



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

THIRTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
1997

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 16 September 1997

Legislative Assembly

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

PETITION- BUS SERVICE WEST OF BEECHBORO ROAD

MRS PARKER (Ballajura - Minister for Family and Children's Services) [2.02 pm]: I present the following petition -

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

We, the undersigned residents of Beechboro call on the Minister for Transport to provide a bus service West of Beechboro Road to incorporate Bluegum Road & the new housing development "Orchid Park" corner of Marshall Road and Beechboro Road, Beechboro.

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

The petition bears 412 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

[See petition No 91.]

PETITION - ROADS

Ennis Avenue, Rockingham - Pedestrian Overpass

MR McGOWAN (Rockingham) [2.03 pm]: I present the following petition -

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

We the undersigned, wish to register our concern at the intersection of Safety Bay Road and Ennis Ave in Rockingham. This intersection services a large population, including that of Safety Bay, Waikiki, Warnbro, Port Kennedy and Baldivis. In addition to this Ennis Ave is the main thoroughfare to Rockingham and the Kwinana Freeway and Fremantle for people coming from Golden Bay, Singleton, Mandurah and beyond. The speed on this particular section of Ennis Avenue is 110Km/hour.

During peak hour this intersection can be a death trap with vehicles travelling at high speeds hitting vehicles turning or crossing.

We ask that you urgently review this situation and put in place measures to increase the safety level of this intersection by installing traffic lights and/or an overpass.

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

The petition bears 1 888 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

[See petition No 92.]

STATEMENT - MINISTER FOR SERVICES

Domestic Airline Travel Contract

MR BOARD (Murdoch - Minister for Services) [2.07 pm]: I inform the House of a new domestic airline travel contract that will realise the State Government savings of at least \$7m in its first year of operation. The savings have been measured against the cost of full published fares and are based on a projected \$30m worth of government spending on domestic air travel. I am sure members of this House will agree that the air travel market has changed significantly since deregulation. The market is now dynamic, with constant changes in flight schedules and routes - all designed to gain the maximum number of customers.

In establishing the new contract, the Government wanted to -

maintain a high level of competition between all airlines operating within WA and throughout Australia;
 establish a competitive framework to ensure continued high levels of service to agencies;
 provide flexibility to allow regional travel agents access to government requirements in country areas; and
 gain increased savings through greater use of discount air fares.

After extensive consultation with the industry and major client agencies, the Department of Contract and Management Services has implemented a contract that successfully brings together all of these objectives. The contract will see Business Travel International and American Express International provide the Government with a complete domestic air travel service based on obtaining the best fares for agencies. Business Travel International and AMEX will negotiate rebates with Ansett and Qantas, and assist agencies to manage their travel more effectively.

Discipline will now be required from chief executive officers and those agency people organising air travel to ensure that the maximum savings are achieved by efficient management. A rigorous audit and management reporting process will monitor the effectiveness of the contract, with CAMS undertaking audits to verify recorded savings. To reinforce accountability, external audits can also be conducted by the Auditor General.

The Government's air travel contract is particularly impressive. Under the new contract, which is effective from 13 October this year, the take-up of discount fares is expected to rise from below 35 per cent to 60 per cent. Furthermore, it is generally recognised by industry experts that for this size of air travel contract, the State Government's deal is one of the best negotiated in Australia. These two factors plus the implementation of a strict management regime will achieve significant savings and ensure the most cost effective use of the State Government's travel dollar.

[Questions without notice taken.]

STATEMENT - SPEAKER

Deputy Speaker to take the Chair

THE SPEAKER (Mr Strickland): I advise members that the Chairman of Committees, the Deputy Speaker, will take the Chair for prayers and question time on Wednesday and Thursday while I am attending the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference.

BILLS (2) - RETURNED

1. Water Legislation Amendment Bill.
 Bill returned from the Council with amendments.
2. Human Tissue and Transplant Amendment Bill.
 Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

**BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TRAINING FUND AND LEVY COLLECTION
 AMENDMENT BILL**

Second Reading

Resumed from 9 September.

MR KOBELKE (Nollamara) [2.47 pm]: The Opposition recognises the need for the reforms and improvements in this legislation. However, we have great concern about one aspect, which is the key intention of the Government. The sunset clause in this legislation flows from the Hitchen report and is the start of a process to shut down the building construction industry training fund. We oppose that move.

Before I go through some of the elements of the Bill, I will comment on the Minister's second reading speech and the matters raised in it. I accept the reforms promoted in that speech because, in large part, they are necessary. However, I do not accept a sunset clause which will lead to the abolition of that fund. The first paragraph of the second reading speech states that this Bill was passed by the other place in the 1996 spring session of Parliament. That comment indicates that this is an ongoing part of the Government's program from its first four year term. I have no difficulty with that, because work on this has been going on for some time. However, there is a difficulty for the Premier because he announced an early election on 14 November 1996, but at the press conference, which received live coverage on commercial television news, he said unequivocally that he had finished his program for the Government's first term. Therefore, this Bill is further evidence that the Premier was not telling the truth.

The Premier said that he would call an early election because he had finished the program set for the Government's first four-year term. Yet we have before us another piece of legislation that the Government foreshadowed would be dealt with in its first term. That indicates very clearly that the Government had not finished its program in November 1996 when the Premier indicated it had. The Premier's credibility is called into question again because he cannot speak the truth on matters as simple as that.

The second reading states -

This Bill seeks to amend the Building and Construction Industry Training Fund and Levy Collection Act to overcome shortcomings that have hindered the effective operation of the Act and to give effect to recommendations resulting from a statutory review of the legislation conducted by Mr Len Hitchen in 1994.

As I indicated, the Opposition supports some of the changes that will overcome the shortcomings of the legislation and the operation of the BCITF. However, when considering the second aim - dealing with giving effect to the recommendations of the Hitchen report - we must be aware that Mr Hitchen gave two options, although he stated that he did not see much benefit flowing from the fund and its operation. The two are in total conflict. If one takes the strong line in the report - that the fund is not fulfilling its responsibilities - and includes a sunset clause, why make the improvements? When the Minister replies, I would like her to explain that. This could be perceived as a Trojan Horse. The Government is trying to have a bob each way: It is trying to improve the legislation and is saying there is some good in it, but at the end the day it will close down the fund. If that decision has been made in accordance with the Hitchen report, it does not have any credibility.

I have not studied the report in great detail, but I was not impressed with it. Where Mr Hitchen made criticisms of the fund, he did not provide detail. Often the criticisms related to the fact that the fund managers could not provide the necessary documentation to substantiate its effectiveness in certain areas. That is not surprising given that it took only four months from Mr Hitchen's appointment to his delivering a final report to the Minister. There was less than a month from the advertising of the review to the closing of submissions. There would obviously be practical problems in getting some of the information required. Often that lack of information led to a damning indictment of the fund by Mr Hitchen. I was not impressed with the report as a fair and objective assessment. While I have not received comment so far from the industry about the whole process, it is not happy with the recommendation that the fund be closed.

The Minister also indicated that the fund is to be extended for a further three years for the reforms to take effect. Why go through the reforms while the sunset clause exists? One can see the need for a sunset clause if your intention is to close it down, because many people are involved in training programs and an apprenticeship can take four or five years to complete. My interpretation is that the Government intends closing the fund. However, it is using the sunset clause to extend the fund's operation so that it can manage the difficulty of shutting off funding, but that is not the wording being used. On the one hand it is positive, but the sunset clause indicates that the Government is fulfilling one of Mr Hitchen's recommendations that it be closed down.

I refer to some of the reforms outlined in the Minister's second reading speech, the first of which is -

reduce the size of the board and enhance decision making processes through the introduction of simple majority decision making;

I understand a problem arose under the old rules because of sectoral representation on the board. In addition, the power of veto was exercised by people not supporting a proposal before the board. A simple majority decision-making principle will enable the board to consider matters, formulate opinion and make decisions far more efficiently. The criticisms of the decision making principles incorporated in the Act are somewhat justified. The Minister also indicated that that this Bill will -

provide for the appointment of an independent chair and members appointed by the Minister following consultation with industry;

That reflects a major change from members of the board being nominees of various union, key employer and industry groups to one in which the Minister will make the appointments. I prefer sectoral representation. However, notwithstanding the problems to which I have just alluded, the proposed system could work equally as well. However, it will work only if the Minister making the appointments is willing to recognise the need for a breadth of experience and representation when those appointments are made. All too often Ministers in this Government have appointed their mates to boards to ensure that the people who see their point of view are the only appointments. If appointments of that nature are made, they will disadvantage this board. It will not be best able to represent all sectors of the industry and ensure that the board functions as effectively as it should. As I said, I am willing to accept the amendment in the hope and expectation that the appointments will represent a fairly broad section of both employer and union groups.

Another reform is -

complete the separation of the BCITF from the Building and Construction Industry Training Council, through abolition of common membership and a new funding relationship based on a clear resource and performance contract;

The Minister's office drew to my attention - I thank her for providing the briefing - that an Auditor General's report raises concerns about a conflict of interest over common membership. That will be addressed by this amendment.

A further reform reads -

amend the objects of the Act, with particular emphasis on removing the requirement for sectoral distribution of funds;

That is a reasonably complex matter and one on which I understand the Minister is setting up an inquiry. Has the Minister announced the establishment of an inquiry into the sectoral distribution of funds?

Mrs Edwardes: It is underway.

Mr KOBELKE: Did that occur recently?

Mrs Edwardes: Yes.

Mr KOBELKE: I thank the Minister for giving me some information on that and I await the outcome. This amendment will enable recommendations to be implemented within the context of the amended Act.

The Minister referred to the amendment which will clarify the ambit of levy coverage which I understand to be a contentious issue. An acceptable training levy will ensure that apprenticeships and training programs provide a sufficient stream of people with the appropriate expertise to fill trades positions in demand. The levy should be attached to work that is primarily or almost totally related to the provision of skilled labour. When considering the total cost of a project, the skilled labour component should not be measured by including components covering major pieces of equipment. I understand that issue has been largely resolved and these changes to the Act reflect that. Other areas and industries which previously may have been captured by the legislation have now been excluded. That means particular areas, as well as types of projects and equipment, have also been sorted out in a way that was not clear when the Act was implemented.

A further amendment will institute an appeals mechanism to ensure there are no continuing anomalies in the application of the levy, with provision for a right of appeal to the Minister. That relates in part to the ambit of the levy where some organisations may be involved in a construction project of which a large percentage is capital equipment that may have been manufactured elsewhere or imported. Clearly, the value of that work must be taken off the total cost of the project which is subject to the application of the levy. There were problems in the earlier implementation of the legislation because if that were simply applied to equipment manufactured offsite, taking the argument to the extreme, the bricks used in the construction could be excluded on that basis. A mechanism was needed whereby the levy could be imposed on the cost of the project relating primarily to the construction costs involving skilled labour, and not major items of capital equipment. The proposed amendments will enable a simple appeals mechanism to deal with this issue when it arises.

The Minister said in her second reading speech that the amendments will provide for an administrative and staffing structure which is independent of the Building and Construction Industry Training Council secretariat, to increase accountability and institute the use of tenders in the allocation of funds. With reference to the allocation of funds, there has been drastic change in the whole training arena, and harsh criticisms of the effectiveness and administrative costs of the building and construction industry fund must be taken in the context of the whole training arena. With so much change, many areas that do not receive funding from the BCITF have similar problems. It is hoped that it will move to a much more efficient basis; however, I do not think criticisms of this organisation in its first few years have much relevance to the effectiveness of the organisation. The difficulties must be seen as teething problems, and allowance must be made for them. In his report, Mr Hitchen seems to have placed more emphasis on those difficulties than is justified. Nonetheless, administrative costs were high and it is hoped that these costs will be considerably reduced. However, I would like to know how much of the administrative cost was associated with legal advice sought as a result of the problems mentioned in the Minister's speech. Some of that cost was clearly involved in setting up the fund, but it would be interesting to know how much was spent on legal fees and sorting out the problems that arose.

The amendments will allow organisations which establish their own training arrangements to apply to the Minister for exemption. Clearly, the training market is flexible, and there will be a need for new organisations to be set up. We should all support that. However, there is a danger that organisations might try to use it to avoid meeting their

commitment to training. It is hoped that the Minister of the day will not fall for any proposition, and will ensure that the standard of training provided under some other arrangement is comparable in quality to that provided under this legislation, and that as many young people are trained as are required to meet the skill demands in the industry.

The Minister also mentioned a sunset clause. As I indicated earlier, I see that as an intention to close down the fund. The Opposition does not support that course of action.

The amendments to the sections under which organisations may apply for a reduction or exemption from the levy include a good provision that the various conditions and criteria to be developed will be done in consultation with the board before they are approved by the Minister. It is important that the Minister not act on his or her own motion without referring the matter to the board, so that it can provide valuable advice on training needs generally.

It has been drawn to my attention that clause 11, which contains proposed new section 25A, may have a slight technical problem in its drafting. This matter can be dealt with in Committee, but I give the Minister some notice of it now. Although reference is made to setting conditions and criteria for a reduction in or exemption from the levy, in most cases it will relate to the fact that an organisation is conducting training and, therefore, it is not required to meet the levy on a particular project. The Government must also ensure that the legislation contains provision for exemption for charitable buildings or, say, the Telethon home. In those cases people get together and build a display house for the sole purpose of assisting a charity, and in the past such projects have been exempt from this levy. I have received advice, but I need the Minister's advice, that the Bill could create a difficulty in that area. That must be considered carefully in Committee to ensure that exemption is allowed for special charitable purposes. Of course, those buildings are excellent community projects because, in addition to providing funds for worthy causes, there is a cooperative approach in which various building suppliers, builders or construction companies, and their employees work together for a particular charity. In addition to the primary purpose of assisting the charity, it is good for industry that people work together for the common cause of serving the community. The Opposition would not like a levy to be placed on those projects as a result of the miswording of the amendment.

I now make some general statements about the importance of the building and construction industry, and the need to ensure funding is available for adequate training. The building and construction industry is extremely important to Western Australia, because it does not have a large manufacturing sector to create jobs for many Western Australians. In my view - I cannot provide figures to support it - the building and construction industry is the largest employer of skilled artisans in this State. It provides opportunities for many young people, who will not go to higher education and training to become computer experts or engineers. They may find they can work well with their hands and do a job that is much needed in the community. Also, the building and construction industry has traditionally been a provider of full time jobs. There has been a shift in certain sectors of the industry, particularly the residential construction industry, for most of the work to be done by subcontractors. Therefore, that security of employment in the building and construction industry is under threat. Nonetheless, the building and construction industry is an area in which full time jobs can be created, even though many are short term and last only for the life of the project. The employees must then find work elsewhere, whether for a building company or a subcontractor. In order to ensure high quality work, people must be given the required training and skills. That is not easily done because the traditional apprenticeship has been for four or five years. In that time apprentices undertake part time studies through a technical and further education college or other training institution and they spend time on the job. This method of training gives them practical experience so they can perform the required skills at the required standard.

Generally where there has been a major building boom there is a shortage of skilled labour and that leads to the importation of people with the skills. That has occurred on a number of occasions. Even during reasonable levels of unemployment in Australia we have not been able to provide the training at the required time to bring those people into the work force. At other times the shortage of skilled labour has resulted in an escalation in the cost of construction, which has been a major inhibitor to the maintenance of the high level of activity in that industry. That creates a range of problems, and people simply cannot get the services they require because the industry is operating at such a high level that there is a shortage of skilled labour.

Training of skilled labour is most important and a scheme must be in place to provide that training. The major companies believe training cannot be left to the marketplace. They want the Government to give appropriate guidance and assistance through legislation, such as the legislation which established the building and construction industry training fund and levy collection.

Approximately three or four years ago I attended a meeting of developers and I had an interesting discussion with a young man whose family had a tradition in development and he was involved in development in Perth. This young man had worked for a couple of years in London. While reflecting upon his experience in Britain he said that although our political positions were quite different - he knew I was a Labor member of Parliament, and because of his family background in development and his being reasonably well off, his inclination was to be a conservative voter - he was concerned about the direction the Western Australian building and construction industry was taking.

He said, "I didn't think I would say it to someone like you, but I am glad to come back to Perth to work and to have to deal with a reasonably strong union movement. In Britain we didn't have unions on the job and there was no system in place to guarantee the quality of the labour you employed." He said one could advertise for a carpenter to work on a high rise building and take on a person who said he was a carpenter. However, the next day the work he did would have to be redone because that person did not have any skills. In Britain there is not the well structured skills development and training through apprenticeship schemes, which has requirements by law, and unions are unable to uphold that system. If this Bill is passed, particularly the sunset clause, and this fund is abolished, I am concerned that this State will go down the same road. I will come back to what industry has told me about why this fund is important to Western Australia.

Quality building must be maintained because it is integral to the quality of life in this State. If we create jobs, which are the basis for selling goods and services internationally, we must take advantage of this State's wonderful environment and the high standards of education, health and the built environment. People need a guarantee not only that the construction will look good and have good architectural design, but also that the quality of workmanship will add to the design and maintain more than the minimum standard of safety and longevity of the structure. There must not be any watering down of the quality of the workmanship in the trades.

I allude to two facts which were referred to me by people in the construction industry. One is the importance of apprenticeships and the other is the very competitive nature of the construction and building industry in Western Australia. Apprenticeships are not cheap. Any employer taking on an apprentice realises that large costs are involved, but the feedback to me is that they see this levy not as an extra cost, but as a help to them. The people who make a commitment to apprenticeship training are people of some standing in the industry who believe in what they are doing. Not only are they making a dollar, which obviously is of primary importance to them, but also they consider themselves to be members of the community who are building the community. As part of their responsibilities they believe they must take on apprentices not only to provide them with a start in life, but also to ensure that their company can continue to operate because they have available a pool of skilled labour which they need for their enterprise. There is a measure of altruism in understanding that their success and the success of their company rests in a wider community understanding and acceptance of the need for training and for skilled people to be available.

However, that level of skill is not always available, because changes in skills are required as a result of fluctuations in marketplace demand. More importantly, the building and construction industry is extremely competitive. If a builder is tendering against a second builder who has lower costs simply by not having apprentices, the second builder has a cost advantage.

The Government must not allow training to be driven by the marketplace. Professional builders and developers understand the need for quality and they want to maintain training while many of their companies or enterprises are pushed competitively into the corner by people who do not provide training. Some of the larger companies will say they cannot do that because they are not able to get the skilled labour they require. The high level of competition must be taken into account and the Government must ensure a framework is in place so that all the companies in the marketplace contribute towards the cost of training. It should not be left to those people who, because they are large companies and see themselves having a long term future, will make a commitment, or to the smaller companies involved in the industry who see the need to give something back to the community and especially to young people who, without the opportunity of an apprenticeship, will not have the chance to move into full time employment.

The short title of the Building and Construction Industry Training Fund and Levy Collection Act 1990, which will be amended by this Bill, reads -

AN ACT to establish a fund to be used to improve the quality of training and to increase the number of skilled persons in the building and construction industry, to establish a Building and Construction Industry Training Board to administer the fund and to collect the building and construction industry training levy, and for connected purposes.

The objective to improve the quality of training is important. It relates to people who come into the industry at an entry level as well as to those people in the industry who, because of the rapid changes in technology and the processes that are used, need retraining. Retraining needs to be taken into account and funded. The Government cannot rely on a limited number of players in the industry to take on responsibility for that ongoing training because it meets their particular need. That will happen, but the Government must look beyond that. The fund provides a body which can look to the needs of industry as a whole and help to ensure not only that young people with an apprenticeship have a chance of getting into the industry, but also there is ongoing retraining programs where necessary.

Another point I read out referred to the increase in the number of persons in the building and construction industry.

That is most important because in some areas we have a fairly high turnover and a fluctuating demand; although, my view is that Western Australia will still grow at a very fast rate. Although other States may see a change in the nature of the construction industry, over the next 10 to 20 years we will see growth and a continuing high level in the construction industry. That flies in the face of the current situation with the housing construction industry being in the doldrums for about three years. We have not seen a crane on the Terrace for major construction for so long I cannot remember; it is certainly five or six years. The population of Western Australia has continued to grow and because of our huge resources and the talents of our people, I estimate that will continue.

Mrs Edwardes: In talking to the commercial people in the CBD, they told me they are looking at 1999. They reckon the rents and availability are such that we will see cranes back in the city centre then.

Mr KOBELKE: In the same way as the Minister has, I have been watching the reports in the newspaper, on the occupancy rate. It fell to a very low level, but it has certainly picked up. Over the past few years we have seen the refurbishment of a number of buildings to meet standards so that they are marketable for rental space. It is getting to the stage now where companies will think of coming into the market. However, a number of other factors must be taken into account before they make a commitment to put in a substantial amount of money for another large office block in the central city area.

I turn now to some comments made by the industry generally. They relate to a letter sent to the then Minister, Hon Norman Moore, dated 22 September 1994. It was a response by industry to the Hitchen report on the Building and Construction Industry Training Fund, signed by the Australian Workers Union; the Builders Labourers Federation; the Construction Contractors Association (WA); the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union; the Electrical Contractors Association; the Housing Industry Association Ltd (WA Division); the Master Builders' Association of WA; the Master Painters' Association of WA together with the Master Plumbers' Association of WA; the former Metal and Engineering Workers Union; and the Operative Painters and Decorators Union.

