories and so on.

Ms MacTiernan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Armadale, that is six.

EMPLOYMENT CREATION PROJECTS, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

418. Mr BAKER to the Premier:

There have been a number of recent announcements concerning major job creation projects in Western Australia. Can the Premier inform the House whether this is indicative of recent trends in the State's jobs market?

Mr COURT replied:

After a couple of reasonably difficult years, particularly with our major Asian markets, good news is starting to come through. Yesterday I had the privilege, as did the Leader of the Opposition, of meeting the Korean ambassador. He spoke of that country having come out of its difficulties and said that for the past six months it had economic growth of around 7 per cent. That is quite remarkable, when the country has had negative growth. That is significant for Western Australia because it is WA's second largest export market. It is also encouraging to see the latest Morgan and Banks Ltd job index which measures the employment expectations of key businesses from all major industries. It shows that Western Australian employers are the most optimistic of those in all States. The level of optimism is up significantly. Overall, 28.9 per cent of businesses contacted in this State indicated they were planning to increase permanent staff numbers. The industries that displayed the most optimism were engineering, information technology, financial services, retailing and construction. Much more can be done, and this Government will do everything it can to encourage new investment in this State that will create jobs. If the Opposition will rethink some of the issues holding back investment in the State - for example, workable native title legislation - there is no reason this State should not have full employment.

TEMPORARY TEACHERS, CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

419. Mr CARPENTER to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Can the minister confirm that thousands of temporary teachers in government schools are about to be disadvantaged because of changes to their employment contracts?
- (2) Can the minister confirm that temporary teachers will now be deemed to be employed for only the length of the school year, and will have all their accumulated benefits paid out in a lump sum on 23 December?

- (3) Will this mean a major financial loss to the teachers affected?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (1)-(3) There has been some discussion within the department about the conditions of employment of temporary teachers, but I assure the member and the temporary teachers that no changes will be made to the teachers' contracts. They will be advised accordingly. Even under that scenario, had there been a change, there is no way that temporary teachers would have lost financially. In fact, the Education Department is going in the opposite direction, and currently proposals are being developed which will give a greater degree of tenure and certainty to temporary teachers. That is in addition to the country incentives package which provided greater continuity of employment for temporary teachers if they agreed to take up a contract position in a school that is difficult to staff. That reduced turnover dramatically, and 85 per cent of temporary teachers from last year stayed in the same school this year. There will be no change, although there has been talk of it within the department.

Mr Carpenter: It was in a departmental publication.

Mr BARNETT: Yes, but there will be no change and temporary teachers are being reassured that there will be no change.

TIDAL POWER, PREFERRED BIDDERS

420. Mr BRIDGE to the Minister for Resources Development:

The minister's answer today to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition outlined the processes and conclusions with respect to the two preferred bidders. Can the minister say what this effectively means for the fate of the tidal power option?

Mr BARNETT replied:

I thank the member for Kimberley for that question, and I recognise why he clearly is a supporter of a project that is very popular in the Kimberley, particularly in Derby. He also has taken a sensible and balanced approach to the issue.

My answer means nothing in particular for the tidal project. I have simply received, and I will inform Cabinet of it in Derby, the recommendation of the committee. It is a recommendation about the highest ranked proponent, over a series of criteria, from the 12 bidders and the six final tenderers. It does not mean that that project necessarily will go ahead or that the Government is in any way bound to accept it or enter into a contract to purchase electricity through Western Power. It is simply a recommendation. This happens with any proposal, and I refer the member to the competitive process involved in the goldfields gas pipeline, the Collie power station and so on. It is a significant step and it will identify from the tender process the highest ranked bidder. It takes the Government only to that point. It does not affect the status of the tidal power project in its reserve capacity, other than to say there is one preferred bidder out of two, both of which are based on gas.

SHIRE OF PERENJORI, BOUNDARY CHANGE

421. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Local Government:

I refer to the minister's recent decision to reject the recommendation of the local government advisory board that part of the north western corner of the Shire of Perenjori be transferred to the Shire of Morawa. I understand the minister noted the merit which the board attached to the proposal and its unanimous support for the transfer. In his reasons for rejecting the recommendation, the minister cited other possible boundary proposals in the mid west region. Will the minister advise whether any such proposals have been lodged with the board and whether there will be progress on them?

Mr OMODEI replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question, and in particular for his interest in this local issue of considerable importance.

On 29 September 1999, when I determined this matter, I made it clear that the predominant reason was to discourage piecemeal boundary change when other proposals were also understood to be imminent. I readily acknowledge the strength of conviction held by the petitioners and their closer links with Morawa rather than Perenjori.

Since making the decision, a formal proposal to create a coastal council in the region has been presented to the board, although I understand it may not be valid. I have also been advised that two proposals may be forthcoming from the Dandaragan region. The shires from the mid west region are to meet in November, and will discuss options for examining boundary changes in the region. I commend them for this approach. It is productive for them to talk about their future.

I have made it clear to the petitioners that if no boundary changes result from these proposals and actions, I will be prepared to reconsider the proposals some time in the future. The Government has made it clear that it will not initiate any new boundary proposals. However, if local government authorities agree on a proposal, it will be considered.

FOREST INDUSTRY STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT FUNDING

422. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for the Environment:

I refer to the briefing I had yesterday on the Government's forest industry structural adjustment package.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that, even though it is almost six months since the Regional Forest Agreement was signed, none of the \$41.5m allocated for assistance to timber workers and their industry has been distributed?
- (2) When does the minister expect the Government to be in a position to commence allocating FISAP funding?