From that list we can see that it was a fairly comprehensive response from the major players in the building and construction industry in this State. That letter took issue with some of the recommendations of Mr Hitchen, relating to closing down the building and construction industry training fund. I will take up some points from a document which I assume was sent by the same organisation on a slightly different date. To be accurate, I cannot attest as to whether or not these organisations signed it, because the signatures are not on the accompanying document. This document is headed "Restructuring the BCITF - A **UNANIMOUS** Industry Position". Having spoken to a limited number of people in the industry in the past few days, when we knew this matter was coming on for debate, I have received no information to contradict this. The people to whom I have spoken are very supportive of maintaining the fund. The paper, at the top, states -

While recognising that changes are required, the Building and Construction Industry Organisations unanimously believe that the Fund **MUST** continue.

We share that concern about the sunset clause which would mean taking away the fund within a couple of years. It further states -

The industry organisations after considering the Hitchen Report in detail stated the belief that the Fund can and must continue to exist as it is vital to the future of Training within the Industry as a whole . . . The BCITF concept therefore has strong support as a primary means of ensuring the long term availability of a skilled workforce . . .

The industry is characterised by a tender system that focuses on winning contract jobs which are of relatively short duration. The workforce, as a direct consequence, is inherently transient. It is not therefore feasible to expect any one employer or the Government to assume full responsibility for the cost of training a person when they will, in all probability, be working for someone else in a space of a few months.

The industry as a whole is characterised by sub-contracting firms each dealing with particular elements of a project. The existence of the Fund therefore provided an opportunity for small businesses as well as large businesses to participate in training to the extent that skills are utilised.

I will take up two points. First, with the nature of subcontracting, people must move around and that is partly reflected in the change to group training arrangements. The Hitchen report noted that there had been a big increase in group training. I do not know whether this was stated exactly in the report, but I got the impression that Mr Hitchen was attributing that to the fund. That is my impression, and I might have got it wrong. I do not think that is true.

The change to the group training fund has been driven by a number of issues, a key one being that changes in the

industry generally and a higher level of competition mean that people are no longer doing standard jobs which roll on for years, on a basis that would take on apprenticeships. Given the more dynamic nature of the industry, the shorter term nature of contracts and of work that these employees could rely on, employers found it more difficult to give an undertaking for an apprenticeship. Therefore, as I see it, group training is driven by the changes in the industry and has nothing to do with the establishment of this fund. It makes the fund all the more important because it is the means by which the group training schemes can run effectively, although there has been criticism that it should have been done much better.

Secondly, we must realise the Government has withdrawn, almost totally, as a direct trainer. Although we have traineeships, the old Midland Workshops, the State Engineering Works, the Water Authority of Western Australia and a whole range of government agencies were major providers of apprenticeships, a number of which related to the building and construction industry. That has pretty well all gone with the contracting out and the downsizing of government agencies. One of the first things to go was apprenticeships. We simply cannot leave that vacuum and let the forces of the marketplace somehow fix the problem. Everyone knows they will not.

The Government must provide the necessary structure to ensure that training takes place and that all the companies which benefit from being involved in the industry make a contribution. That contribution is currently 0.2 per cent of the value of the project. As I have indicated, allowances can be made when major components in the project do not relate to locally provided skilled labour. People in the industry are not kicking up about the 0.2 per cent. The spokespersons with whom I have raised this matter see that as the contribution that must be made. They have said that it is an eminently equitable and a suitable mechanism. Why do away with it when people feel it is fair and it is a contribution they could make? Another part of this paper to which I am alluding and which relates to the rate of levy states -

The rate of the levy is currently 0.2%. It is recommended that the levy be maintained at a current ceiling of 0.2% for the time being and that it be reviewed annually.

That is what the joint proposal by the industry has said to the Government. Although some players may feel the burden of this extra levy, there is no opposition to it across the industry. The players are happy because they can see what it can deliver, and they want that delivered as efficiently as possible. Perhaps the figure of 0.2 per cent could drop to a lower level, always on the proviso that a scheme is in place to ensure that as many young people as possible are trained to meet the needs of industry and are trained to the highest possible standard.

Another part of the document outlining the industry position states -

In almost all of the other Australian States, a scheme similar to the BCITF is in the process of being established, already operating or aspired to. There are also schemes operating internationally including both Germany and Great Britain.

We have a scheme which is worth holding on to and improving; it should not be done away with. I now go through the Hitchen report and the counter-arguments put by industry to the criticisms contained in Mr Hitchen's recommendations to the Government. First, Mr Hitchen recommended that the fund cease operation and that the remedial moneys be placed into an interest bearing fund. That is not accepted by industry. Also, one of Mr Hitchen's arguments related to the cancellation of the Australian industry training guarantee under federal law. As members know, every employer had to use a percentage of wages for training purposes or pay into the Australian training guarantee fund. However, if one was paying the BCITF levy, one was exempt from the commonwealth training guarantee. The argument from the Hitchen report was that as the Australian guarantee was removed, the financial incentive to place money into the training fund was also removed. That does not add up.

The building and construction industry training fund was in place before the Federal Government put in place the Australian training guarantee, and the BCITF was regarded as necessary before the training guarantee was initiated. The industry groups themselves have indicated that the training fund is still needed, and that they are prepared to make a commitment to it. The removal of the Australian training guarantee has not somehow provided a disincentive to provide money to the fund.

The Hitchen report talked about flaws in the Act. First, it outlines the definition problem relating to what is caught by the provisions, and I have alluded to that aspect. Secondly, the report covers the broad structure of the board, to which I have referred. This relates to the power of veto, whereby a board member representing one sector of the industry can stop action designed to achieve some improvement. That flaw is to be corrected in the legislation; it is being addressed. Mr Hitchen also felt that insufficient time had elapsed to determine whether the existence of the fund had produced the outcomes for which it had been established. The Act contains a sunset clause to provide more time to determine the effectiveness of the fund, so why move an amendment to abolish the fund when Mr Hitchen said insufficient time had elapsed to make the determination?

Many of the problems identified in the Hitchen report have been identified by the board, and rectifying action of the issues criticised in the report was under way. However, the report made no mention of the reforms already under way at the time. The industry position paper clearly states that reforms in a number of areas that were not under way due to the direction of the Minister of the day; namely, as this review was taking place, the Minister said that the board had to maintain operations, in most areas at least, on an as-is basis. Therefore, the Minister would not countenance reforms requiring regulation changes to address the issues the board had already identified; those problems were picked up in the Hitchen report.

Financial control was one matter to which the Hitchen report alluded. The BCITF board would have put many measures in place to address those issues, but it was under a directive to operate on an as-is basis. It was unable to address those issues.

The restructuring of the board through this legislation, with changes to the quorum process - that is, the removal of the fundamental cause of blockage to the decision making process - will ensure, we hope, that the foundation for Hitchen's criticisms will be properly addressed. Criticism was made of the fund's coverage of the mining, agriculture or other areas which were caught by the possible imposition of the levy. I understand that those matters have been sorted out by amended regulations and removed from the liability of having to contribute to the fund. Industry supports the concept of the fund. Again, I quote from the position paper -

The concept has the unanimous support of all the organisations representing the Building and Construction Industry, including both employers and unions. It should, in its revised form, be allowed to continue.

As a conclusion, it states as a unanimous industry position -

The existence of the Fund is CRITICAL to the future availability of trained labour for the Industry. It is an Industry initiative which should not be removed on the grounds that it had problems. These problems can and must be resolved. The Industry believes that the proposed changes cover ALL the outstanding issues and it should therefore be permitted to continue.

That is the key issue. We have great difficulty with the sunset clause. We believe it to be a statement by the Government that the fund is not to continue. We are supportive of the improvements made by the Government; in a large part, they are necessary and will help with the building and construction industry training fund. It is a dilemma because the Minister's speech does not make the situation clear. The Minister referred to improvements and the Hitchen report, which promotes abolition, yet the Government has put in place a mechanism which will lead inextricably to the abolition of the fund.

Mrs Edwardes: Also, the mechanism is available whereby if the board is able to demonstrate that it is utilising the funds in the most effective way regarding industry training, it can be extended. At the end of day, they are using their consumers' money; for instance, householders' money. Parliament has an obligation to ensure that those funds are being properly used. That has not been demonstrated until now. We are giving them, through the amendment to the legislation, an opportunity to demonstrate that that obligation is being met. A lot of money is involved. If they are able to demonstrate that the fund is meeting needs, an opportunity exists with the amendments to the legislation to extend the fund. If not, we ought to make a firm decision and say that a lot of wastage is taking place.

Mr KOBELKE: I thank the Minister for her comment. The sunset clause is not necessary. Rightly, the Minister points out that the money must be used effectively and efficiently - I have no problem with that. However, accountability is necessary and a review should be conducted to ensure that the fund is effective. Nevertheless, that would be best achieved through section 32 of the principal Act which requires a review. We could use a clause similar to that to say that in another three years, roughly 2001, we will conduct another review. If it has not shaped up by then, the Government may need to take more drastic action. The Government seeks to make amendments that have the stated purpose of improving matters. From all reports those amendments are likely to prove successful, in large measure at least. Why put in place a sunset clause that will simply wipe out something which industry feels it needs and wants to continue and which it helped to initiate? The Government says it is thinking of the consumers. However, consumers will not thank the Government or anyone if they cannot get houses built at reasonable prices because prices become inflated due to a lack of skilled labour, or if they find major problems, such as fretting mortar, and if those types of problems become increasingly evident for people building houses because of a lack of quality tradespeople.

Mrs Edwardes: It must be taken into account that by and large industry is having a greater input into training around Australia. The Government looks after the needs of the community through that framework. We have the opportunity of extending it when it comes back up. I am happy to consider giving a commitment to this House that the Government will institute a review in advance of the 30 days prior to the expiry so it can come back to this House and is public and accountable.

Mr KOBELKE: I will take up two matters from the Minister's comments. Undertaking that review does not go far enough. I will return to that matter in Committee. First, we must ensure that people receive appropriate training. The Minister correctly spoke about major changes that are taking place in training. However, although changes may be made with good motives to improve efficiency and meet changing needs, there is great concern that there are problems with the new arrangement. It may be just that it is a starting up process and people are not getting the proper level of training or it may be an ongoing problem with the new arrangement. We know the difficulties.

Mrs Edwardes: Perhaps this should be a debate for another occasion, because I do not fully understand what you are talking about.

Mr KOBELKE: I am just taking up the Minister's comment. The Minister is saying the industry training fund must take account of the major changes in training across Australia. I am saying that while there is security and certainty in this fund for providing training, in the whole new landscape of training providers and the standards set for training there is reason for concern that it may not do the job it is hoped it will do because of factors outside its control.

Mrs Edwardes: Western Australia has maintained the strong position that it will go slowly because it wants to protect the providers and, more importantly, ensure the public does not miss out on any opportunities that are presently provided.

Mr KOBELKE: The point I make is just part of that. There is a need to be conservative in our approach when the whole training arena around this is changing drastically. If we want to ensure the system works well, we must wait to see whether it comes up to speed, as we hope it will with these changes, and how the whole training arena settles down after it has emerged from the huge change process in which it is currently involved, rather than simply take the Minister's statement earlier, which could be read as saying that because everything else is changing, this must change.

Mrs Edwardes: No, I am saying that obviously as time goes on and training is changing, the changes must be taken into account.

Mr KOBELKE: The second point relates to the sunset clause. The sunset clause and the option of extending by regulation the time at which the fund would have to be closed down are related to closing the whole thing down. The fund is dealing with apprenticeships that have been established and that might have another three or four years to run. If the Government closes down the fund, it will face the huge management issues of who will pick up the tab in various areas and how these people will be reassigned, if necessary, to continue their apprenticeships. Hundreds of young people - I am not sure whether it goes into thousands - could have their lives totally disrupted by the legislative change made in this place.

Mrs Edwardes: The Government would not allow that to happen.

Mr KOBELKE: I am saying that will occur if this system is not put in place. Second, many companies that are committed to apprentices will not be able to continue their involvement with those people because of the changes the Government seeks to make. That is why the Government needs the ability to extend the period by regulation. It is not there because the Government is considering letting it continue; it is there because of the practical things that must be done in order to close down this whole scheme. The Opposition does not want to see it closed down. The Opposition will put a proposal to the Minister that it is happy to continue monitoring the fund to ensure it is accountable. However, we accept that it has an ongoing role. That is the view of industry also. The Government is out of step with the needs of industry and the people of this State by seeking to close it down. Perhaps the Government and the Opposition can discuss the matter to see whether we can compromise on that.

MR BROWN (Bassendean) [3.46 pm]: I will pick up some of the observations of my colleague the member for Nollamara about the sunset clause in this legislation. In the Minister's second reading speech the apparent grounds for the sunset clause are based on a review that was tabled in Parliament on 11 August 1994 by Len Hitchen entitled "The Review of the Building and Construction Industry Training Fund and Levy Collection Act 1990". It is instructive to consider the context of that report to see whether there is any firm support in it for the sunset clause that is proposed in this Bill. In that context I will consider the nature of the training agenda at that time; that is, the legislation and funding mechanisms dealing with training, the proposal, and the stability of the training market as such. I will consider whether it is appropriate to look at a recommendation that arose from that report, given all of those factors at that time.

Mr Hitchen referred to changes that were taking place then. Page 2 of the report states that a review of the Australian National Training Authority was not available at the time his review was carried out. Mr Hitchen also referred to the review of the education and training structure in Western Australia which is known, in short, as the Vickery review. That review had certain implications for the then State Employment and Skills Development Authority and the proposed vocational and employment training Act. He also indicated that changes were proposed for the industry employment training councils. Mr Hitchen noted that all of those developments made the training agenda quite fluid

in nature and examining the fate of this fund at that time was a difficult exercise. He reiterated the difficulty of coming to a conclusion about the viability of this fund. At page 2 of the report Mr Hitchen states -

A further general point should be noted. The Fund is in its third year of operation, and coupled with the existence of specific operational problems, this is a relatively short period in which to assess the extent to which the BCITF has had an impact on the building and construction industry, in terms of increasing the numbers of trained people in the industry and more particularly the quality of training generally.

Mr Hitchen placed a fairly substantial caveat on his report. Essentially, he says that when he undertook that review in 1994, the situation was difficult to assess. As with any training fund, it takes some time for arrangements to be put in place, for the training to be conducted and for a proper assessment to be made of the improvement in skills, qualifications and so on. Mr Hitchen placed a substantial caveat on his recommendations. At page 24 of the report under the subheading of "Quality and Numbers" he states -

Overall it is not possible at present to determine the extent to which the Fund has increased numbers or improved the quality of training in the industry. In part this relates to the need for a longer time frame of operation of the Act and a stable economic environment.

The review that was carried out in 1994 placed fairly substantial caveats on its findings. Essentially the review said that the fund had operated for a short time, the training market was fluid and they were not sure about the benefits to the fund. Nevertheless, Mr Hitchen went on to make the recommendations. When one looks at the recommendations on that review, one must look at them in the context of the caveats placed on the review by the reviewer. Yet three years later this Parliament is discussing the same matters.

Mr Hitchen's review is now three years old. It was conducted in a time that was different from now. It was carried out when the training agenda was being subjected to different changes. That time has passed; it is now three years later. Yet the Minister's second reading speech does not indicate that a further review has confirmed the Hitchen recommendations. We have no indication that the recommendations that were made over three years ago in a different training environment are still valid - that is, they still hold sway - and that the concerns Mr Hitchen raised at that time, particularly about outcomes, are valid today. That strikes me as somewhat unusual. Why is the Government acting on a report - given that Parliament tends to be a creature that takes some time to come to grips with these issues - and seeking to dispense with an Act of Parliament that was reviewed over three years ago, over which the reviewer placed very strong caveats on his findings and the circumstances have now changed? Everyone recognises that, yet somehow the recommendations emanating out of that review are accepted as valid in a different environment. I do not follow the logic of that; it does not stand up. It is appropriate for the Minister to explain what he has found out more recently that encourages the Government to come forward with this Bill. Have the circumstances changed or are they the same? If they have changed, how have they changed? Are some of the concerns raised by Mr Hitchen three years ago when he delivered the report the same as they are now? Has the industry fund been able to correct some of those problems? None of that has been explained to the Parliament. It is not contained in the second reading speech. I ask the Minister to provide that explanation for us today so we can understand it. Otherwise the Government is asking us to adopt recommendations that were made at another time under different circumstances and which might not be relevant today.

The other interesting aspect of this legislation is that the Government has said that it encourages industry groups and people to strike agreements in industrial relations. This is an agreement between employer organisations and unions over the funding that is necessary to provide training opportunities in the industry. This agreement was reached some years ago. Interestingly, despite all of the changes to industrial relations legislation that have affected the parties, we still find support from the industry parties to continue with this fund. If that is the case, why has the Government decided that it will not accept the industry's views. This is not a question of accepting one view of the industry in preference to another view of industry. The Minister has not said in her second reading speech, "Yes, it was true that certain employer or union groups supported this legislation previously but now no longer support it and they want to move away from it". I do not know whether the Government has received any submissions from organisations saying that they do not want the legislation. I can understand that individual companies or employees do not want the fund to continue. However, are any groups suggesting that the legislation should be done away with? If so, what groups and why are they promoting that view? One would have thought the Parliament would be entitled to that information rather than relying on a report that was written three years ago.

The other interesting aspect of the training agenda is the debate on what is appropriate training. I guess as long as the industry continues to change - and it will, and the change will only accelerate - we will hear debate about what is the appropriate level of training. In effect, there are three parties to the training agenda: The employer party is very keen to ensure that the training will provide employees with the skills to carry out the work they need to do at the enterprise level. Therefore there is a very strong interest from employers to ensure that the training agenda does meet the requirements of industry today; but that is not the only concern about the training agenda. The employees

are very keen generally to ensure they receive training to carry out the job, but equally many employees are concerned to ensure that that training is broadly recognised; that it is not narrowly focused and will not preclude them from moving within the industry. They wish to obtain broader brush and recognised training, because that will enhance their capacity to obtain employment in the labour market. Therefore, sometimes there is a different point of view about the breadth of any training provided. That argument relates to the fact that on one hand there might be an interest group to keep the training quite narrow and specific and, therefore, limit the ability of employees to move across the industry. On the other hand, there may be debate about taking a much broader perspective with training so that people can move across industry more easily.

The third interest group in the training agenda is the community as a whole. We all hear about unemployment, and unemployment is with us, but equally there is frictional unemployment where jobs change and people who do not have skills are displaced because they are unable to find jobs with the skill band they possess. The more narrow we allow the training agenda to be, the more specific it is and therefore limited to a given industry or employer, and the less capacity someone has to use those skills generically across industries or employers, is the extent to which it will not be in the community interest because it will create greater levels of frictional unemployment. Therefore, there is no unanimity of view about the breadth of training to be provided and the skills that should be provided, and there are some sharp arguments on that aspect.

Many years ago I worked with an organisation that followed the policy in respect of certain employees who had to have specific skills to carry out a job. The organisation required its employees to have training equivalent to only a first year standard, therefore it would support the employees whom it wished to carry out the job in obtaining training and qualifications to only first year standard in that area. The employees, of course, were keen to obtain a full qualification, because having obtained a full qualification they became more employable across a wider band of industries. There was no agreement on that point. The employer said that for its purposes it required them to have a specific and narrow qualification, and that made the chances of the employee getting a job elsewhere very limited.

We hear this argument all the time. Those of us who have worked in the trades have seen tradespeople coming from other countries, carrying a certificate, and saying that they are an X, Y or Z - and one of those could be a cabinet maker. Recently we were talking to cabinet makers who were dealing with tradesmen from overseas - or who claimed they were tradesmen. However, they could do one facet of the job, and that was all. That was great if they were employed in a large company doing one small job, but they were not tradespeople. They were not a tradesperson's bootlace as far as Australian tradesmen were concerned who could do the whole job, as far as the cabinet maker was concerned, and other work as well. One often finds this difference of opinion about the training agenda. All too often, in some of the later arrangements which are talked about, we are aware that the training is being narrowed. I note that the Federal Government's new, so-called apprenticeship arrangements will truncate the time apprentices will spend learning the work. We will see a truncation of their skills not because, in some instances, they are unable to grasp intellectually the way in which to carry out the work but simply because the shorter time will not allow them to develop the hand skills, speed and all the other requirements necessary if one is to be a quality tradesperson.

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Mr BROWN: It is ironic that we are going this way in our training market compared to the people who produce one of the best tradespeople in the world. The Germans recognise their master craftsmen; and reward people appropriately. These are people who have broad based skills and are able to make substantial contributions to the enterprise because of their breadth of capacity in given trades and occupations. Although some individuals will feel the pain of a narrowing of the training agenda, ultimately the community will feel the pain of the narrow training agenda as well. At a time of rapid change, if people have narrow and limited skills, one can engender much higher rates of frictional unemployment and, therefore, difficulty in retraining not only for employees but also for the industry seeking to adopt and expand if caught with skill shortages simply because people do not have the depth of knowledge or skills to be able to adjust to new challenges as they arise. It is not only a matter of concern to employers and employees but also has a strong community emphasis, and so on.

I am amazed about the decision to insert a sunset clause in this Bill, because agreement has been reached between industry parties to continue the fund. In the past the Government has been very keen to remove any influence that a union or group of unions might have in an industry. That has been an ideological view that the Government has strongly pushed in legislation in this Parliament. We have witnessed the removal of many union representatives from other rights, and so on. I am not sure whether this legislation simply follows that agenda, although it certainly looks like it. It certainly appears to be the Government's desire to continue down that path in this case.

Another issue that has not been addressed in the second reading speech concerns the very nature of this industry. In many ways, this industry is different from other industries in that it is substantially one of contracts and subcontracts. People move from employer to employer, not because they wish to move but simply because they are put on to

construct a building and when the building is completed that is the end of the contract and another is struck. Therefore, people in this industry are itinerants, and move from job to job, from contractor to contractor; some have long periods of employment and others short periods of employment depending on the nature of their skills, and so on.

One of the rationales for introducing this Bill is that if, for example, contractor A has a strong commitment to the training of his staff and contractor B has no commitment to training whatsoever, contractor A will be disadvantaged when applying for contracts to the extent that he will have to build into the contract price a margin for training. Without that extra margin, contractor B will win the contract if it is based simply on price. I have not heard any explanation about how that issue will be dealt with. Does the Government believe that the problem identified previously of some companies providing training and some providing none is no longer an issue and that everyone is doing the right thing? Is the Government saying that the previously identified problem of skilled workers being poached by companies that do not provide training is no longer an issue? I have not heard any arguments that somehow in this new era there is no need to address these issues. They are very real issues because they relate to which company or group will obtain work and the degree to which the contract price for that work will permit the company or group to undertake the necessary training.

In some ways, this is a reverse direction from other areas. Interestingly, it has become I think mandatory for clients building a home to take out indemnity insurance to cover them should their builder go broke. It reflects a change from so-called reliance on the market in that industry; it has not proved to be all that successful. Some market imperfection has occurred in ensuring, given the competitive forces at work, that the industry will not run into these problems. I would like the Minister to explain how those matters will be dealt with. They are not explained in her second reading speech.

Questions arise about the degree to which training will be affected in the industry. Will an analysis be done of the nature and breadth of training and the amount of funds spent on it so that in time, particularly in the light of the sunset clause, further analysis will be undertaken on how the provisions of this Act have contributed to training? What will happen? It is obvious that in highly competitive industries, whether they be in Australia or overseas, when the obligation to provide funds for this purpose is stripped away, they will not be provided for the purpose; they will simply be reallocated. If that occurs, it will be a retrograde step for not only the industry but also the community generally.

Mention has been made of people being able to compete for contracts on a level playing field. Again, if the obligation to make provision for some form of training is removed, companies and operations that are committed to training will be on an unequal playing field and severely disadvantaged as a result of competitors not building into their prices an appropriate training component.

These issues have been raised time and time again; they have been a cause for industries to strike levies, particularly where people constantly change employers. It is different from other industries in which a relationship might be struck between employer and employee. An employer may be able to see that an employee has considerable talent and if everything works to plan, he will work for the employer for the next 15 to 20 years. It is therefore beneficial to both parties if an amount is allocated to his training and upskilling.

In an industry where people move from employer to employer, the same incentive does not exist because in a year or two a person who works for employer A might be working for employer B or C. That begs the question: Why should an employer invest money in employees' training? If we go down that path we will reach the lowest common denominator whereby no-one puts in any money as a result of the competitive nature of the industry. That will have a detrimental effect on the level of skills in the industry and will create a variety of other disadvantages.

I hope the Minister will explain to me how the legislation will work when the sunset clause is invoked. Most important, will the Government provide a guarantee that commitment to training in this industry will not diminish?

MRS EDWARDES (Kingsley - Minister for Employment and Training) [4.17 pm]: I thank members opposite for their comments. It seems that their major concern is that, as a result of this sunset clause, the fund will no longer continue. The concern raised not only in the Hitchin report but also, as I pointed out previously to this House, by the Auditor General is something about which both opposition and government members should be concerned. The Government does not want the wasted opportunities for the use of those funds to continue. However, an opportunity exists to ensure that very effective training is carried out to improve skills within the building and construction industry. Amendments are in place to allow the fund to continue and to ensure an effective training mechanism exists in the building and construction industry. I want to see this fund, which involves a large amount of money, being used in the best possible way. I want the industry to be given the opportunity to ensure that an effective mechanism will be in place for the improvement of training. That is why the industry training fund will be maintained. The amendments will allow the effective operation of the Act.

Members opposite are concerned that the training fund will expire despite the provision in the Bill that extends it by way of regulation. It will not, as the member for Nollamara said, simply provide for transitional progression by existing apprentices and the like. The sunset clause will provide an opportunity for the fund to be extended in the event that Parliament considers that to be worthwhile. Having picked up those concerns from members opposite, I propose in Committee to move an amendment to provide for a review to be carried out in the year preceding the expiration date as proposed in the current Bill. That report must be tabled in this Parliament 90 days prior to the expiration date. That will allow Parliament to have a say about the extension of the fund or otherwise. It also will allow this Parliament to have a say about the effectiveness of the fund and any other changes that should be put in place to improve the way training is carried on beyond 2000.

Training issues move very quickly; it is a dynamic area and it must be constantly reviewed. In order to pick up the concerns of members, I propose to insert the clause and extend the expiration date by a further year. It was the intention to give the fund a full three years to ensure it has a chance to operate in the best possible way. Some of its problems could be regarded as teething problems and nothing more; however, concern has been expressed particularly in the Auditor General's report that it was not as effective as it could be. It is now on notice to take the opportunity with both hands, and put the fund to good use for the community and not just for the employees, trainees and apprentices.

Mr Brown: We recently dealt with legislation that had a sunset clause and a review clause, and the Minister for Fair Trading had to introduce a Bill because the review had not been carried out. The Act was about to lapse, and the Minister's rationale for not carrying out the review was that he was not Minister at the time and he did not know about the review provisions. When it was brought to his attention, he said he got on with the job. Is it the Minister's intention that, although there is a sunset clause, the date on the sunset clause will not come into effect unless the report has been tabled in this Parliament? I am concerned that a report may not be made.

Mrs EDWARDES: I have discussed this and, obviously, it is not desirable that the expiration take place on the basis of the tabling of the report in this House. It is open to members in this place to bring the Government to account in this matter. If it has not carried out a review, as required by the legislation, it is up to this House to take action. The Government is putting in place a clause providing that a review must be carried out and a report must be tabled in this place 90 days prior to expiration of the board. That allows plenty of time for this Parliament to bring the Government to account in the event that the report has not been tabled. Also, the review will take place 12 months before the expiration date. This Parliament will have an opportunity to ensure the Government is accountable, not only in respect of carrying out the review but also in tabling the report prior to the expiration date. A period of 90 days has been specified because the proclamation must be made within 30 days. That allows the Parliament 60 days in which to bring the Government to account in the event that the report has not been tabled. I cannot see that occurring. From time to time, slips may occur but in this instance the process is overt and it should be carried through.

Mr Brown: If you are to do that, the Act will expire on 31 December 2000.

Mrs EDWARDES: In the event that it has not been extended by regulation.

Mr Brown: The last election was held on 14 December 1996, and the Parliament was prorogued in November. The 60 day period will commence on 14 October and if the Government continues for a four year term until 14 December, that will be one month before an election campaign begins.

Mrs EDWARDES: Remember it is 90 days, and it gives an effective tool if nothing is done by that time.

Mr Brown: In that environment it is not likely -

Mrs EDWARDES: Does the member want it to be 120 days? The opportunity will be available to table the report, but sufficient time must be allowed for the fund to operate so that an effective review and investigation can be carried out. That means public consultation and the like. Also, time must be allowed to table it in the House. A period of 120 days would allow eight months in which the review could be carried out, evaluated and reported on. A period of 120 days is not a problem from the Government's point of view.

Mr Brown: I wonder about this. Presumably, an election will be held around December 2000. Why would it not be worth leaving it to the next Government? The people will have spoken again and who knows who will be elected - whether it be this Government or the Labor Party. The report could be done and tabled for the first spring session, and the new Government could then make a decision.

Mrs EDWARDES: The discussions that have taken place publicly have been on the basis that the fund would be given three years. That is the reason it is extended to 2000. I support the review process because practically that must happen in any event if an informed decision is to be made on extension or otherwise. I am trying to put in place

a mechanism whereby it is a public commitment - that is done by inserting a clause in the legislation - it allows the report to be tabled in the Parliament, and sufficient time is allowed for a decision to be made on the outcome of the report.

Mr Brown: I have no problem with that, and with the safeguards. I understand the public consultation and the rest of it but, perhaps when the public consultation took place it may not have been recognised that the three year period would coincide with an election date. If we were two years into the Government's current term, I would have no problem with that and the new Government could make a decision. I am concerned that in the hurly-burly of an election campaign this will not rate as a massive issue, and it is too important to get caught up in that environment.

Mrs EDWARDES: It is always a shame when important matters can get caught up in political issues. The opportunity exists for it to be raised on the basis that the Government has not done what it is required to do by the legislation. It is not that we have not done it - we are not extending it; it is that we have not met a legislative requirement, which is a much stronger pressure. We can debate this further when we go into Committee. I thank members opposite for their contributions. In the time available, I have not been able to get the breakdown of the costs etc for the member for Nollamara. However, I undertake to get that information to him as soon as it is available. I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Bloffwitch) in the Chair; Mrs Edwardes (Minister for Employment and Training) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1 put and passed.

Clause 2: Commencement -

Mr BROWN: Given that in the second reading debate, we were talking about when the legislation might expire and so on, what is the Government's time frame for proclaiming its legislation, bearing in mind that it must pass through this place and the other place in this session of Parliament? Is the time frame for proclamation 1 January, or is it later?

Mrs EDWARDES: The only delay will be getting the new board in place. That can be done relatively quickly. We must call for expressions of interest from the various organisations. That will happen as quickly as possible.

Mr BROWN: I am not sufficiently familiar with how all of that is done. It is now 16 September and the Bill must go to the other place and be dealt with. Effectively the Bill could be considered by the other place next month.

Mr Cowan: We would like to think so!

Mr BROWN: It could be, but there is nothing to guarantee it will be. If, theoretically, it were dealt with by the middle of next month, would three months be sufficient time in which to fill all of those positions?

Mrs Edwardes: Yes, because work can be done on the correspondence and the like in the meantime, and we will endeavour to do that.

Mr BROWN: In effect, it could commence on 1 January next year.

Mrs Edwardes: We would look to doing that. It has three full years of operation.

Mr BROWN: Given the time frame of some of the legislation that goes to the other place and the way in which it is considered there - I am not reflecting on our colleagues there -

Mrs Edwardes: That is something we could look at to see what happens in the other place and if there is likely to be any delay.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 and 4 put and passed.

Clause 5: Section 7 amended -

Mr KOBELKE: This clause adds new paragraph (ba) to section 7 of the Act. Currently section 7 outlines the functions of the board, which are to ensure the efficient collection of the levy; to control and administer the fund; to formulate operational plans in accordance with section 8; and to implement operational plans approved by the

Minister under section 8. It also says that the board may do all things necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with the performance of its functions.

Section 8 refers to the operational plan which in large part gets changed by a subsequent amendment. I understand this amendment takes up the requirements of section 8. I will ask the Minister to comment on that in a moment. New paragraph (ba) is an excellent provision. Although it is referred to in the short title of the Act, it was not picked up in the functions in the current Act. It is great that that is set out specifically in the functions. However, there is a slight extension; that is, the use of the word "research". Although I want to support that, I have some doubt about whether that may raise demarcation issues relating to the appropriate industry training council. Research might be seen as something that the industry training council should be doing; whereas the training fund is now given the potential to engage in research. There is a cooperative approach between the two organisations, so that will not be seen to be a problem. However, if there was inadequate communication between the Building and Construction Industry Training Fund board and the industry training council covering the same area, we could end up with waste or duplication. I do not know whether the Minister has any view about the limitations that may be placed on that research. There does not appear to be any in the amending Bill, and I am not suggesting there must be. However, the ability to undertake research now provided in the functions opens up a whole new area. Although I support that principle in general, I ask the Minister to comment on the operation of it.

Mrs EDWARDES: Obviously this new paragraph dealing with the functions and powers of the board clarifies better the purpose for which the fund is established. It clarifies further the functions and powers of the board. It was an industry request to include research in the Bill. Obviously, nobody would support duplication; the board has an evaluation role in relation to research and will take that into account.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6: Section 8 amended -

Mr KOBELKE: Under this clause we end up with a definition of the industry for the purposes of clarification of other sections within the amended Act. An operational plan must be formulated on an annual basis and approved by the Minister. Clause 8, as amended, will read that the board shall -

... formulate and prepare in writing in respect of each financial year an annual operational plan, the aim of which is to improve the quality of training and to increase the number of skilled persons in the building and construction industry by the allocation of resources of the fund to programs that support -

- (a) apprenticeships and other forms of entry level training for employment in the industry;
- (b) supplementary training for those already qualified to work in the industry;
- (c) training in technology used in the industry and in the occupational safety and health requirements of the industry;
- (d) the recognition, for the purposes of employment in the industry, of persons with existing skills, knowledge and aptitude appropriate to the industry;
- (e) the accreditation of training courses for employment in the industry or that are otherwise appropriate to the industry;
- (f) innovations in training in the industry and research relating to the levels of competency in, and the training needs of, the industry.

It is a good move to be more specific about which items are to appear in the annual operational plan. I will not go into the matter of finance, but that is also picked up in respect of the approval of the allocation of those funds. I seek some clarification of paragraph (d). What is the extent of the paragraph? The Minister has already talked about supplementary training. I presume she does not want to duplicate that.

Mrs Edwardes: It allows recognition of prior learning to be taken into account.

Mr KOBELKE: Okay. I am a bit worried about the demarcation between the industry training fund board and the industry training council, which has already been alluded to in relation to there being some doubt about financial accountability. If it is simply a matter of prior recognition, that would be a matter for the industry training council and the state training board. I thought that would not be a requirement for the building and construction industry training fund, unless this Bill enables it to pass funds to the industry training council.

Similarly, paragraph (e) talks about accreditation of training and paragraph (f) refers to innovations in training relating to levels of competency. While there was criticism previously of the joint membership of the industry

training council and the training fund board, the situation now arises where matters are being put into the operational plan, which will pick up those functions. It seems to create a direct conflict. This clause is worded in the same way as the major undertakings of the board; that is, it can allocate funds to apprenticeships and supplementary training. That seems to be its core function. The other matters do not seem to be core items for the training fund levy board but for the industry training council. I thought the wording would be somewhat different to enable the provision of funds to a training council appropriate to supporting its operations, whereas the clause simply includes these matters as a primary function which should be taken up by the board.

Mrs EDWARDES: The clause has been changed because it is out of date as a result of the SESDA Act and the Australian Training Guarantee Act. There was a need to clarify where the funds should go and into which programs. That is what is set out here. Although paragraph (d) sets out matters which appear to be separate from those in paragraphs (a) to (c), it is not separate. Provision is being made here for a legitimate role for the fund in providing funds, for example, to an ITC to carry out the type of work referred to. We are setting out the allocation of resources that the funds can support and which types of programs. Those programs deal with recognition for the purpose of employment, which can quite rightly be carried out by an ITC. It enables the ITC to access those funds or to apply to the fund to carry out a program. It is not the board itself or the authority carrying out these matters; the Bill gives them the power to allocate the funds to certain types of programs, which are set out in the clause.

Mr Kobelke: I am assuming interpretation will not be a problem. The clause in part refers to allocation of resources of the fund "to programs that support". Because this relates to the annual operational plan, I was limiting the concept of programs to those for which the board has responsibility.

Mrs EDWARDES: No.

Mr Kobelke: According to your explanation, it means programs in a wide sense to include both primary programs of the board and those of other organisations that may fit those categories.

Mrs EDWARDES: Yes, absolutely.

Mr BROWN: I want to clarify two matters. In relation to paragraph (d), relating to the recognition of prior learning, will the funds to be allocated for this purpose be used for training or educational organisations to assess the degree to which people have skills - that is, not actually training them in those skills - or for building on their existing skills to ensure they are adequate to meet the qualifications required for the job, or both?

Mrs EdwarDES: Both. Also under paragraph (b), as the member for Nollamara pointed out, there is supplementary training.

Mr BROWN: Given that there is now a specific requirement in the Act in relation to the allocation of funds for the recognition of prior learning -

Mrs EdwarDES: It is an example.

Mr BROWN: Yes. I have no philosophical objections to that. However, given that the board is required to have an operational plan which sets out its priorities for the allocation of resources during the financial year concerned to the programs supported by the plan, that seems to raise a significant question. People in the industry have not been assessed for skills they have already. The board must assess the degree to which funds are then allocated to carry out that assessment. As I read it, the board is required to allocate funds based on priorities and to say, "This is where we will allocate moneys." Part of the funds must be used for the recognition of prior learning.

In certain circumstances that can be quite an expensive operation. It is not merely a matter of interviewing a person and saying, "I accept that you have X, Y and Z skills" but a matter of testing competency in a particular industry. I do not know how one can have an operational plan which allocates resources for that purpose unless one knows the degree to which people working in the industry have not been assessed for the skills they acquired prior to entering the industry. I would not like to hear criticism of the board in three years' time, when this matter is being reviewed, criticism of the board because it has used funds in a way set out in proposed paragraph (d) but has not made adequate provision for it in its operational plans. I am not sure how it all fits together with the onus on the board for its operational plan.

Mrs EDWARDES: The setting out of the annual operational plan must be in writing and the board must determine its priorities. The clause sets down a requirement for the board to carry out the plan and develop priorities, but it does not go to the next step of requiring the board to spend those funds in that area. If it assesses the numbers who require recognition of prior learning and the like, they do not have to be funded in a year. The board must be held to account for the basis of its management plan not having been met. At the same time, I am advised that a significant number of people in the building industry do not have qualifications or recognition. This applies even to apprenticeship trades. The industry has assessed hundreds of people over the past two years through the Building and Construction

Industry Training Council, therefore, there is a significant need to have that element in the Bill and for it to be addressed.

Mr BROWN: My concern is that when one reads the proposed change to section 8(2) and (3), it requires that an operational plan shall set out the priorities the board proposes for the allocation of resources of the fund during the financial year concerned. As I read it, the requirement is not only to set out the priorities but also to set them out for the allocation of resources.

Mrs Edwardes: Yes.

Mr BROWN: The demand for the industry fluctuates. One can have heavy demand periods when lots of new people will be drawn into the industry and, therefore, the need for recognition of prior learning could be great. That can be compared with the time when the industry is in the doldrums, and many people who work in the industry are well known and such an allocation is not needed. I accept the position, if the Minister is saying that this is really a guide for an operational plan and that when the review is carried out, whomever it is carried out by may not make any criticism of the board for allocating or not an appropriate level of funds, because of the fluidity of the industry and because it is impossible to predict with any certainty the degree to which the industry will attract new employees or employees who have been out of it for some time and who, therefore, need that recognition. As the industry waxes and wanes, we might tend to have commercial construction coming along for a period and then work there may slow and move into housing construction. Different skills are required in those two areas. A number of people in the industry have the capacity to move between one sector and the other. Some move and stay and some move backwards and forwards. That could create considerable problems for the board. The clause provides for the allocation of resources of the fund to the programs that support in proposed paragraph (f) innovations in training in the industry. One innovation might be an open learning mechanism for which people would need a computer and, therefore, we could provide money for computers, a CD-ROM or whatever. I am not sure what funds can be allocated. What is the breadth of that definition?

Mrs EDWARDES: This refers back to the comment I made in response to the second reading debate. Many changes within the training framework are occurring in Australia at the moment. One change I have talked about is vocational and educational training and schools allowing and assisting students to move from one area to another through apprenticeships. That may well be such an innovation in training in the industry which could be considered for the allocation of funds by the board. That is one example of picking up on the flexibility and changes that are occurring within the training industry at the moment.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7: Section 10 repealed and a section substituted; members of Board cease to hold office -

Mr KOBELKE: We have already discussed this clause in the second reading debate. Could the Minister give some explanation of the change in the groups?

The board previously comprised 12 members, or one representative from each association or interest group, so there was direct representation. A board comprising seven members will now be appointed by the Minister, after consultation with the industry bodies that are listed in proposed subsection (1). Therefore, the method of appointment has changed.