- (3) Does the minister concede that this is further confirmation that the Government had no structures in place for affected workers and businesses when it signed the RFA, and has none in place now, almost six months later?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (1)-(3) That is not quite true. The FISAP funding must be agreed between Minister Tuckey and me. That has not stopped the State Government getting on with the job, as the member is well and truly aware. If the member is referring to Whittakers Ltd, the Government has already started to put its hand in its pocket to support its commitment. It will continue to do so, and it will work with the Federal Government to finalise that agreement. The Government will make sure those funds are available for the business exiting, and to help restructure the timber industry to ensure there will be a viable timber industry in future which will provide jobs. Members opposite have totally forgotten about that in their policy. When they say they will stop logging in old-growth jarrah, it proves they are not interested in providing jobs because they have made no commitment to the workers in the south west region.

SCAMS AND SWINDLES, OLDER AUSTRALIANS

423. Mr BAKER to the Minister for Fair Trading:

Will the minister please advise the House of any initiative the Ministry of Fair Trading is involved with, which addresses scams and swindles which target older Australians?

Mr SHAVE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. I am pleased to advise the House that earlier today - National Consumer Day - I launched the booklet, *The Little Black Book of Scams*.

Ms MacTiernan: That would be right!

Mr Kierath: ALP preselection policy!

Mr SHAVE: This is a very serious document.

Mr Kobelke: It is a Liberal Party policy document.

Mr SHAVE: A number of people suggested it could have been labelled "The Labor Party preselection manual".

Mr Brown: Have you read it?

Mr SHAVE: I have indeed. Having read some of the information in this booklet, I find it tame compared with some of the ways in which the Australian Labor Party is tearing itself to bits at the moment.

Mr Pendal: I can remember when you were in it.

Mr SHAVE: I learned all my tricks from the member for South Perth.

Mr Pendal: Are you in it?

Mr SHAVE: I would like to continue, because this is an important issue.

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister does not have 10 minutes today in which to do that!

Mr SHAVE: I do not want members of the Australian Labor Party to take offence at my comments, because they know what they are. The book gives some examples of many scams, including illegal pyramid schemes, chain letters, Internet rip-offs, overseas lotteries and mail-stuffing schemes. It does not refer to branch stacking. Unfortunately, elderly people are frequent targets for these scams in a wide variety of cases. We can minimise the number of these scams by providing this information. The booklet is available through senior citizens centres and the Ministry of Fair Trading.

This Government has joined with other States through the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs to develop this information. I compliment the ministerial council. It is an important issue. After question time, I would like to make a presentation to the member for Armadale so she can sharpen up on her act.

KING EDWARD MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, REFURBISHMENT

424. Ms McHALE to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Contrary to his hollow promises to Parliament on 16 September, is the minister aware that the tender for the Hensman Road clinic at King Edward Memorial Hospital has not gone out, that there is no possibility that the project will commence in November and absolutely no way the clinic will be completed in April 2000?
- (2) Is this abrogation of his responsibility to the women of this State further evidence that the Metropolitan Health Service Board wishes to close this hospital, which would be an act of folly in the extreme; or just another example of the minister's inability to manage this critical portfolio?

Mr DAY replied:

- (1)-(2) I thought the member might finally ask me the question of which she gave notice last week. In relation to the redevelopment of the outpatients clinic at King Edward Memorial Hospital, the information I provided at the time - the member mentioned September - was on the best advice I was given by the management of the metropolitan

health service. The important thing is that the redevelopment is occurring. I agree entirely that the existing outpatients clinic is substandard. That is why the redevelopment is going ahead and, no doubt, the management of the hospital will ensure that that will occur as quickly as possible.

REGIONAL BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT PURCHASING

425. Mr BLOFFWITCH to the Minister for Works:

There has been a number of debates in this House in recent months relating to the support for regional business and government purchasing. What is the role of the Department of Contract and Management Services in this regard?

Mr BOARD replied:

With some pride, I say that over the past two and a half years the Department of Contract and Management Services and the State Supply Commission have gone to extraordinary lengths to ensure that regional businesses, particularly small and medium businesses, are aware of opportunities provided to them through government contracting and tendering. Since December 1997 a number of forums have been held in Albany, Broome, Busselton, Esperance, Geraldton, Katanning, Karratha, Narrogin and Northam, at which between 60 and 80 small businesses have been in attendance, to indicate that CAMS has moved into shopfront offices around Western Australia, and to discuss the Regional Buying Compact, how they can access contracting, particularly the one-man operations, and how they can introduce themselves to CAMS on an ongoing basis.

In recent times, forums have been conducted in Northam, Esperance, Merredin, Narrogin, Broome, Carnarvon, Karratha and South Hedland covering early tendering advice, the bulletin board, on-line tendering and E-commerce. We believe small and medium businesses in rural areas will be able to access E-commerce in a way which will give them benefits, which has not been the case in the past. A lot of material is going out. We will continue our efforts of the past two and a half years. We want to ensure that small and medium businesses have as much access to government information and contracting as possible.

METROPOLITAN HEALTH SERVICE BOARD, EXPENDITURE

426. Ms McHALE to the Minister for Health:

Some notice of this question was given on Tuesday. What is the expenditure by the Metropolitan Health Service Board for the months of August and September, and what proportion of board's annual allocation does this represent?

Mr DAY replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The expenditure by the Metropolitan Health Service Board for the first two months of the current financial year - that is, July and August - was \$171m. The expenditure for September was \$108m, making a total of \$279m. As a proportion of the total allocation of \$1 040.3m, the expenditure for July and August was 16.4 per cent; and for September it was 10.4 per cent, making a total for the financial year to the end of September of 26.8 per cent. That expenditure relates to 25 per cent of the year, which is the amount of the financial year that had expired at end of September. It is important to realise that it is not possible to extrapolate across a whole financial year on the basis of a small number of months because the rate of expenditure in health service is not necessarily equal over all months.