The list of bodies which will be consulted has also changed. The Master Builders Association of Western Australia has a guernsey in both this Bill and the Act, as has the Housing Industry Association and the Construction Contractors Association of Western Australia. However, the Confederation of Western Australian Industry, the Trades and Labor Council of Western Australia, the Building Trades Association of Unions of Western Australia, the Australian Workers Union and the Western Australian Municipal Association have dipped out. I presume the Western Australian Municipal Association was in the Act for the good reason that local government collected the levy when it granted building approvals. The building trades are covered adequately by the Construction, Mining, Energy, Timberyards, Sawmills and Woodworkers Workers Union of Australia and the Builders Labourers, Painters and Plasterers Union of Workers.

Mrs Edwardes: Are you concerned that we have missed someone out?

Mr KOBELKE: What is the reasoning behind those changes? Secondly, how will this Bill allow for changes of name, because unions seem to change their name all the time these days.

Mrs Edwardes: Are there any prospective changes that we should be made aware of?

Mr KOBELKE: I am not aware of any changes, but these things do happen, and I want an assurance that a body will not be excluded because of a minor name change.

Thirdly, proposed subsection (2) states that at least two of the members shall be, in the Minister's opinion, independent of the bodies referred to in subsection (1). I am not sure why we need at least two independent people. While there have been problems with sectoral interests, we need people who are involved in and know the building and construction industry. It appears on face value that we need only an independent chair.

Mrs EDWARDES: The independent chair will be one of those two independent people. The other independent person may be a professional administrator, or a person with expertise in training or finance. We will not be sure until we appoint these people and balance the particular skills that they have; so we have said that at least two of the members shall be independent of the bodies referred to in subsection (1) in order to ensure the broadest range of people on the board.

Mr Kobelke: I have some concern about that. The board will comprise seven members, of whom at least two shall be independent. That number might increase to three people, in which case only four of those seven people would represent bodies that have a direct interest in the building and construction industry. There is no reason that a person from the Housing Industry Association may not also have the necessary technical expertise - he may be a lawyer or accountant - yet he will be excluded because he is associated with one of those bodies.

Mrs EDWARDES: That may happen, but we will not know that until we go down that path. I am absolutely committed to putting in place a proper mechanism to ensure that this fund works effectively. Therefore, the membership of the board will be critical. Organisations will not be excluded by the mere fact that they have changed their name, or amalgamated or divided; that change may be included in an omnibus Bill.

Mr Kobelke: Is there not a standard clause in the Interpretation Act to deal with that matter?

Mrs EDWARDES: I am advised there is not.

Mr Kobelke: The Act would have to be amended if an organisation changed its name?

Mrs EDWARDES: Eventually; it would not need to be done immediately. This proposed subsection lists the minimum number of organisations which must be consulted. We will consult much more widely in seeking the views of organisations.

I am advised that the CCI has not participated for a number of years and that it was considered that WAMA was almost like government. The industry has indicated that it wants an industry driven organisation. We need to have a balance. I am advised that is the reason this approach was taken.

Mr BROWN: Proposed section 10 provides that the board shall consist of seven members appointed by the Minister after consultation with the bodies that are set out. Section 10 of the Act provides that the board shall consist of a presiding member appointed by the Minister, and 11 other members appointed by the Minister, each of whom shall be appointed to be a member on the nomination of each of the bodies that is set out in subsection (3)(a).

Apart from removing a couple of the peak organisations and changing some names, the substantive amendment will remove the right of the organisations named to have their nominee on the board. The amendment gives the Minister the absolute discretion to appoint whomever the Minister considers appropriate after consultation with those groups. Is it the Minister's or the Government's intention to ensure that the board has a balance of members from employer and union groups?

Given that there are seven members of the board and two must be independent, only five must be appointed after consultation. It would therefore be possible for the Minister to appoint a person nominated by the Master Builders Association, the Housing Industry Association, the Construction Contractors Association, the Master Plumbers and Mechanical Services Association and the Master Painters Decorators and Signwriters Association. In some quarters that would not be seen as a balanced board. Can the Minister indicate the degree to which it is intended to have a balanced board and what that balance will be, given that we are talking about five members being appointed from those groups after consultation and two others?

Mrs EDWARDES: This amendment provides some flexibility. I do not want to go over the difficulties faced with the current board structure. However, at times there have been huge conflicts of interest, whereby members of the board have been seeking funds for the various programs run by their organisation. Since the enactment of the legislation, a number of organisations have established training or skill centres. The Minister needs flexibility so that members can be selected from the industry, and that clearly includes employer and employee representatives. In the past, duplicated membership from the BCITC and the BCITF has produced conflicts of interest. There might be opportunities to include other people on the board - for instance, industry practitioners. The Government is implementing this flexibility to ensure that industry groups are represented. Overall, the Government wants some level of independence and to remove the conflicts that have arisen in the past. The objective is to achieve a very important and effective mechanism for improving training in the industry.

Mr BROWN: I appreciate the need to remove those conflicts of interest. One way to do that is to ensure all the members are of the same mind.

Mrs Edwardes: I am not talking about conflict in the board structure but about on the part of some members. I cannot guarantee there will not be conflict between individual board members.

Mr BROWN: If we want a balanced board with an independent chair, we could draw three people from the employer groups and three from the union groups at the nomination of their respective organisation. Those nominees must not have a perceived conflict of interest. In other words, a person nominated by one of those groups who was the manager of an organisation that existed purely on the basis of moneys from the fund would not be seen to be able to take an objective view of allocations to other groups if his or her organisation would be adversely affected. I can understand a provision prohibiting people in that situation from participating. However, that would still give the organisations - both employer and employee - an opportunity to influence the ultimate selection. If a person were seen to have a conflict of interest because of the position he occupies, we could consider another person who does not. However, we could still be relatively satisfied that there is that balance.

This will very much depend on the Minister's discretion. Ministers all have their own philosophical approach to these matters. Such an open-ended provision might mean that the board becomes very lopsided. If it is done as a device to undermine confidence in the board and the fund, I would not agree with it, but I can understand it. However, if it is not being done with that in mind but to improve the operations of the board and enhance its decision making, and if there is to be a balance - I am not sure there will be - why do we not include other provisions allowing greater ministerial control and comfort for the organisations?

Mrs EDWARDES: The Government has no intention of setting up this board to fail. The budget for the fund this year is \$5.6m and, with the upturn next year, it will be increased to \$6.2m. That money must be spent on effective training. There is no way that this Government will allow a board to be set up to fail and have those funds wasted. It will ensure that the people appointed will make the fund work. That is the whole idea of extending it; otherwise it need not have been done. I give the commitment that there is no agenda and will be none to do that. The flexibility being provided is to ensure we get the best people on the board.

I have written to the Trades and Labor Council of Western Australia asking it to nominate a representative to serve on the State Training Board. That is clear evidence that the Government is amenable to having employee representation on the board. The membership of the board will definitely not be lopsided. The Government wants the board to operate effectively. A lot of money is available for training people in the construction industry and the Government wants the training to be effective.

Mr BROWN: People have different views about what constitutes an effective training program. Some people have a view that a training program should provide people with the immediate requisite skills. Some people have a view that a training program constitutes that as well as other things, particularly gaining qualifications which are recognised in the industry and not by one employer or group. Some people have a view that a training program should give the employee a real opportunity to gain qualifications that are recognised by industry and education institutions. Therefore, the capacity for the trained person to move from employer to employer is enhanced. Not everyone has a common view on that. Some people have a view that training should be specific so that it is difficult for employees to move from one employer to another. They believe that if they do move to another employer they should not be able to move into an occupation which gives them the same level of reward; therefore, they get trapped in an occupation that is very narrowly based or in one enterprise. Some people say that to keep labour, particularly if skilled labour is short, is an effective way of training.

From an employee's perspective it is wise to have broad-based training to allow them to move from one employ to another. From a community perspective it is wise to have broad-based training because it means that at times of industry growth people are better able to cope with that growth and to meet the changing circumstances, and there is less propensity for frictional unemployment.

The three ways of looking at it are from the employer, employee and community perspectives. A good training program recognises all three perspectives, but that view is not universally shared. I am not suggesting that people will get on the board to waste the money or to put it into inadequate programs. However, if the training opportunities that are created are not balanced in the way I suggested, they will be perceived by some people as not meeting the needs of either one group or the other. From that point of view they will not be accepted and it will undermine the standing of the fund and the qualifications obtained from the courses and it will lead to industrial, training and skilling difficulties.

I did not want the debate to pass without making those comments. It is important to achieve a balance with boards like this. As a person who came from the union movement I was often appointed to boards with 12 or 13 members

and it is a lonely existence when one is pushing an idea with which the other members do not agree. In this instance one person could be pushing a barrow for the board to take a broad view rather than a specific view to training. Even if that person has done all the research he is not guaranteed that in the decision-making process his ideas will get proper consideration.

Mr Bloffwitch: I cannot see how the money will be collected in the first place.

Mr BROWN: The member would knock the fund out if that were the case. It is a philosophical debate which I am happy to have.

Mrs EDWARDES: I note the member's comments and agree with them. The advice for training programs in schools will come from the Building and Construction Industry Training Council and the board could be considered as the bank which funds those programs.

I have spoken to people who have been members of boards on which the member for Bassendean has been a member and they found him to be a most constructive person with whom to deal.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8: Section 11 amended -

Mr KOBELKE: This clause amends section 11 of the parent Act, which relates to deputy members of the board. Under the old scheme each member represented a particular group or organisation and there was a need to appoint a deputy who would also represent that interest group. This Bill will change the method of appointing deputies. Technically how will this be interpreted and how will it work?

My reading of this Bill is that the new section 11(1) will read -

The Minister may appoint a deputy member to act in the place of a member where a member is unable to act due to sickness, absence or other causes and while so acting the appointee has all the functions and entitlements of a member.

Will the Minister have the authority to appoint a deputy to replace a particular board member or will they be deputies at large - for example, this month a deputy might represent board member A and next month he could represent board member B on the same entitlement - or will the entitlement need to be changed if the deputies are representing different board members? What are the mechanics in respect of the specific wording?

Mrs EDWARDES: I understand that when we seek nominations from the respective bodies we will also seek from them the names of people who can operate as deputies. That is what is anticipated.

Mr KOBELKE: My question is a direct, technical question. The wording of the Act is that the Minister may appoint a deputy to act in the place of a member. Does that mean the Minister can appoint a single deputy who would act in the place of member A or a deputy who can act in the place of any of the members without any form of authorisation? It comes down to the exact technical interpretation of the words used. I know that the Minister intends it to apply at large, but it does not seem to state that intention upon a superficial reading. It may be that the word "a" means "any". If that is the interpretation, I have no problem.

Mrs EDWARDES: It is meant to be "in the place of a" member. Therefore, when one seeks advice from the respective bodies regarding who will be available to act as deputies, the deputy will be appointed as a deputy for an individual member: If X is the individual board member, Y will be the deputy to X. When one talks about deputies at large, it will not be a panel from which deputies can be drawn at will; it will be a panel indicating who can operate as a deputy, but people will be appointed as deputy to a certain member.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 9: Section 14 amended -

Mr KOBELKE: Section 14 of the principal Act relates to the disclosure of pecuniary interests; it reads -

14. (1) A member who has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in a proposal before the Board -
 - (a) shall disclose the nature of the interest to the Board at each meeting where the proposal is discussed; and
 - (b) shall not take part in any deliberation or decision of the Board with respect to the proposal.
- (2) A disclosure made by a member under this section shall be recorded in the minutes of the Board.

A penalty applies in subsection (3), which reads -

(3) For the purposes of this section, a member shall not be regarded as having an interest in a proposal only because the proposal may benefit or affect a body referred to in section 10(3).

Section 10(3) outlines the member organisations from which the previous board was drawn, and that provision will be struck out because sectional representation will no longer apply. I have no problem with that. However, I am concerned that the Minister may have picked up another problem with this deletion. One may have board members, as they are chosen on merit, who are directly associated with an interest group, union or whatever. Many, if not most, of the decisions made by the board could be seen to be affecting these people indirectly. They could have an indirect pecuniary interest. If one has a key person from the Master Builders Association who is the principal of a company, it is likely that many of the decisions made will impinge on the Master Builders Association and the representative could be regarded as having a direct pecuniary interest. Section 14(3) gave such representatives a way out. When this provision is struck out, a tighter definition will apply to pecuniary interests.

The removal of the provision in relation to new section 10 makes sense. However, inadvertently, the Minister may have tightened up the pecuniary interest requirement to the point at which it is too onerous a burden on a board member. That person may have a direct interest with affected groups and his or her commercial interests. The Minister does not want to place people in a situation in which they are squeezed off the board because the pecuniary interests requirements are too tight. Can the Minister allay my fears? If the Minister agrees with this problem, it may require consideration to provide some way out with standard commercial arrangements in relation to indirect pecuniary interests for board members.

Mrs EDWARDES: Obviously, the provision is to be deleted because we are removing sectional interests. The fact that we are writing to the individuals and organisations seeking nomination means that some or other member may well have such interest. For example, the member could be the Secretary of the Housing Industry Association, and it would be appropriate that, when considering a decision dealing with funding directed to the HIA, the person disclose that interest and not take part in the debate. We are returning to basic, straight down the line pecuniary interest declarations and disclosure. I have no difficulty with that. Members should disclose and not take part in deliberation or decision made when funds are directed to their organisations.

Mr KOBELKE: I understand that point. However, one must be concerned that one does not exclude people from board membership through the term "indirect pecuniary interest". If it is indirect interest relating to the person's company, it is not a problem. I take it from the Minister's comments that it will not impose an onerous requirement on members, other than normal propriety.

Mrs Edwardes: We do not expect to see it provide other limitations than that normally required of board members.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 10 put and passed.

Clause 11: Sections 25A, 25B and 25C inserted -

Mr KOBELKE: New section 25A deals with arrangements made for the granting of a reduction or exemption from the levy payable by a project owner. We do not want to see closed off the availability of this exemption for construction for charitable purposes. It may be that a comma is required. Proposed section 25A(1) reads -

After consultation with the Board, the Minister may publish a notice in the *Gazette* providing that, if specified conditions and criteria relating to the provision of training arrangements by a project owner are met by that project owner, the Board shall grant a specified reduction, or exemption from, the levy payable by the project owner under this Part.

The conditional clause follows right through to the comma after "owner". It could be read that one must meet the specified conditions and criteria relating to the provision for the exemption to be available.

Mrs Edwardes: The provision of training arrangements and the charitable purpose must be linked.

Mr KOBELKE: Yes, I am saying I do not think they should be. If a comma is put after "specified", it will leave that open, although that may open the gate too wide. If it is not specified, the condition could be broader because it would not have to be caught by training. The primary reason for the clause is to give the exemption or reduction on the basis of the provision of training by the project owner. That is being met. The Telethon home would not be tied necessarily to training, but we still want to provide that provision on a limited basis for cases the Minister sees as worthy causes. Notice of that would still go in the *Government Gazette*. However, there would not be a requirement that a training arrangement be provided.

Mrs EDWARDES: At the moment that exemption is allowed. The sentiment the member expresses is one with which the Government agrees. I would not like to make that change without receiving advice on it. Rather than trying to make this amendment on the run and opening up the provision too wide to a broad range of exemptions - I am sure that is not what the member has in mind, and neither would it be the Government's intention - between the passage of the Bill from this place to the other place, the Government may consider that matter and bring forward an amendment in the other place to ensure charitable purposes such as the Telethon and Appealathon homes are able to be exempt. That is the current practice and the Government wants that to continue.

Mr BROWN: What will the specified conditions and criteria be under new section 25A(1)? As I read it, that criteria will be used by the board to determine whether it will grant an application.

Mrs EDWARDES: They have not been spelled out as yet. The types of conditions and criteria would be looked at can be decided after consultation with the board. It will not be an easy matter to grant an exemption. It will be looked at carefully at the training arrangements of the body. I assure the member it will not be a mechanism by which people opt out of paying a levy without putting in place proper training arrangements of their own.

Mr KOBELKE: What is the current arrangement for the lodgment of such applications? Will it continue that way? Does it go to the Minister's office or to the board which will then send it on to the Minister?

Mrs EdwarDES: No exemption provisions are available at the moment. A totally new procedure will be established.

Mr KOBELKE: How will this operate when incorporated into the Act? Will the general approach be to the board, which will then refer it to the Minister, or will people make application directly to the Minister first? In the provision in new subsection (1) that the board shall grant a specified reduction in or exemption from the levy, how "specified" is it intended the reduction will be? Will it always come down to an exact amount of money, or will a specified formula apply to a range of projects? One assumes from the use of "specified" that the reduction will not be too general.

Mrs EDWARDES: The second point dealing with specified reduction is something that has not been discussed yet. I agree with the member: It will not be general, but will be considered in discussions with the board in light of the application. The conditions and criteria for exemptions and reductions in the levy will be developed in consultation with the board. The Minister will give notice in the gazette of the specified conditions and criteria to be applied for applications for exemptions from and reductions in the levy. Applications in accordance with the criteria will be submitted to the board for a decision. A party aggrieved by the board's decision has the right of appeal to the Minister and the Minister must publish reasons for overturning a decision of the board in the board's annual report to Parliament. It is envisaged a project owner would need to substantiate the provision of comparable training arrangements already being implemented by or for that project owner for it to be able to obtain an exemption or reduction.

Mr Kobelke: It was really the front end entry. I presume that is left wide open. Constituents, the board or an industry group may come to the Minister, not knowing how to start the wheels rolling to make such an application.

Mrs EDWARDES: That will be done in consultation with the board. Broad discussion on how that will occur has not been held yet.

Mr BROWN: Is it correct to assume that under new section 25A one of the matters that would be critical to granting an exemption from or reduction in the levy would be a demonstration by the project owner that it was providing training arrangements recognised by the Building Industry Employment Training Council - that is, not made-up training arrangements, but formal training arrangements to the extent that they were recognised for this fund - and that the level of reduction or exemption might relate to the direct cost of those arrangements? For example, if the cost were half the levy, presumably the organisation would receive a reduction of half? If the cost equated to the full amount of the levy, it would get an exemption that related to more than the levy; it might get full exemption. What is the concept behind these words? Does the person who is applying for the reduction or exemption have to demonstrate he or she is conducting training that is recognised by the fund and does the level of reduction or exemption depend on demonstrating a commitment to training in financial terms that is equivalent to the reduction that is being sought?

Mrs EDWARDES: The reason for the reduction is that we did not want to grant a total exemption from the levy without justification. We need to look at the training that would be put in place, and how it compares with other training programs, including cost. It can take in all of the circumstances plus other criteria to which the member has referred. That probably will be one of the first things that the board looks at.

Mr BROWN: When the training guarantee legislation was in operation, in some instances the training dollar was skewed to the most senior levels in the organisation. Sometimes it was for so-called self-development courses that

might have meant spending a week in a resort compared with training for those people who held the more mundane jobs. I am not aware whether that was the case or is still the case. Will the training profile be considered when examining this or any proposal; that is, the area where the funds will be focused like entry level induction training and those sorts of things and not accepting that project X will be spending X dollars in some way or the other which is unspecified

Mrs Edwardes: It must be very specific and comparability will be one of the key aspects. The levy will be paid upfront prior to seeking the reduction or exemption, and then the board will make the refund.

Mr BROWN: Will the profile that is being put forward in a proposal - if it is accepted by the board - be a public document? If I am in the industry and I am paying the levy, I might be keen to ensure that my competitors have not put up some arrangement to effectively avoid their obligations. I have not seen anything in this Bill to suggest it will be either a public or a secret document. Will it be an open process, and if an exemption or reduction is granted, will it be possible for people with an interest in the matter to obtain a copy of that document and to examine it to see the training that is proposed? I hope it will not be an in-house document available only to the board.

Mrs EDWARDES: No provision exists to make that document public. It will be available only to the board. The conditions and criteria for the exemption or reduction will be published in the *Government Gazette*. I take on board the member's comments. The board might address that in its annual report. That might assure people that exemptions and reductions were not being granted without the proper assessment being carried out. The board would address the financial aspects in its annual report.

Mr KOBELKE: I will raise two issues of accountability in the procedure for the reduction or exemption from the levy. The board is not required to report on the granting of an exemption or reduction on the basis of criteria that the Minister has established, although one would hope that the board's annual report would provide detail on which organisations had met the criteria laid down by the Minister and published in the gazette. That would provide accountability, so that people had an independent idea of whether they had met those criteria and conditions.

My desire for accountability in the appeal process may be met even though it is not mentioned directly. I am pleased that an appeal process has been incorporated in the amending legislation. A project owner who is dissatisfied with the decision of the board can appeal within 30 days. However, that must be done in a form approved by the board. If the board felt that a particular project developer was, in the words of our past illustrious leader, a recalcitrant, and there was a problem of communication between a person and the board, people might feel those conditions to be inappropriate. How does that person get past the board to appeal to the Minister? They might be able to do that by letter, so the Minister would be aware if the process was not working. I do not have any grave concern about the board's approving the form of appeal; however, one would need to ensure there were no difficulties there.

Mrs Edwardes: The information will be provided in a simple application form that will be published in the *Government Gazette*.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 pm

Mr KOBELKE: I thank the Minister for her response to the effect that the form approved by the board will refer simply to the proforma required on a piece of paper rather than other constraints and requirements of a more elaborate nature which could be used to obstruct. That was the first matter of accountability.

The second matter relates to the process of appeal to the Minister. First, I will point out the most important requirement, and why I hope the Minister will accept that it could be covered by the existing arrangements even though not stated specifically: A project owner may be dissatisfied with a decision of the board regarding a request for a reduction in or exemption from a levy, and may make an appeal to the Minister by notification within 30 days. The Minister then is to review that determination and may appoint a person independent of the board and the appellant, to investigate the matter referred in that appeal under the direction of the Minister. That is, the Minister can set directions for the independent person if the Minister so wishes to appoint, and that person will make written recommendations to the Minister on the matter of appeal. The Minister will then be in a position to review the determination of the board and, after considering any recommendations made presumably by the person appointed to the appeal, can either confirm, vary or cancel the determination and substitute the Minister's determination. Having done that, the Minister shall notify the board and appellant accordingly.

I would like a requirement that the decision by the Minister with reasons be made public. Many appeal mechanisms in other Statutes have been shown to be less than accountable, because Ministers can make decisions and do not have to make public justifications for those decisions. I have no difficulty with the Minister having those powers; it is an efficient and accessible appeal procedure and the Minister can handle that in the most appropriate way, but we need a mechanism whereby the Minister's decision and reasons for the decision are public knowledge. That is not stated, but under proposed section 25C(6), the requirement is that a report of a determination that is varied or cancelled and

substituted by the Minister shall be included in the annual report submitted by the accountable authority of the board under section 66 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act. I hope that report will be a fairly full one and will be available in the annual report and include the justification for the decision by the Minister. I am sure that in an overwhelming number of cases, there will be no reason to question the Minister's decision. However, from time to time the Minister will make difficult decisions or those which other people might wish to question. Therefore, we need a procedure in which decisions and the reasons for the decisions are placed on the public record. I hope that the report required under proposed section 25C(6) will be more than just a perfunctory mention of the decision. I hope that it will contain some justification. If that is the case, I will be happy with the procedures which require a report on the Minister's decision, but that is not stated specifically. I hope that the Minister will be able to give an undertaking that she will do that - if she is the Minister at the time.

Mrs EDWARDES: It is reasonable to have published in a report the reasons for the determination; otherwise it would be senseless and should not be referred to as a report.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 12 and 13 put and passed.

New clause 14 -

Mrs EDWARDES: I move -

Page 12, after line 3 - To insert after clause 13 the following new clause to stand as clause 14 -

Section 32 amended

14. (1) Section 32(1) of the principal Act is amended by deleting "6 months commencing on the third anniversary of the day on which this Act comes into operation" and substituting the following -

"12 months before the date referred to in section 35(1)(a)".

(2) Section 32(2) of the principal Act is amended by deleting "within 6 sitting days of that House next following the completion of that report" and substituting the following -

"not less than 4 months before the date referred to in section 35(1)(a)".

Mr KOBELKE: This amending Bill seeks to establish a sunset clause which provides that the operation of the building and construction industry training fund will expire on 31 December 1999 or under proposed subsection (2) at a later date. The Bill provides the Minister with power to extend that period. That mechanism seeks to wipe out the building and construction industry training fund. The reason for the extension as I read it - the Minister might have a slightly different view - is to allow time for the practicalities to be arranged when withdrawing funding which supports hundreds of young people involved in apprenticeships.

The Bill clearly seeks to do away with the fund. Neither the industry nor the Opposition wants that. With this amendment the Minister is trying to meet our concerns, for which I thank her. However, it does not go far enough. The Act will still expire at a given date which would be 1999 without the new clause which changes the date to 31 December 2000.

Although the possibility exists of extending that it is a mechanism to manage the closing down of the fund rather than to ensure its continuation, which the Opposition wants. The Minister's amendment to section 32 will provide for another review in the 12 months prior to the date on which the Act will expire on 31 December 2000. That review, which is to examine the effectiveness of the board - whether the objects of the Act are attained, whether the Act should continue in operation and any other matters which the Minister considers relevant - will be undertaken before the date on which the Act could expire.

The Opposition hopes that the review will be thorough and not biased and that in the two years at least before that review begins, the fund will have proved its worth, and the training programs for which it is responsible will be shown to be effective and necessary and as a result of which legislative action will be taken to overturn this proposed section.

I am not happy with this amendment; I would like the expiry clause taken out. The Minister might be willing to put on the record her reasons for not doing that. I do not want to say anything out of school, but the Minister indicated that the board must perform and this amendment, in part, is to ensure that it does perform. I hope the Minister corrects me or puts on the record why she wishes clause 14 to remain, but will go part of the way towards what the Opposition seeks.

Even if the board fails to fulfil its full potential a fund which will provide the required financing for a range of training programs within the building industry is necessary. The industry has indicated through feedback that it is committed to the fund. The Government will not have much support if for some narrow, philosophical reason it wants to use inefficiency or mismanagement to justify abolishing something the concept of which is worthy of retaining.

The philosophical or policy position of whether a fund such as this should operate should be separate from the management decision on whether it is working well or needs improvement. I would have no trouble giving the Minister support for steps that must be taken to ensure the fund is properly managed and is effective. However, I will have great difficulty with the fund being struck out for policy reasons.

Mrs EDWARDES: Insertion of the new clause has arisen as a result of clause 14, one aspect of which is the sunset clause. Proposed section 35(1)(a) reads, "on 31 December 1999; or". It is not a matter of just being the provision of a proclamation, therefore there is a transitional period. Irrespective of whether the proclamation date is extended one year or five years, the life of the whole Act is extended.

The new clause which provides for an investigation and report to this Chamber is important. In any event, in the light of members' concerns, this Parliament will want to know that the fund is operating effectively and better than it has to date. Primarily the new clause is to ensure that the board will perform over this period. In the event it does not, the review will be tabled in this Parliament which will highlight any difficulties. I hope members seize on that opportunity and use it to their advantage. The fund has in it a huge sum of money that really needs to be more effectively managed than it has been to date.

I look forward to a positive Auditor General's report rather than a qualified report and to the industry, regardless of who are the stakeholders, supporting the operations of the new board. The amendment provides for a review and the subsequent report. The review must be carried out 12 months prior to the expiry date as referred to in proposed section 35(1)(a). Even in the event of the proclamation extending that date, it must happen within 12 months of proclamation and the report must be tabled in the Parliament not less than four months prior to the expiry date. That will allow members in this Chamber to have a say on the outcome of that report. It is appropriate and I was pleased to pick up on the views of members opposite to provide that.

Mr KOBELKE: A fairly fundamental difference still exists in that if one believes in the principle of the establishment of a fund such as this, one does not leave it in limbo. When legislation is put in place to require the Government of the day to, by regulation, extend the life of an agency, that agency may lack the confidence to be as proactive and vigorous as one would like in pursuing the charter it is given under this legislation. Agencies should not be set up with the threat that if the Government is not happy with it, for whatever reason, its life will not be extended.

I am not happy with the amendment, but I appreciate the Minister's willingness to come part of the way to acceding to the Opposition's request. I give an undertaking to the Minister that I will consult various sections of the industry and the unions and if they are convinced that the amendment will provide the fund with a basis on which it can work and progress and meet the needs of training in the building construction industry, it will have the Opposition's support. If the Opposition is not happy with the outcome, it might move to oppose what the Minister is seeking to achieve by this amendment.

I accept the spirit in which the Minister has moved the amendment and acknowledge that it goes part of the way to meeting the Opposition's request. On that basis the Opposition will not vote against the amendment.

Mr BROWN: One of the matters that will be considered in the review that will be undertaken in accordance with the proposed amendment is the question of whether the provision in proposed section 35 should be removed. We have a provision which is different from the normal provision built into Acts of Parliament. In many Acts there is a review period after a specified number of years and that commits the Minister to institute a review and, within a certain time, table the subsequent report in the Parliament. The instrument of the review carries out the task in accordance with that section and looks at the intent of the Act and the debate in the Parliament and then goes forward from that point to determine whether that which the Parliament intended has been carried out.

The difference is that under proposed section 35, the Parliament will be saying that this Act comes to an end unless there is a gazettal to extend it. My understanding is that such a gazettal cannot keep the legislation in operation ad infinitum; it has to be on a later date. The reviewer could say that the Parliament has said this legislation will come to an end on 31 December 2000, or a later date, and under an amendment to it, I am to carry out a review. It is not for him to determine whether the legislation should come to an end. That is a matter for the Parliament. It will be hopeless if one is trying to look at whether the objects of the Act are being met.

Mrs Edwarde: If you are looking at extending the operation of the Act by way of proclamation, it makes a lot of sense, in a practical way, to carry out a review in any event.

Mr BROWN: I do not have a problem with a review. However, whoever is engaged to carry out the review must be satisfied about the matters to be reviewed. It concerns me that some reviewers would take the view that the Parliament has decided the Act will come to an end; therefore, it is not a matter for them to examine.

Mrs Edwardes: It has been made clear in our public comments and in this Chamber that that is not the case.

Mr BROWN: That is the point I am making and it is good to have it on the record that the question of whether the Parliament should consider an amendment to this provision to continue the Act will be a term of reference for the review. It will then be made crystal clear to the person or group carrying out the review.

Mrs EDWARDES: We are amending section 32 of the parent Act which says about the investigation and review to be conducted and the report that must be prepared that the reviewers must concern themselves with -

- (a) the effectiveness of the Board;
- (b) the attainment of the objects of this Act;
- (c) the need for this Act to continue in operation;
- (d) any other matters that appear to the Minister to be relevant.

It covers the member's concern that they do not carry out the review on the basis that the Act will cease to be effective at the end of that year. Already set out in the Act is a term of reference for the need for the Act to continue to operate.

Mr BROWN: The Minister's comment was correct: Subsection 32(1)(c) requires reviewers to consider the need for the Act to continue in operation. When this review provision stood alone, no sunset clause applied and it was clear that any reviewer must consider that term of reference.

Mrs Edwardes: We have retained it.

Mr BROWN: I accept that. A reviewer could say that if one traced back the legislation - the Minister knows the law better than I as a result of her training - an inconsistency could be found. In looking at the intentions of Parliament, one would draw on the later amendment and argue that an inconsistency was contained in the Act. The Act states that the legislation will come to an end, and then the review clause will determine whether the Act should come to an end. Will the Minister confirm that, notwithstanding the Bill's amendments, it is clear that the reviewer should lay out the terms of reference as specified in section 32(1)(a), (b), (c) and (d) of the principal Act? Should the reviewer do those things notwithstanding the decision by Parliament to insert new section 35?

Mrs EDWARDES: I do not see an inconsistency between this amendment and the Bill before us in respect of clause 14. It includes the word "or", and the sunset clause does not stand alone. Following proclamation, the opportunity will exist to extend the operation of the fund. I make it very clear that the review has, and will continue to have, as part of its terms of reference the requirement to consider the need for the Act to continue its operation. In the event of considering either extending the operation of the Act, or applying the sunset clause, one would need solid reason to go one way or the other. It is clear as part of the terms of reference that the reviewer would need to look at the need for the Act to continue its operation.

New clause put and passed.

Clause 14: Sections 34 and 35 inserted -

Mrs EDWARDES: I move -

Page 12, lines 15, 19 and 20 - To delete "1999" in each place it occurs and substitute "2000" in each place.

The amendment primarily overcomes an oversight. It was always the intention of the Government to allow the Act and the levy to operate for a full three years in order to give the opportunity to the new board and the industry to maximise the benefits which are to be derived from that extension.

Mr KOBELKE: Considering the chronology of the amendment as it relates to the previous amendment, in extending the expiry date the Minister will require that a review take place in the preceding 12 months to 31 December 2000. Therefore, in practical terms, the review must start early in 2000 as it must be tabled at least four months prior to 31 December. Given that an election is likely to be held in early 2001 or late 2000, Parliament is likely not to have a heavy schedule around that time, as is traditionally the case near elections. Therefore, limited opportunity may be available for legislation to be considered to amend the Act following the review.

Alternatively, the Government could use section 32(2) to extend the Act by determining proclamation to a date some time in the year 2000 and beyond so Parliament can reconvene and deal with the matter. It has some practical

difficulties, but it is workable. A key element is that the review must start early in 2000, which will mean that the fund will have a full two-years' operation if the amendments are proclaimed within the next few weeks; any delays could lead to problems. One could not expect the board and the fund to take on board the amendments we are making, and to achieve the efficiency and effectiveness we seek, in only one year.

I appreciate that the Minister has come some way to meet the Opposition's concerns. We will look carefully at the time scales to see whether they enable the fund to operate as effectively as the Opposition believes it can.

Mr BROWN: Will the Minister be prepared to accept a minor amendment to change "2000" to "3000"?

Mrs EDWARDES: The member jests!

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 15 to 21 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Bill reported, with amendments.

LOAN BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 11 September.

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Leader of the Opposition) [8.09 pm]: The Loan Bill seeks the necessary authority for the raising of loans to enable the State to assume responsibility for the debt raised on its behalf by the Commonwealth under the 1927 financial agreement between the Commonwealth and the States. This Bill is in accordance with an agreement between the States and the Commonwealth over that debt. Before I move on to more general commentary, I will seek clarification from the Government on a couple of points on the loan issue. The first relates to when the State will assume full responsibility for this category of debt. In the second reading speech, the Treasurer indicates that the agreement will allow the State to assume responsibility for this debt on a phased-in basis from 1990-91 to 2005-06. However, no indication is given by the Government on when it will take over fully all that debt. What is the Government's plan for the assumption of that responsibility? How does it propose it will occur? Can we assume the program will continue through to 2005-06? Perhaps there might be an earlier period within which the State will take full control over that debt. Taking control of the debt also means taking the interest payments that are involved with that, and there is an agreement between the Commonwealth and the State on how that will be managed.

The second general issue I raise with the Treasurer relates to the Government's debt management strategy over future years. What current set of projections exist for that debt management strategy? What are the Government's forecasts in relation to that? The papers that accompanied the Budget indicated where the Government saw debt going. There has been an increase through public trading enterprises, mainly associated with the infrastructure needs of the State. When the Treasurer responds to the second reading debate later this week, will he give an indication about Treasury's current forecasts for debt management in Western Australia? In particular, will he indicate whether assumptions are being made about government commitments to the Kingstream project for infrastructure provision which may impact on the Government's debt management strategy in the future?

Mr Court: The big debt reduction comes from asset sales. We did not build BankWest sales into our forecast; we waited until it happened - similarly with the pipeline sale. Basically we have controlled the debt; you are right. Across the total government sector there is a small increase this year, which is mainly to do with the Collie power station, for which expenditure is peaking. Although it is not built into the forecast, the next big reduction in debt would be from the sale of the gas pipeline.

Dr GALLOP: Perhaps the Treasurer could ask Treasury officials to indicate whether the forecasts that were outlined in the budget papers remain as such and also whether any assumptions are being made about the Kingstream project that may alter that.

Mr Court: With Kingstream you are assuming the Government will build a harbour.

Dr GALLOP: I am wondering whether that is the assumption. If it is, has it been built into the debt management strategy?

I will spend some time tonight talking about issues related to the Western Australian economy as it is currently working. Aspects of our economy should be of concern. The Treasurer says often in his public pronouncements and in his pronouncements in this Parliament that Western Australia is the nation's strongest economy. He claimed all the credit for Western Australia's performance, saying that it did not happen by accident, but through the right mix of policies introduced by his Government. I will not engage in a political to and fro on that issue. However, if the Treasurer wants to compare Western Australia's economic performance with the other States and the national trend, he might go back two or three decades. He would find that on pure aggregate performance - that is, rates of growth of the gross state product, or economic growth rates - Western Australia has bettered the other States for two or three decades. For some of that period there was a Labor Government and for some there was a conservative coalition Government. This State has tremendous assets. Great skills have been built up in its resource sector to use those assets to good effect. That has been the case in Western Australia for some time.

The most important area to look at for current economic policy is not necessarily the aggregate figures of economic growth, but the different parts of the economy beneath those and how they are performing. As we do that, there is no doubt that aspects of our economic performance should be cause for concern. It has led some commentators to conclude - I will quote some of them in a minute - that this State's comparative performance is not running as well today as it should be.

Mr Court: You would not want it much better, would you?

Dr GALLOP: The problem with the Treasurer's responses to these questions is that he is dealing purely with the aggregate figures. Any political approach to economics these days that deals only with aggregates and does not go down into the heart of the economy - into the different parts of the economy such as the retail sector and the small business sector - to get some perception about what is happening, will miss the point and will not produce policies that are balanced enough to enable the great assets in this State to be shared by all in our community.

I turn to a report that was released only last week by the Western Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry into the Western Australian and Australian economies. It claims that whereas previously the Western Australian economy tended to lead the rest of Australia in the economic cycle, in the current cycle it was likely to be a little different with key sectors such as the housing sector and the retail trade likely to lag behind the national average. That is an interesting observation on how shifts are occurring in our economy and its relationship to the national economy. Previously it could be said that Western Australia was leading the nation's economy and, in a sense, dragging it along with it. However, there are now signs that in the current cycle it is lagging behind the national average. The two areas the report refers to specifically are the housing sector and the retail sector.

Mr Court: What about the wealth creation sector?

Dr GALLOP: We know the aggregate figures. I encourage the Treasurer to take a balanced view of the economy so that when economic growth occurs in our community, it is shared by all people. Currently it is not being shared by all sectors of our economy. The report states also that although Western Australia continues to have the highest annual growth trend, the difference is now marginal with both the Queensland and New South Wales economies expanding at a similar pace to Western Australia, whereas previously this State was in front.

In those two aspects, the situation in Western Australia today is different from the past. The Western Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry does not advocate on behalf of the Australian Labor Party. The view taken by economists at the WA Chamber of Commerce and Industry is shared by some other key economic research agencies. An index of state economic activity released by Westpac's Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research on a monthly basis claims that we are in a "growth cycle recession". The index uses a weighted average of five economic series that typically are coincident with economic activity to produce a coincident index. More specifically, there are some key areas in which the Western Australian economy is not performing.

Those of us who move around the community and talk to different interest groups, most notably the locally based chambers of commerce and industry, have received this feedback. I have just undertaken a tour through the Pilbara, Gascoyne and Kimberley. I had a meeting with the local chambers of commerce and industry in every town I visited, and the theme was the same. I recently visited chambers of commerce in Midland and Victoria Park. The theme of the problems faced by small business was similar. It all comes back to what is happening to private final consumption expenditure. If one is part of the small business sector, final consumption expenditure is a pretty good indicator of one's performance. Motor traders throughout Australia have had an extremely difficult period over the past couple of years. Retailers in the Eastern States have come out of that period a little bit. Western Australia has shown some signs of improvement, but we still have a problem.

The private consumption expenditure figures tell the story very well. In annual average terms, private consumption grew at only 2.1 per cent for the year ending March 1997 compared with 4.3 per cent for the previous year. In

comparison with the other States, only South Australia fared worse than Western Australia for the year ending March 1997. The South Australian economy faces extreme problems. It has structural problems and shorter term cycle problems that exist in the other States as well. However, when one puts those two together, South Australia has a massive difficulty in finding a way into the future. It is interesting to note that private consumption growth in Western Australia has halved over a 12 month period and only South Australia has fared worse than Western Australia.

A significant component of private consumption is the level of retail trade. In the June quarter, retail trade fell by 1.7 per cent in seasonally adjusted terms. In trend terms, retail trade has fallen for the past four consecutive months. The retail trade sector covers a broad range of goods and services including food retailing, department stores, clothing and soft good retailing, recreational goods retailing, other retailing and hospitality and services. The retail sector has been active on issues like commercial tenancy because it is experiencing heat in the general economy and it is looking for some support from the Government when negotiating leases with landlords. The industry is looking to this Government to provide it with support in the negotiations, because currently the retail sector is experiencing some difficulties. In the context of those difficulties, if landlords had the ability to roll the leases over and impose costs on commercial tenants without any restraints, they could drive their tenants into bankruptcy.

Mr Court: Eventually market forces must work.

Dr GALLOP: Yes. However, there are market forces and market forces, Treasurer. What the Treasurer understands by market forces is that the relationship between an employer and employee is different from what I understand it to be. I believe that employees must have some degree of protection in their dealings with employers so that the market forces provide fairness. The same thing applies when one is dealing with the relationship between large landlords and small tenants.

Mr Court: My experience in retailing is that if a landlord is greedy and charges so much rent that good tenants leave, they lose out.

Dr GALLOP: The Treasurer is out of touch with the way the world is working at the moment, and the choices that are available to people. A lot of small business people do not have that choice.

Mr Court: Why?

Dr GALLOP: Because of the difficulties in the economy generally. The notion of moving on somewhere else as a form of economic salvation is not available to them. They are already experiencing difficulties. I have referred to private final consumption expenditure and retail trade figures.

Let us look at other partial indicators of economic activity that have shown Western Australian's sluggish performance in key areas. Small business confidence has eased. Business confidence as measured by the Yellow Pages small business confidence index has been falling since November last year. That must be of concern to the Government. All members of Parliament receive that Yellow Pages index in the mail. That means that all of those businesses that are looking to the future, who are in a position to employ people in Western Australia, do not have a confident view of the future. That being the case, the ability of the Government to tackle the unemployment problem will be much more difficult. Small business has a role to play in tackling unemployment in Western Australia. When we come to the job summit that will be held later this week we need to take into account these factors that are operating in our economy.

What does this all mean? It is interesting to note that the Prime Minister of Australia is finally parroting the federal Leader of the Opposition in terms of the major priorities that should exist for the Australian Government. Kim Beazley has been saying since the federal election, "Jobs, jobs, jobs" and "Job security, job security, job security" are the major issues of Australian politics. John Howard is now parroting him.

Mr Court: In Western Australia we are creating the jobs.

Dr GALLOP: The Labor Party has set the federal agenda. What is happening in the economy in terms of jobs?

Mr Court: She is looking pretty good, my friend. I am glad I am living here and not in the Eastern States.

Dr GALLOP: The Treasurer's complacency is extraordinary.

Mr Court: I am not complacent.

Dr GALLOP: The Government is complacent. It has become slack and arrogant. Given these levels of consumption and falling business confidence, it is no surprise that employment growth is falling.

Mr Court: Falling business confidence?

Dr GALLOP: Does the Treasurer not read the Yellow Pages index?

Mr Court: The Leader of the Opposition had better come on some of our trips, so I can show him what is going on.

Dr GALLOP: The trouble with the trips that the Treasurer takes is that they are always with the big end of town; the trips I take are with the local small business people and members of the chambers of commerce.

Mr Court: I go to Port Hedland and former supporters of the Labor Party turn up at the Liberal Party function.

Dr GALLOP: Do they, Treasurer? I love the Treasurer's arrogance.

Mr Court: The member for Hillarys was there. Former card carrying members of the Labor Party came to a Liberal Party function in Port Hedland and said that they have never had it so good.

Dr GALLOP: The Treasurer can keep parroting that language. We will take his comments to the small business community.

One by one we will win over those people to our cause. As stated in the Treasurer's winter economic summary, of the 17 600 jobs created from the beginning of 1996-97 to July this year, less than 20 per cent have been in full-time employment. Of course, we have seen that trend away from full time jobs to part time and casual employment throughout the Australian economy.

I do not know whether the Premier realises that with the casualisation of employment in our society, banks will not lend money. Of course, that is one of the difficulties with our economy: Despite the fact that interest rates have been falling, that does not register as improved economic activity because of the insecurity that exists in the labour market. The Government wants a society in which people respond to fear. I do not want to live in that sort of society.

Mr Court: What about the recent survey in *The West Australian* that said young people are very optimistic about employment opportunities?

Dr GALLOP: Our country has great opportunities and a great future. However, young people do not want a future that is dog eat dog and in which the strongest take the most. They have an optimistic view.

Mr Court: You are parroting ideology. That socialist stuff is gone.

Dr GALLOP: The Premier is totally out of touch with what is going on in the real world.

Mr Court: I went to a function tonight for design students from Curtin University. Given their talent, they will get work anywhere in the world.

Dr GALLOP: I want them to work here in Western Australia.

Mr Court: I spoke to one architect who has been selling her services in New York who said that the Americans cannot get enough of Australian architects and the like. We are selling our services all around the world from Western Australia.

Dr GALLOP: We still have long term unemployment and very flat private consumption and housing demand in Western Australia. If the Premier wants to keep parroting the view that there is nothing wrong in Western Australia, he should feel free to do so.

Mr Court: I am very optimistic.

Dr GALLOP: According to the August 1997 WA Labour Market Review produced by the Department of Training, Western Australia has recorded a drop in employment expectations as measured by the Morgan and Banks Job Index. It claims that for the period August to October 1997, a net 18.9 per cent of employers reported the intention to increase staff numbers compared to 23.2 per cent in the previous quarter and 28.4 per cent a year ago. It goes on to point out that this result has taken Western Australia below the national average for the first time since the commencement of the job index in 1995.

Comparative figures indicate that, historically, Western Australia has always led the way and now it is not performing as well as other parts of the national economy. We must ask ourselves why that might be. One of the reasons is that the Premier's complacency and top end of the town view of the world does not translate into policies that mean the fruits of growth can be enjoyed by different sections of the economy, including small business.

Of course, we must keep coming back to the basic priority, or what should be the basic priority, of all Governments; that is, long term employment. In July the number of long term unemployed was 14 200, which was 23 per cent of the total unemployed. That is an increase on the same time last year, when 18.1 per cent of all those unemployed were long term unemployed. The Government can keep talking about aggregates and mouth rhetoric, but the reality

is that 23 per cent of our unemployed are long term unemployed. That figure should be of great concern to the Government and it should be driving it as a priority in government. Of course, the Premier has just indicated that we have never had it so good.

Mr Court: My view of the world is that 7.5 per cent unemployment is better than 12 per cent unemployment. That is what you presided over.

Dr GALLOP: The Premier is shifting the argument. He said we have never had it so good and that everything is wonderful. He was trying to talk up the economy. When I pointed out to him that 23 per cent of our total unemployed are long term unemployed, he shifted the argument. We should make that a priority for government, at all levels. We cannot maintain those rates of long term unemployment and have a society in which people feel a commitment to the future and that they are part of a country worth living in.

It is true that unemployment in Western Australian is the lowest in the country. In August it was 7.2 per cent compared to the national rate of 8.7 per cent. For those who are employed, average weekly earnings growth has not been at the rate the Minister for Labour Relations has led us to believe.

Of course, this State has great economic potential and that is being taken up by significant sectors of our economy to produce benefits for Western Australians. However, any economic strategy which focuses on that aspect and which does not address the priority issues of long term unemployment and ensure some balance so that the small business sector can enjoy some of the fruits of growth as well should not be supported by this Parliament. The Labor Party will continue to argue that the Government should broaden its vision so that it is more inclusive of the different sectors of our community.

In comparative terms, the lead and the strength that Western Australia has always had over the other States is not as obvious today as it has been. I have illustrated that by referring to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry study and other economic commentaries. That conclusion is also revealed when we look at full time earnings in Western Australia. In 1996-97, full time ordinary time earnings increased in annual average terms by 2.3 per cent. That was the smallest increase of any State and does not compare well to Queensland's growth of 5.3 per cent. Even on that score, Western Australia's comparative performance has not led the way as it has in the past.

One of the great problems in Australia today, and indeed in Western Australia, is that insecurity in the work force has reduced confidence in our economy. The Labor Party philosophy, with its emphasis on job security and decency in the labour market, brings with it a wider range of benefits for the small business sector than the philosophy being pursued by the current Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you will find it interesting that in the course of my travels recently I was talking to someone who sells motor cars. He said that he was a very strong supporter of the Liberal Party and that he was very enthusiastic when it was elected to power with a policy of radically changing the labour market. He believed it was a better way to structure an industrial relations system, and in his view wages and conditions were too beneficial to employees and unions had too much power. He accepted the Government's point of view on these questions. I am talking about a person who has been a strong supporter of the Liberal Party. However, he said that he was revising his view on this question because he had found it difficult to sell motor cars. He was reflecting upon the fact that people who used to buy his motor cars were no longer in a position to take out loans from the bank, and they did not feel secure enough to buy a new car or a used car. Therefore, the number of sales had fallen. He said he was rethinking his position in politics because he wanted to create a society where there was a greater sense of fairness and, therefore, more consumption in the community. I mention that story to indicate some of the changes in society that have resulted from the biased and narrow view of the Government on economic policy. The lack of full time employment growth in Western Australia and nationally has contributed to a tightening of consumer expenditure. The federal coalition cuts on labour market programs have added to the difficulties, and the sole reliance on low interest rates and the promise of tax reform to increase employment throughout Australia have not helped in this regard.

Consideration must be given to the modern economy. This economy is quite complex, and it is different from the economies of the past. There are low interest rates, low inflation and heavy competition. Not many sectors of the Australian economy today are not subject to international competition. Even in the government sector there is competition. There is a high level of risk, and more and more people are involved in the small business sector. Many of the 10 000 government employees who have lost government employment in the four years of the coalition Government have become small business people competing with other small business people for a declining retail market. It is a tough economy. As a result, it is much more difficult to generate the retail sector, to generate investment in the small business sector, and to bring about improved employment via small business. The Government does not seem to understand this, but certainly the Opposition does. The Opposition currently is talking to a range of people in the community about developing policies that will address the real nature of the modern economy, rather than the illusory, mythical view of the economy that seems to be held by the Government. The

Minister for Labour Relations has not helped with his radical industrial law changes, which have added to the job insecurity in Australia. Uncertainty has spread through the community, decreasing consumers' willingness to spend.

What message does the Government send to the economy? Only last week we heard that Main Roads Western Australia will slash many jobs, not only in the blue collar sector but probably, more prominently, in the white collar sector of its activities. Yet again, there will be shattered morale in the department, and the message from the Government is one of insecurity and uncertainty. Governments should not put out those messages in the context of the current high risk, low inflation type economy. At the end of the day the Government must play a role in ensuring the economy can work on a more even keel for the different groups in our society.

Mr Court: Do you think we have been building a lot of roads?

Dr GALLOP: The Government has built a \$400m tunnel. With that money more roads and rail systems could have been built.

Mr Court: It has gone up by \$100m.

Dr GALLOP: Is it worth \$300m? I thought the price had escalated. The Treasurer should check with the Minister for Transport.

Mr Court: The tunnel is considerably cheaper than that, my friend.

Dr GALLOP: There is no justification for it.

Mr Court: We are building roads all around the State.

Dr GALLOP: There is no justification for that public investment in the tunnel; it is the great white elephant of the coalition Government.

Several members interjected.

Dr GALLOP: Coming from a general practitioner, that is pretty rich. The member for Yokine is saying that the great joy from that tunnel is that we will drive through it and put carbon monoxide into the atmosphere.

Dr Hames: Your children will drive through it, as they drive over the Narrows Bridge, and think what a far-seeing Government put that in.

Dr GALLOP: What is the current figure for building the tunnel?

Mr Court: I do not know.

Dr GALLOP: I think it is \$300m. If that amount had gone into a rail network to Rockingham, which investment would produce more benefit for the State?

Dr Hames: It is too simple to do it like that. You could take away the railway line and put that somewhere else, and the same goes for the Narrows Bridge. Work done anywhere could be put somewhere else, and we could try to work out the benefit. It is a great service for the long term future of that area, and particularly for Victoria Park residents. You should be proud of it.

Dr GALLOP: I am not proud that this Government is creating another white elephant. It is yet another example that the Government does not take seriously enough the future needs of the city.

Mr MacLean interjected.

Dr GALLOP: When the member for Wanneroo is choking in the pollution in 2010, he will look up this speech and recognise that I was right.

Dr Hames: I have been through tunnels in other parts of the world, mostly in taxis, and most taxi drivers say they are the best thing since sliced bread. It enables them to bypass the serious traffic, they give a much better thoroughfare and I have not seen any problems with pollution.

Dr GALLOP: In Western Australia?

Dr Hames: No, in those other places where I have been through tunnels.

Dr GALLOP: Which places?

Dr Hames: The most recent was Singapore.

Dr GALLOP: Singapore has strong anti-pollution laws for protecting the environment.

Mr Court: You are not advocating a Singapore solution?

Dr GALLOP: No I am not, but it has been a very progressive Government in protecting the environment.

Mr Court: And in relation to law and order.

Dr GALLOP: No. This country could not cop the sort of authoritarian regime that exists in Singapore. Even in the Treasurer's darkest moment, he would not use the defamation laws that the Singapore Government uses against its opponents. Even the Treasurer in his most authoritarian moments would not be tempted by that political strategy.

Mr Court: They seem to have some success with their drug strategy.

Dr GALLOP: The Treasurer should look at some aspects of Singapore's drug strategy. I do not think he is well briefed on them. I have read the Singapore year book and note that some of its strategies on drugs are interesting, but even the Treasurer would not be willing to contemplate them. He should look at that before he makes such silly comments.

Mr Court: One thing it does -

Dr GALLOP: Does the Treasurer advocate it?

Mr Court: No. I was told today that every Friday or Saturday the Press contains details of people who are killed for drug offences. Singapore does not have a particularly big drug problem and that is its solution. We could not implement it here, but Singapore does not have a problem.

Dr GALLOP: It has a problem and is trying to address it. In the Singapore year book which I received just last week, I read that that Government is trying to encourage people who are addicted to take on treatment programs. They are given something like an amnesty to allow them to come into the program. It was an interesting proposal. We must focus on the treatment of people.

Mr Court: We should look at that.

Dr GALLOP: I come back to the main theme I wish to develop this evening; that is, when the totality of our economy is taken into account, it has problem areas which are not being addressed by the Government because of its very narrow vision and complacent attitude, particularly to the small business sector. The continuing reductions in the Public Service, through the Government's ongoing program of competitive tendering and contracting out, have also increased instability and uncertainty in the community. We have seen that again this week in Main Roads Western Australia. That is adding further to the problems people face.

I refer to the focus of the Government on aggregate investment and output figures to measure our economic and social wellbeing, and its reluctance to acknowledge and address some real problems in the economy. It continues to cause difficulties when it comes to applying policy. In today's world, the aggregate figures for gross state product simply do not measure wellbeing. Let us consider the fact that the state gross product will increase when sections of the community invest money in home security. Does it mean society is better off if people are having to invest that money? The gross state product might go up if there is a big oil spill somewhere and a lot of money must be spent to clean it up. Does that mean we have improved our economic performance? People want a broadly based improvement in their quality of life which takes into account their material living standards and all of the other things that matter to them. Things such as security, a good environment, safe neighbourhoods, a strong community, and all the other features of our modern society are not taken into account if we simply refer to the aggregate investment and output figures.

We on this side of the House say that the Government should broaden its definition and its vision, and the accountability that we place on government will relate to the needs and concerns of people, not to the requirements of some narrow, abstract statistics that are set. We believe many of the problems in Western Australia these days are a result of that very narrow vision. With those comments, I indicate that we will continue to argue in this Parliament on behalf of the interests of the small business sector and employees who are facing great uncertainty and job insecurity. In advocating for those two sectors of our economy, we will be helping the overall economic performance of our State by ensuring that the benefits are spread throughout the community, thus giving a boost to confidence and encouraging broadly based economic development, rather than the narrowly based development that we have had in recent times.

MR MARSHALL (Dawesville - Parliamentary Secretary) [8.53 pm]: It is always a pleasure during the debate on the Loan Bill to have the opportunity to talk about one's electorate. In the past I have been very positive about the way in which Dawesville, Mandurah and the Peel region are headed. Only recently I wondered why I was always talking optimistically about my electorate. It reminded me of a fellow I had a lot to do with in my early days in

tennis. His name was Ted Trainer, who some members might remember as being the number one salesman for the Slazenger group in the sporting world. He played a couple of games for East Perth and won charities. An amazing thing about this man was that every year when Slazenger brought out a new Slazenger Challenge racket, Ted Trainer would say, "This is the best racquet the world has ever seen and you must change from your previous racquet and start playing with this one."

I was a free list player and I had six brand new racquets. I had won a few tournaments and quite a bit of money with them, and I did not want to part with them. Because Ted Trainer was such a salesman and because he believed in the products he sold, my six older racquets would be replaced with six new ones with which to further my career for another 12 months. Exactly the same thing would happen 12 months later when Ted Trainer said, "Have a look at the new Slazenger Challenge racquets. They are the best racquets that ever hit the market."

Mr Barnett: And you never learned!

Mr MARSHALL: I am a Liberal and a loyalist. I never change. There is no shadow of grey in my blood.

Mr Court: You should have handed the old racquets down to people like myself.

Mr MARSHALL: We used to hand them back and they would be given to orphanages. The Premier knows how it works. Having learned from the lessons of Ted Trainer, I find it very easy to say some positive things about the Dawesville electorate, rather than the negative statements that we hear about events around the world every day.

We all know more projects have been completed in the Peel region in the past six years than at any time in the history of the area. That is because the Peel region is arguably the fastest growing area in Western Australia. In 1993 it had a population of 56 000 which by 1996 had risen to 65 000, an increase of 15 per cent. To give members a better appreciation of the growth in that region, I will look at the way in which the Electoral Commission of Western Australia used those numbers. In 1993 when country electorates were based around the figure of 11 000 constituents, Mandurah had 11 800 and Murray had 15 000. By 1995 Mandurah had 12 000 voters and Murray had blossomed with 23 000 voters. That blow-out caused the redistribution of electoral boundaries. With this in mind, the Electoral Commission struck a new country mean of 12 000 constituents, and the new seat of Dawesville was created.

I will give a further indication of just how much the population boomed down south. In 1994 Dawesville had 11 600 voters. In December 1996 that seat had 14 160 constituents, an increase of 29 per cent. In comparison, Mitchell had an increase of 18.6 per cent, Mandurah had an increase of 16.62 per cent and Vasse had an increase of 15.5 per cent. Members can now understand why I say that it is one of the fastest growing and largest country electorates in Western Australia.

I mention this because population demands infrastructure. Over the past six years that infrastructure has been provided with the completion of some marvellous projects. All members will remember the Dawesville Channel which was opened in 1994. In the same year the North Dandalup Dam was completed. What about the new technical and further education college? In the same year as tertiary education was supplied to the area, only four primary schools were built in Western Australia, two of which were in my electorate; that is Riverside Primary School and Halls Head Primary School. It shows the diversity of projects in the Mandurah-Dawesville area. In the old days Mandurah was a sleepy hollow village that catered to retired people and those who liked to fish occasionally. Now it is a city. As a result all these projects have been completed.

There is a tremendous contrast in the school environments in that area. We have lots of young children, from preprimary to primary, who can take advantage of excellent education facilities. We have some wonderful high schools, including the Frederick Irwin Anglican Community School, which is the equivalent of Guildford Grammar, and the Catholic high school which is also a superb educational facility. The students are achieving excellent results there. On top of that, the TAFE college rounds out primary, secondary and tertiary education to people in my electorate.

Recently the Premier opened the \$16m cultural centre which many people are wont to call the performing arts centre. In the past three months it has had near capacity crowds as each weekend a variety of entertainment has been presented - school concerts, variety concerts, first class ballet and opera. At the opening of the centre, James Morrison - he is recognised as one of the best trumpeters in Australia, if not the world - in one performance stepped forward of the microphones and told the crowd that the acoustics at this new centre were some of the best of any venue he had ever performed in. He told the audience that during practice he went to the centre for half an hour to become accustomed to the venue, but stayed for an hour and a half playing for the sheer enjoyment that he got from the acoustics resulting from the architectural design of the centre. He let go a few high, shrill notes that reverberated through the assembly and sent shivers down our spines. We are very proud of our cultural centre; we are catering not only for education and sport but also for the arts.

While I am talking about the variety of improvements, let us not forget our 130 bed hospital, part of which will be completed and opened in November. Next year 30 beds with all their auxiliary health facilities will be operational. This is an amazing plus for the area because for the past 10 years we have put up with a 30 bed hospital which has really been like a doll's house. The health service has not been adequate for the growing city of Mandurah and the surrounding Peel region.

On top of this, on the drawing board there is room for a 450 pen ocean marina for Mandurah. We have talked this week about how exciting the Exmouth marina is, that it is already full and about the amount of tourism it will attract. The same will apply to Mandurah. Mandurah is the stepping stone to the south west and it is wide open as a tourist destination. With tourism comes employment, and I see this marina supplying all the facets such as boat maintenance, boat building, restaurants, fuel supplies, bait, fishing and so on.

I do not know whether members are aware, but eight new restaurants have opened in Mandurah over the past two years and the number of police officers based there has doubled. To keep pace with this population boom, transport has been improved. People in Mandurah used to feel isolated from the metropolitan area, but a rapid bus service was introduced 12 months ago. Initially it catered for 336 passengers weekly, but now it is carrying 1 124 passengers a week. We are already closing the gap. Although the Peel region is classified as country, it is only 55 minutes from Perth in a rapid transit bus. Last week we introduced two new buses to the fleet. I am proud to say they were double decker buses, the first to be used in Western Australia and they are centred at Mandurah. If one travels on the top of one of those 62-seater buses, one finds the scenery on the way to Perth is magnificent; it is smooth riding; there is music and television if the passengers want it; and there is even a telephone. It is like travelling first class on a Qantas jet to Perth.

Mr Carpenter: Are pensioners allowed on them at peak time?

Mr MARSHALL: Pensioners are all right there. They are being catered for in our electorate because they understand they do not have to rely on the Government for handouts. One of the mentality problems of some members opposite is that they rely on handouts to exist; they have not learned to stand on their own two feet, look in the mirror and say, "I am going to make it on my own." Naturally, these buses are very popular. The Mandurah to Perth express bus is a great success.

I would not like the House to think that I am not appreciative of the Government for recognising the needs of my electorate but, like Oliver, I am asking for more. We desperately need the extension of the Kwinana Freeway to Mandurah. The forward estimates were costed at \$400m, to start around 2005, with the proposed initial extension from Thomas Road to Folly Road to begin in 2001. The recent High Court decision regarding state levies has raised considerable concern about whether these projects will go ahead. Members will be aware there is a federal fund for roads of national importance, but every time Mandurah folk try to stress to our federal compatriots that their road is of national importance, our federal colleagues do not listen. Somehow we must make them understand the importance of the growth in the south.

Statistics show that 20 per cent of the Peel region work force travels by car to the metropolitan area. I know the member for Willagee will remember the Old Coast Road because he told me how he used to go to Bunbury when it was a limestone road. It is all bitumenised now and part of the road will become a six lane highway when the extensions go through. Members will be staggered to learn that 22 000 vehicles daily use the Old Coast Road to Bunbury. If that does not start people thinking that we need a road of national importance down south, I do not know what will. Mandurah is the gateway to the south west. I have already mentioned that the Electoral Commission's figures clearly show that Dawesville, Mitchell, Mandurah and Vasse are the fastest growing country areas south of Baldivis. A freeway would increase employment opportunities and tourism, even though last year Mandurah was credited with having the most day trippers of any place in Western Australia.

Tourism would improve and the road would open up industrial opportunities. The Peel region makes a contribution to the Australian economy through mining - I am talking about gold at Boddington and Alcoa's bauxite - and agriculture. We have everything except wheat down that way; pigs, poultry, cattle and sheep, fruit, vegetables, timber, fishing, manufacturing, you name it; I could go on forever. However, we do not have a main road to provide high speed road transport links to the metropolitan area.

What will happen if the Government lets us down? Where will the money come from? A freeway of national importance - the Kwinana Freeway - must be extended to Mandurah before the turn of the century. A toll has been suggested, and maybe this idea should be investigated, because it is a user pays system. People do not have to use the road if they do not want to. There are tolls in other parts of Australia - the Sydney Harbour Bridge has one - and they are to be found throughout Europe, the United Kingdom and the United States. Instead of being negative and saying, "We can't have this in Western Australia", maybe we should investigate a toll because when the numbers were right for the north, the Mitchell Freeway was built. Now the numbers are right for the south, there is no money.

Perhaps we should have a toll on the Mitchell Freeway for all the northerners who have had it so good and so cheap, free and immediate over the years. Maybe they should pay a little for the people in the south.

The coalition Government brought in a fantastic scheme to help build sport facilities in the country and the metropolitan area. I refer to the community sporting and recreation facilities fund. Under that scheme, which has worked magnificently, one-third of the money came from the Government, one-third from local government and one-third from the community. It has meant that 70 per cent of the allocations went to the country. International first class facilities are now in place in the country 20 years ahead of their time as a result of community input. It also means we are 20 years ahead of our time in finding the sporting talent that will represent Western Australia and Australia. Without first class facilities it does not matter how good the talent is, it is difficult to make the grade. I know that a toll on the road in WA sounds right out of this world; why should we consider it? Radio station 6MM quoted Hon John Cowdell as saying that proposed toll fees for the Kwinana Freeway were nothing short of betrayal by the State Government. Whoever proposed it? That comment by Hon John Cowdell is twisting the truth. It was suggested. There is a big difference between a suggestion and a proposal. It shows people how the Opposition take an agenda and turn it around after an idea is made public.

Why should people in my electorate wait 20 years because the Federal Government does not realise that this is a road of national importance? Why should they wait 20 years while money is found from the various taxes we have just lost? Many people south of the river want to know why the railway line from Perth to Joondalup was ever put in as a red herring which would not pay. They ask whether it was a vote catching exercise by the previous Government. The people I talk to, the people in the country and the thousands of people who do not use that line, all want to know. The line is marvellous for north of the river commuters but we all have to subsidise it by 75¢ in the dollar for the train. What a business exploit that is to be proud of! I have used it only once and I am not likely to use it again. What is wrong with the suggestion of a toll and user pays? Why not put the issue to the public and see what they feel about it, without a few members of the Opposition jumping on the bandwagon and turning a suggestion into a proposal and scaring people overnight because something might be successful?

We have some marvellous projects in my electorate and there are some tough challenges ahead. I must tell members about Peel Thunder. As all members know, this was the first country side in Western Australian football. I admit that on the field, the team has performed poorly but only due to the Football Commission's reluctance to allocate Australian Football League players to Peel Thunder this year. Last night I was tremendously proud to sit at the presentation of the Sandover Medal with the member for Willagee.

Mr Carpenter: I was dressed correctly.

Mr MARSHALL: I was testing him out.

Mr Carpenter: You were not dressed.

Mr MARSHALL: The member fell for it, just as I got this story in the paper to get the road noted as a matter of national importance. The Press fell for it with the mention of the toll. However, last night at the Sandover Medal presentation I was looking at the guernseys. East Fremantle club's guernsey was changed this year because of its 100 years' celebrations. I was proud to have something to do with the design of that new Peel Thunder guernsey. It has caused Subiaco and Perth clubs to change their design. I was proud of my Peel Thunder boys looking in awe at their first time in the big arena. Members will have to watch some of those 17 and 18 year olds, because they will be winning Sandover Medals in five years. They have never experienced it. Kalgoorlie could have had that opportunity if it had been smart but it missed out. I could rave on about Peel Thunder forever. A letter to the editor in a Mandurah local paper of last week states -

Do not give up on Peel Thunder! Creating this club in only six months was miraculous.
The support and administration staff were creative, sponsorship lucrative and membership second only to East Fremantle Football Club.

This is the club that was not supposed to do any good. The team's playing performance was down, but what about this? The letter continues -

Scott Simister was selected for WA Westar Team.
Rod Tregenza was selected for WA National 18's team.
Luke Hill is a top ten draft hopeful.
Dene Buszan and Chad Stronach were selected in the 1997 Quit Cup All Stars Team
Mitchell Russell made the last 30 of the State Schoolboys.

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Mr MARSHALL: This is an important punch line and you will love it, Madam Acting Speaker. It continues -

Five 17 year old colts played league football :-Brandon Hill, Brock Agnew, Rod Tregenza, Anthony Schirripin and Luke Hill.

Last Sunday during the Westar Rules preliminary final between Perth and South Fremantle I thought to myself, "Look at that." The little league representing Peel Thunder won the state-wide competition. The 12 year olds were running out in their special colours. The letter continues -

To create a Westar Football Club in just six months has been an amazing performance by the club's Board of Directors.

Well done Peel Thunder!!!!

Arthur Marshall . . .
MEMBER FOR DAWESVILLE

Madam Acting Speaker, it is always a pleasure to talk to you about my electorate.

MR CARPENTER (Willagee) [9.15 pm]: I would like to raise a few issues relevant to my electorate of Willagee. If I have time, they will cover the hospital and health situation, the schools and education system and the funding of it, police, law and order and perhaps Homeswest, now that the Minister has come back.

First, I will raise the issue of funding for schools in my area. Some concern has been expressed by primary school principals in the past few days. It springs out of comments made by the federal Schools Minister, Dr David Kemp, and his reported assertions that States would lose funding if they did not improve literacy in the public education system. This is of grave concern to some of the staff at the schools in my area, which were identified previously as priority schools and as having a significant level of extra need for some of their students. The threat to the States of loss of funding if literacy levels are not improved has been taken very seriously by the educators in my area. Dr Kemp's comments are potentially very adverse to the welfare of the education system in the Willagee electorate. Dr Kemp is reported to have said that \$600m in federal government grants, the money formerly used for programs to help disadvantaged schools, would be tied from next year to performance in improving literacy. We can put aside the argument about whether literacy among students is as bad as Dr Kemp is asserting. The educators I speak to inform me that is not the case. They are concerned that coming from a position of false perception, he is threatening to remove funding from the areas which need it most. He has adopted the completely converse attitude to that which should be adopted to deal with the literacy problem in education. His reported comments in today's *The Australian* newspaper that every school will have to make its results available has caused considerable concern.

Mr Barnett: The state education Ministers have made it quite clear that will not be the case.

Mr CARPENTER: I thank the Minister. It has caused considerable concern among educators, because it follows a model that was introduced during Thatcher's educational reforms in England. The general consensus is that if the idea was to enforce improved literacy standards on schools, it has failed abysmally. It will penalise schools by withdrawing funds from those schools which are having problems in raising literacy standards. This fear has been felt among the schools in my electorate. I am sure that they will be comforted to some extent by the Minister's interjection tonight. I hope the position he has put prevails in the long run. In at least five primary schools in my electorate a significant number of students come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Grave fears have been expressed that Dr Kemp's threats and other reforms to education could have the adverse effect of driving away better performing students and leaving the primary schools in my electorate as the providers of education for students who are struggling the most.

The threat to reveal or make available the performance details of each school is exactly what parents use as a basis for deciding whether to move their children from one school to another. This has happened already at Melville High School, which has suffered a declining number of students based on the perception that it is not performing well with regard to education standards. Schools in Willagee and Coolbellup would suffer greatly if this policy were forced upon the State Government. I have taken the opportunity of raising this matter, and I will issue a statement to my electorate outlining the Education Minister's response tonight in order to provide some level of comfort for educators and parents in my electorate.

David Kemp is a complete fool. He is a disgrace as federal Minister for Schools, Vocational Education and Training, and should be removed immediately, and on his tombstone should be the epitaph "He did not have a clue", because he does not have a clue about what is happening in the public education system. Regardless of whether he means to do it, he is driving people out of the public education system and into the private education system. He is devaluing the role of the public education system in this country, and that will wreak great damage upon Australia if it is allowed to continue for much longer.

The Director General of Australia's largest public school system, Dr Ken Boston, wrote recently that the great

strength of Australia's public school systems is they are the crucible in which the Australian identity has largely been formed, and that public schools have been without doubt the most important single factor in shaping the pluralist democratic multicultural society which is Australia today.

People like David Kemp and Amanda Vanstone have no concept of that element of our culture. They do not realise the damage that they are wreaking on the public education system in this country, which educates more than 70 per cent of Australia's children, and they do not realise the damage that they are wreaking on the long term social infrastructure of this country. I hope that their muddle headed educationalist views are not forced upon the States and are not continued with as public policy in this country for much longer.

Amanda Vanstone is the worst federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training that this country has seen. Senator Vanstone should have been sacked long ago, and the ridiculous remarks that she has made about the public school system and its capacity to provide children with the ability to access employment have displayed to the whole Australian population that she is a totally inappropriate person to hold that portfolio.

I have made many comments in my short time in this House about the value of the public education system. I have had the Minister visit at least one school in my electorate and provide some useful information to parents who are worried about the situation at that school. I hope that if situations arise in future where the public school system is deemed to be in crisis in my area, the Minister will follow the example that he has set.

Mr Barnett: You could always invite me to visit some of the primary schools to which you referred. I would be happy to do that.

Mr CARPENTER: I thank the Minister. The Minister was out of the House when I said that I will use the comments that he made tonight in a statement that I will put out tomorrow as an assurance from the Government that the Kemp policy will not be inflicted upon Western Australia's public school system. I am glad the Minister made that interjection.

The main functions of any State Government are education, health, and law and order. I turn now to health. I have raised this issue in this House previously, in conjunction with the member for Fremantle. Until one sees it with one's own eyes, it is difficult to believe what is happening in Fremantle Hospital in our area. Fremantle Hospital is the central health facility for the catchment area of which my electorate makes up a large part. When I was told that there was a new accident and emergency ward at Fremantle Hospital that had not been opened, I could not believe it and I would not repeat it publicly until I had seen it with my own eyes. I did see it, and I have seen it again, and it is still not open. That is a disgrace. There is no excuse for it.

The Minister for Health, who, as I said previously, I like and have known for a long time, because we come from the same town of Albany, is in a precarious situation because he made certain policy statements in the lead up to the election upon which he has palpably failed to deliver. In fact, the health system has deteriorated under his guidance. Our system of government demands responsibility and accountability, and the Minister must accept that responsibility and accountability. It is less than a year since the Minister made statements about reducing significantly - I think halving - waiting lists in public hospitals. He gave that categoric assurance to the electorate of Western Australia, but less than a full year later he has admitted that it is impossible to fulfil that promise.

The course of action that would be open to most people is pretty obvious. Since we raised this matter in the Parliament a few weeks ago, the situation at Fremantle Hospital has become worse rather than better. It is mind boggling to consider some of the information that has come out. About four weeks ago, the member for Fremantle and I explained to the House in some detail the extent of the problem of waiting lists for elective surgery at Fremantle Hospital.

However, since July, which were the figures on which we were operating at that stage, the situation has deteriorated even further, to the point where now almost 5 000 people are waiting for elective surgery at Fremantle Hospital. That is about half the population of the electorates of some members of this House. If that were happening in the country areas of this State which those members represent, the Government would act immediately, but because it is happening in Fremantle, the Government is riding the crisis as if it were a wave that will eventually wash away of its own accord.

The Government has a responsibility to act when these situations arise and not throw up its hands and say that all sorts of factors are impacting upon this problem and it cannot do anything about it, which is exactly what the Minister for Health is saying. He should get out of the way and the Government should put someone in his place who is prepared to do something about it. It is unbelievable that 5 000 people are waiting for elective surgery at Fremantle Hospital - not just for minor surgery, but in hundreds of cases for what is described as urgent surgery.

The figures that the member for Fremantle has accessed today and provided to me most kindly - I am considering

employing him as my 0.04 because he is so useful - show that about 29 per cent of the people who are waiting for urgent surgery at Fremantle Hospital are waiting for more than the nationally recognised standard period, whatever that may mean, of one month. The waiting list for all sorts of elective surgery at Fremantle Hospital is deteriorating daily. For example, in July of this year, 556 people were waiting for ophthalmology, but that figure is now 598; and 854 people were waiting for ear, nose and throat surgery, but that figure is now 904. The list is getting longer by the day. The median waiting time for ophthalmology in July was 4.17 months. In the space of one month, it increased to 4.55 months, or about two weeks longer. People are discovering that for each month that they wait, they must wait a bit longer. Women have come into my electorate office who have been waiting for years for some sort of treatment at Fremantle Hospital. That situation is utterly ridiculous and must be addressed.

Since we first raised the matter of the waiting list at Fremantle Hospital, I have had the unfortunate experience of having to explain to the Government the situation with regard to the accident and emergency department at Fremantle Hospital, of which the Minister was blithely unaware. He suggested that I should find out what was going on, if I was so interested, and when I did, he attacked me publicly for doing so. Since then as a result of questioning by the member for Fremantle, the Premier has provided the figures relating to funding for the public hospital system in this State. It is an interesting read.

I will concentrate on Fremantle Hospital because it falls within my electorate catchment area. Funding for that hospital has been cut. One would need to be a complete idiot to be behaving like this. Every day government members talk about the previous Labor Government's financial mismanagement, and say that we must run things as a business. The fact is that, with one or two exceptions, the Government is made up of failed small business people who could not run their own businesses, and that is why they are in this Parliament. They could not run their own business, yet they are in this place trying to tell us how the State should be run.

I suggest that every government member take a large coaster bus driven by the Minister for Housing - because he is a doctor and he is one of the better members - to the Fremantle Hospital. The member for Alfred Cove could go with them, because he knows the area well, and he has some concern about what is going on. The Minister for Housing could drive and the Minister for Lands could sit up the front. They could take the entire government team to the Fremantle Hospital. The Minister for Health could wheel them in so that they could see the line of 5 000 people - about as many who voted for the member for Roe - waiting outside for treatment at the hospital.

The member for Yokine could explain what it means for people with bad hips, bad eyes and bad throats to be waiting for months or even years for treatment. The member has had some experience of this, and he has maintained that the situation is becoming worse. The member should write the next health policy for the Government because at least he understands that the situation is becoming worse. He also understands that it cannot be stated on a piece of paper that the situation will be fixed, and then later that it cannot be fixed. This is a disgrace.

All government members should take a bus to the Fremantle Hospital and visit the accident-emergency department. They should stand outside the three emergency rooms containing 10 beds, and ask why there are no patients when 5 000 people stand outside, and when appointments are being cancelled because there are supposedly no beds. They should then ask the collective question: Should we not be doing something about this matter instead of saying in Parliament that opposition members wasted \$3m!

Dr Hames: You have three minutes remaining. Do you want to address the Homeswest matter?

Mr CARPENTER: I will move on to that.

Health, education and law and order are the three key areas - with due respect to other Ministers. Certainly they are the key budget areas for State Governments. The education system is in a state of flux. It could improve or it could become worse. People are waiting and are giving the Government a fair go - as are we. People are waiting to see what will emerge from the current changes. The health system must be addressed now. I have wandered from the point a little, but the Fremantle Hospital received \$112m in the 1996-97 Budget. This year, with the situation becoming worse each day, with the lines outside hospitals becoming longer every couple of weeks, the Health budget was cut by \$4m. At the same time, the Government has set aside \$41m as additional funding for health. As I recall it, the Minister said that extra money will not be expended on Fremantle Hospital; it will have to manage. The Government has \$41m set aside, and it has cut \$4m from that budget, and there are 5 000 people standing in line -

Dr Hames: I think that he said that \$41m is available for wherever it is needed.

Mr CARPENTER: It is needed already. Why is it not being spent? It is obvious that it is needed, and that \$41m is available -

Mr Shave: This is like the breaking of the loaves. You are being parochial because you want it spent in your area.

Mr CARPENTER: Does not the Minister want it?

Mr Shave: Of course I do, but the Minister for Health has overall responsibility to all electorates, not just the electorates that affect you and me or the hospitals in our areas -

Mr CARPENTER: I understand that, and I understand the comparative nature of any point the Minister wants to make about health. If I could find the information I could illustrate that the situation at Fremantle Hospital is much worse than at any other public hospital in the metropolitan area. Many more people are waiting to be treated at Fremantle Hospital than at any other hospital.

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Mr CARPENTER: If the situation at Fremantle Hospital was not as bad as at other hospitals-

Mr Shave: I agree with that point.

Mr CARPENTER: Thank you very much, Minister. I can put out a press statement with the Minister's name on it as well! Something must be done. We cannot go on saying that the problem will sort itself out when something happens in five years. Something must be done now; it is not good enough to put it off forever.

As a member of Parliament, I have come to appreciate the very real difficulties involved with Homeswest. As a journalist, I was often confronted with situations in which people asserted they had received a bad deal from Homeswest. Without wanting to decry the journalistic trade, it is easy to take one side of a story and promote it, and the next day or a couple of days later do a reaction piece. It is easy to generate a one-sided view of a situation - something I was never guilty of!

Mr Shave: When I was Minister for Housing, a family might have wrecked three houses, and the do-gooders would say that we should give that family a fourth house. There was a waiting list of 17 000 people, and perhaps people should be allowed to wreck one house, but after two or three houses have been wrecked it is difficult to allow them to have a fourth house. How would you handle that situation? You tell me that there are two sides to any story.

Mr CARPENTER: I appreciate that those situations arise. However, one of the Minister's problems is that he uses very intemperate language. People who make suggestions about the necessity to house people are not necessarily do-gooders. The Minister used the word "do-gooder" as an insult. If someone said to me that I was a bloody do-gooder, I would ask what was wrong with that. If I wanted to do some good for people, it would be fine. I accept the Minister's comments, but he categorises people with labels which are dismissive and insulting. He said that do-gooders say that people must have a roof over their head. I understand the dilemma, but because, as a member of Parliament, I say that I understand a family is a problem -

Mr Shave: Let me qualify the word "do-gooders". I will call them irrational critics.

Mr CARPENTER: Okay. If the Minister used more temperate language, his arguments would be improved and people would listen to them more often.

The member for Armadale drew to the attention of the Minister for Housing a Homeswest problem. She referred to the valuations used by Homeswest when selling homes to Homeswest tenants under the right-to-buy or other schemes. I am always a little sceptical of people who make claims along those lines. However, I have raised a matter in this House recently, but I do not know if it has been brought to the attention of the Minister for Housing. I referred to a clear-cut case involving Mr and Mrs Harry of 6 Malone Street, Willagee. I think the couple may have approached the office of the member for Alfred Cove, because I told the couple that it might be useful to bring on-side a member of the Government, and that the member was a very capable local member prior to my arrival in the area.

The Minister for Housing should seriously consider this matter, because the family was given a valuation of \$108 000 on their property, but subsequently the properties on either side were sold for \$20 000 to \$30 000 less. The couple were tenants of the property for 43 years, and the Minister could say that they have probably paid for the place 10 times over and they should take it off his hands because Homeswest is trying to reduce its housing stock and the responsibility that goes with it. That is fair enough! However, to have allowed a 70 year old man and his 65 year old wife to borrow to the hilt to purchase a property which was \$30 000 overvalued was shocking. I have raised their case in the House and written to the Minister, who should examine it because it needs attention.

Dr Hames: It would not have occurred under Keystart; it would be under the Right to Buy scheme.

Mr CARPENTER: The Minister does not need to tell me that; I informed him of that in my letter to him.

Dr Hames: The valuations are not done by the Government or anyone with anything to do with Homeswest; they are done by valuers and should be based on current values. If they are wrong -

Mr CARPENTER: Homeswest provided the couple with the valuations.

Dr Hames: That must be right, but as I say it will have been done by an independent valuer.

Mr CARPENTER: The responsibility lies with Homeswest.

Dr Hames: I am happy to examine the matter to see why it went wrong, but we must rely on quotations. By law valuers are supposed to value close to the real valuation.

Mr CARPENTER: I am sceptical when people make assertions about having lost their property and claim it is worth much less than what they paid for it. However, this is a genuine case which should be investigated. In his responses to the member for Armadale the Minister was dismissive of her comments. The member for Alfred Cove has also written to him.

I must sound like a broken record to the Minister for Police. People ask me - this perhaps characterises my speeches - "What is going on?" People ask what is going on when cases like that occur; what is going on in hospitals when people cannot have surgery and the Government is cutting health funding and storing it away for Joondalup or whatever we just heard about in Mandurah; and what is going on in suburbs like Hilton when a 58 year old woman innocently going about her business in the middle of a Friday night is bashed half to death and the police response is that it must close the local police station? That is totally wrong headed.

I do not know what policy Commissioner Falconer is imposing on the Western Australia Police Service but I bet that in 20 years another Police Commissioner will take another direction. However, I am saying to the Minister for Police, as I have said to the hierarchy in the Fremantle Police Station and as I say to my constituents, the best policing option is to have local police stations with local police who know a little about their area such as who are the good people and who are the bad people, and where are the trouble spots. Local police have some presence on the streets of their suburb.

Under present policies, which seem to be out of the hands of the Police Minister - that is a real worry because he should be representing public interest rather than just seeing what the police are doing - the service is moving to a collective group of policemen in regional police stations miles from where police are supposed to know what is occurring in the suburbs. Police are stuck in the new police station in Murdoch, or driving around at 60 kilometres an hour in their cars oblivious of life on the streets. If policing is moving towards a centralised police system where all the resources are in one block and there are no local police stations it is going the wrong way.

That is what I told a 58 year old woman who was bashed over the head within a couple of hundred metres of a police station which was closed because it was after business hours on Friday. She could probably see the police station from where she was attacked, but it was closed because it was after six o'clock. There is something wrong with that policy. I have tried previously to interest the Police Minister in addressing this issue. He gave some assurance that he would consider the Hilton situation. When I have a final announcement from the Police Service that that station will not be closed I will believe him; I think the plan is still to close it.

The Government should resist the policies brought down from Canberra by the federal education and schools Ministers, both of whom are incompetent in their jobs, and who have demonstrated they should have been sacked long ago. It is amazing that Amanda Vanstone is a Minister; she is a complete joke and her having that portfolio is a very poor statement about the Howard Government. In any case we are led by the worst Prime Minister this country has had since Billy McMahon. The sooner he goes, the better. He is leading this country down a blind alley because he is incapable of any form of leadership or direction for the country. He created a scenario that has led to the ugliest debate in this country for a long time. He should get out. There must be better alternatives on the conservative side of politics in Canberra. The member for Alfred Cove can probably think of a few. John Howard is not the man to be the Prime Minister of this country.

The only solace I can take from John Howard's being the Prime Minister of Australia is that he will be remembered as a very bad Prime Minister. I urge the Government and the Ministers I have addressed tonight to consider the problems I have raised.

MS WARNOCK (Perth) [9.45 pm]: I will seize this opportunity to discuss a number of subjects, including bicycle safety, security in the city and sewers, among other things. I congratulate Brady Anderson on his success in winning the Sandover Medal last night. He is with the East Perth Football Club, of which I am one of the vice patrons. I am pleased to be able to congratulate such a wonderful player for that club. My comments were encouraged by my colleague from Dawesville with his evident and understandable enthusiasm for the Peel Thunder Football Club.

Mr Shave: I do not know about understandable.

Ms WARNOCK: I am such a polite person; perhaps my comments therefore are understandable.

Mr Bradshaw interjected.

Ms WARNOCK: I am sorry that the East Perth club missed out so narrowly this year on getting into the local finals, but it does not always have the luck of the Irish. The betting scandal which has broken out subsequent to the count last night is a mere sideshow which I hope will be resolved by the Betting Control Board. It should be addressed firmly. There is obviously a problem of security in the Sandover Medal count.

To address more serious issues I refer to the sewer project which is making its presence felt in the western side of my electorate.

Mr Carpenter: Is it the sewer project?

Ms WARNOCK: Yes; the member for Willagee will hear all about it; it is a very important issue. Earlier this year the Water Corporation announced a project to replace the Perth main sewer. This is a several million dollar project to do necessary work on a series of giant pipes that we all know are underground doing their very hard work. The pipes have had their day and need to be replaced. The residents most affected by the early stages of this project are my constituents in Lake Monger Drive, Wembley.

I have had many representations from this group of people. I have been to onsite meetings and residents' meetings where they brought their views to my attention in no uncertain manner. Although, like every other citizen of Perth, they obviously welcome and acknowledge the necessity for this sewer work, they feel they have been treated like the proverbial mushrooms. They also feel their concerns were ignored by the Water Corporation as a story in the local *Subiaco Post* shows.

The residents of Lake Monger Drive feel that the Water Corporation has taken the easy and cheap way out of a dilemma. Nobody denies the necessity for some of those public projects; nonetheless, they always create a dilemma. One must weigh up the interests of the local people against the greater good of the community. The people are concerned that their concerns have been ignored in the search for a way out of this dilemma. One of the residents told me yesterday that she believed the contracts for this project were let long before residents were consulted. She believes there were many other parties to the matter who were not consulted.

Dr Hames: That is not true.

Ms WARNOCK: She believes there is no question that that is the view of the people in the area. They believe that Aboriginal and heritage groups that should be consulted were certainly consulted, but that the residents were told about the project after the decisions had been made.

Dr Hames: Not they, she believed it.

Ms WARNOCK: She is not the only person who contacted me.

Dr Hames: The others freely admitted they had consultation, but did not understand what was going on.

Ms WARNOCK: That is not the view that was conveyed to me by the residents. They also believe that the Water Corporation had always intended to ignore their alternative suggestions and the Minister had not been given an accurate costing on the alternative proposal. I attended a meeting with the residents and suggested that in the first instance they should take up the matter with the local council because, as it represented the area, it had an interest in this matter. They did take it up with the local council and at a meeting with various parties to this matter, including the Water Corporation, they put their point of view. The residents certainly expected inconvenience. Anybody who has been near the building of a major public works program, as many of us have, will know they will cop inconvenience. However, the residents now have what they consider to be major disruptions to their lives, a real concern to their safety and the potential cost of recompense should anything go wrong.

Those members in this House who are not familiar with this area must take into account that the residential part of Lake Monger Drive is built on a very steep slope. Residents are genuinely worried about the effect of slippage following work to dig the big trench, which is part of putting in a sewer, and the accompanying dewatering. They fear that cracks and subsidence are possible and they wonder whether they will be recompensed. I have seen a document from the Water Corporation outlining its intentions to look after the residents. I hope it will go some way to reassuring the residents. I know and they know, if they have been reading the local papers, how many compensation claims are outstanding over the Northbridge tunnel disruptions, and that will not help their confidence in this matter.

Dr Hames: I met with the council and the Water Corporation and they suggested we move out 4 metres into the middle section because it would free-up the local roads and give them continuous access to their properties. It would not only block two lanes of Lake Monger Drive and increase the costs, but also they could not use the internal drive because even though the hole would be moved out there would be a huge hole near the private road and we could not possibly let cars drive on it for the risk of its collapsing. People will be prevented from driving into their

driveways for a maximum of three days at a time. We will provide security guards and even hotel accommodation if they want to move out.

Ms WARNOCK: I have seen the offers and they certainly are generous.

Dr Hames: I would like to help the residents, but we could not open that road. There is no other way around it. I sympathise with them but there is nothing I can do.

Ms WARNOCK: They are disappointed that the Minister has gone along with this other option.

Dr Hames: Now you know the reason.

Ms WARNOCK: I do and I have seen the written reasons given by the Minister. The residents considered the option of putting the line down the median strip to be a much better option and that it would not be much more expensive.

Dr Hames: It would be between \$150 000 and \$200 000.

Ms WARNOCK: An engineer did some costings for them and they believed it came in on the lower side of that. Be that as it may, they felt it would have been a far better option to put that sewer line along the median strip instead of on the slip road outside their properties and very close to their driveways. They put it to me that the Government is not dealing with 100 year old trees, as it is in some parks in Perth, but with gum trees which were planted in about 1962 and a good percentage of them will be removed with the sewer line going through.

Dr HAMES: A percentage of them, but not a good percentage of them. It is less than half.

Ms WARNOCK: That is true. One of the residents who was told the sewer work would have no effect on her property was very shocked when her front lawn fell into the hole which was dug outside her property a few days ago. It did not instil confidence in any of the local people.

I have read the document which was produced by the Water Corporation and it has certainly made assurances, in writing, to the people in the street. I hope there will not be any suggestion if anything goes amiss, however slightly, that those conditions will not be kept. I am thinking of people whose properties run adjacent to Reid Highway. They had a very long wait for matters to be settled after their properties were damaged when a major work went past them.

Dr Hames: There is no question whatsoever and it is the least I can do.

Ms WARNOCK: I hope they do not have any problems with that. They are absolutely concerned about how it will affect not only their lives, but also their properties. They are disappointed that the Water Corporation has decided to go ahead with putting the sewer along the route it has chosen. I have told the residents that they have an assurance in writing and I hope there will not be any call on those matters about which the document assures them. If there is to be any damage, I hope the Water Corporation will take seriously its responsibility to the people in that street.

As a person who represents people who have had to put up with an immense amount of disruption over the Northbridge tunnel, I know people must be kept to their word because it is easy to make promises in the beginning. When the project goes on and damage is done and disruption is caused, it is too easy to back away from commitments which were made at the beginning.

I move on to a different matter that deals with cycleways and I bring to the attention of the House some questions I asked the Minister for Transport earlier this year. The questions concerned bike safety in Perth and they involved a whole lot of statistics about how many cyclists had been injured over a certain period.

The cyclist who was keen to have those answers was horrified when he obtained a copy of them because he believed that unreliable and incomplete statistics had been used thus giving a wrong picture of the number of cyclists who had been hospitalised or treated for some sort of injury. I refer to a document the cyclist sent to me with the questions that I asked about cycling in the House. I asked what was the Australia-wide proportion of cyclists among hospitalised road crash victims as reported by the federal Office of Road Safety. The Minister replied that 1 082 cyclists were admitted to hospital Australia-wide in 1994; that is, 4 per cent of hospitalised road users.

According to the Cyclists' Action Group, which is concerned about safety for cyclists in Western Australia, the real figure is 17 per cent, and the number of hospitalisations in 1991 was 6 031. The group claims that this is reliable data from hospitals, not incomplete police data. The group representative says that the error is in the range of six-fold low, which he explains as follows -

The figures provided to the Minister are "police-reported - crash" hospitalisations which are almost unrelated to how many cyclists are actually hospitalised. To provide only the police data and to claim to the Minister that it represents the number of cyclists hospitalised is grossly misleading.

What is the point of drawing my attention to these statistics, and how badly this person feels they have been conveyed to the House in this ministerial answer? Road crash statistics are used in allocating road safety funding. This cyclist believes that without the use of correct statistics, cycling will not become safer on Western Australian roads. He also claims that cyclist groups have had no representation on the black spot consultative panel to assess where funding should be directed. He believes that the funding assessments are based on unreliable and misleading data.

I intend to take up this matter with the Minister. There seems to be no point in encouraging the greater use of bicycles, as has properly been part of the Government's policy for health and anti-pollution reasons, if cyclists are putting themselves at greater risk than necessary. This gentleman has drawn my attention to bicycle safety on a number of occasions, and I intend to pursue the issue on his behalf.

Another matter which this gentleman has asked me to raise is the use of the footbridge which passes over the railway line near the Perth Entertainment Centre. The Cyclists' Action Group believes that the Westrail-controlled Perth Entertainment Centre footbridge should be open to bicycle riders. It is currently open only to bicycle pushers; that is, it may be used only when pushing rather than riding bicycles. I can see the convenience of using the footbridge as it cuts out a large amount of road use to reach that area. If one does not go over the bridge, one needs to go all around the world, so to speak, in order to cycle safely into town.

Anyone who has ridden a cycle on a crowded road in the city knows how hair-raising the experience can be, unless one is a bicycle courier who takes great delight in riding fast and taking risks. Most people find it very risky and want to cut down the journey's length as much as possible, therefore they believe they should be able to use the footbridge over the railway line. I intend to take up that matter with the Minister on the group's behalf.

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Mr Bradshaw: I, and others like me, use that footbridge regularly and believe it is totally wrong for people to ride their bicycles on it.

Ms WARNOCK: I use it.

Mr Bradshaw: It is safer to push the bike over the 200 metres or so, and it is not that much of a greater effort to do so.

Ms WARNOCK: I used it today, as I do regularly, to check it out, and people could safely ride on that bridge. Some people I know who ride cycles in town in a risky fashion could not use the bridge, but most cyclists could. I intend to take up that issue on behalf of the person who raised the matter with me.

This person drew my attention to the fact that in 1996, 11 cyclists were killed and 714 were hospitalised as a result of vehicle crashes. This was 14 per cent of the total of 5 204 WA people who were hospitalised from vehicle crashes. Not since 1986 have more people been hospitalised from vehicle crashes, and the number of cyclists hospitalised last year is the second highest figure ever reported. Obviously, the Cyclists' Action Group is deeply concerned about safety, and for that reason I intend to take up those matter with the Minister on behalf of cyclists.

I now bring to the attention of the House one or two small matters concerning security and safety in the city. One of my constituents brought a matter to my attention only this week: He lives in North Perth and sometimes works at home during the day. He told me that some security firms are using telephone marketing techniques to ascertain a household's level of home security. This process appears to be lawful as I made an inquiry on my constituent's behalf with the police and the Ministry for Fair Trading on the practice. His main concern, and mine too, is that people are giving out information over the telephone about their home and family to effectively anonymous individuals. If it were a legitimate survey, it would be another matter. However, it is clear that this information could be used unlawfully by unscrupulous people.

The police officers to whom I spoke agreed that it certainly could be a problem: A lone pensioner answering the question could put himself or herself at risk with an unscrupulous person using the phone polling technique. The best advice is for people to say, "I don't want to answer such questions." I leave it for the House to consider whether that technique is appropriate for use by such firms. I can understand the firm wanting to convey to people that security is important, and that it can help them solve that problem. My constituent is a man in his thirties who is not likely to be overly fussy about such matters, but this practice rang bells in his head, as it does in mine.

I turn now to the issue of crime and safety in the city, an issue about which I have been concerned for a long time as I have lived in the city for 30 years and represented the area in Parliament for four and a half years. In that time, I have written many letters to the two Ministers for Police, and I can understand their frustration in constantly receiving my letters on this matter. People bring matters to my attention, and I must draw them to the attention of the Minister.

I received a letter from the Minister this week in reply to a letter of mine written in July on behalf of a business person

in the CBD who was concerned about antisocial behaviour in the CBD, and Barrack Street in particular. Although the Minister's reply has taken a long time to reach me, it has answered my constituents' question and will satisfy their concerns.

In brief, the letter relates to the fact that some people who stay in the CBD, particularly on Friday nights, to drink in a particular tavern, cause problems for merchants and passers-by in town enjoying themselves. The Minister said that police and the City of Perth jointly operate and monitor security cameras placed in the city, and indicated that some additional security cameras may well be placed in Barrack Street. I hope that that is the case. I am a member of a committee which makes recommendations about such issues to the City of Perth, and we will be pursuing the security cameras matter. The Minister also mentioned that a mobile policing facility is placed in the Murray Street Mall, which will be a reassurance to people concerned about safety in the city. Many matters relate to the licensed premises to which I referred, and I will take up the subject when we debate an amendment to the Liquor Licensing Act later this year. It is clear that some premises in the city draw people who make a nuisance of themselves when they have been drinking, and who make the lives of others a misery. I am pleased a number of conditions will be placed on these premises. It is hoped that with extra foot patrols and cameras that matter in the centre of the city will be addressed. As I have said many times in this place before, this is our capital city. We hope that not only people who work in the city, but also residents from other suburbs who come into the city during the day or night to shop or simply unwind are able to enjoy themselves in safety and not be constantly concerned about antisocial behaviour, or worse, from others in the city.

I draw attention to a personal safety seminar that I attended this morning. It was organised by Citysafe - an organisation I have mentioned a number of times in the House before. It is a community policing committee of which I have been a member for about five years. Its business is to address safety in the city. I hope that others hearing about the seminar will take up a similar initiative in their area. This seminar was largely aimed at women who work in the central business district and who are concerned about getting home safely, particularly after work late on Friday night. One of the outcomes of the seminar this morning was that Citysafe has made an offer to women who work in the city of a supervised safety walk from the CBD to adjacent car parks on Friday nights - supervised by security officers who work in the city and also by the cameras. I hope this will be helpful because there has been concern about personal safety in the city for some time.

I will give members a few statistics to illustrate why this sort of activity by Citysafe is necessary. Since January there have been 37 sex offences in the city, compared with about 55 for the whole of 1996. In just July and August this year there were 53 common assaults in the city and 827 calls were made to police about antisocial behaviour, such as kids sniffing glue and gangs of kids causing problems for older people. Shockingly, there have been 139 robberies. That figure is up from 59 last year and is a 140 per cent increase. The interesting aspect about this crime is that it largely involves bag snatches. In the opinion of the police and security authorities in the city it is related to the heroin on our streets. Although it is understandable, it is hair raising and it is something all of us hope we are able to bring under control as soon as possible.

The efforts of Citysafe are obviously directed at controlling these offences in town and making town a better place for men and women and young people to spend time in. The aim of the organisation is not to discourage young people from coming into the city - as some people thought at one stage - but to make it a city where young people and old people feel equally comfortable going in both the daytime and the evening. It is obvious that personal security is not guaranteed in the city yet. Citysafe will have a job on its hands for some time. I hope the Government will take seriously these warnings from people who work and play in the CBD, because those of us on this side of the House have vivid memories of the Government making much of its law and order credentials before the last two elections.

I do not want to overplay this issue because as the representative of the city I want to encourage people to go there. However, I take my responsibilities as a member of Citysafe seriously, and I do not see our being out of a job in the foreseeable future. I support the efforts of this community organisation. I applaud the efforts of the police and City of Perth security officers who work in the city because working together they do a good job. However, for some the city still creates concern. People are calling out for further effort from the Government to make it a place where people want to be. I support that call. I applaud the efforts of those who are doing their best to make the city a better place for people to visit.

MR MASTERS (Vasse) [10.14 pm]: I want to acquaint members with some recent developments in the wine industry in Vasse. It is an industry that is pretty well known for the tourism activity it encourages in the south west; however, it is also becoming a major exporter in its own right. There has been major growth in this industry over the past five or 10 years. To give members some idea of the strength of the industry in Vasse and in the south west in general, I will give two examples. The first is Capel Vale Wines. This company started its operations about 15 years ago when a Bunbury based person, Peter Pratten, commenced operations in a very small way. Slowly but

surely, the quality of his grapes and his knowledge of what to do with the grapes became such that he was able to produce good wines. He employed Rob Bowen as his principal winemaker. That operation expanded quickly and today the chief winemaker is Krister Jonsson. Krister is Swedish, which is a little unusual considering we are a long way from Sweden. He is a reflection of the international nature of this industry of which I am speaking. Not only does Capel Vale employ him as its chief winemaker, but last year for several months the company employed for two or three months a Japanese winemaker who was in Western Australia to learn the trade and to take those skills back to Japan.

It used to be a small property on the banks of the Capel River, but today Capel Vale has expanded such that it purchases grapes from a number of other vineyards, including properties in the great southern. Recently it entered into a new contract with local farmers Doug and Craig Scott. They are former dairy farmers who decided it was time to expand and get into new fields. They are reaping the rewards with good quality grapes. Capel Vale is about to produce some very good quality wine from that. The end result is that Capel Vale has doubled its wine output over the past few years and will double it again over the next three to four years. I understand its goal is to have total production valued at \$10m by 2000. A major part of that will be in export industries, but as a sign of confidence in the local tourism industry Capel Vale is also spending several hundred thousand dollars on a major new wine tasting area and restaurant complex, which is now under construction on the banks of the Capel River. I commend all members of this place and the other place to try Capel Vale, especially after it completes its new wine tasting and restaurant complex.

The second example I will mention is the well known company of Evans and Tate. Evans and Tate go back even a few more years than Capel Vale - in the order of 20 years or so. Historically it has been associated with the Swan Valley. However, it is selling up its property in the Swan Valley area - which I understand is a few hectares, but is reasonably valuable - and moving to the Jindong area, which is a traditional broadacre beef farming area just to the south west of Busselton. It is moving to land which traditionally has not been considered wine growing country. There have been problems with the soil from waterlogging or other factors and generally it has not been seen as the best place to grow grapes. However, Evans and Tate has realised that the future of the wine industry in Western Australia is in the south west. I do not wish to be parochial and say it will be only in the Busselton-Augusta-Margaret River area, but it will certainly be in the south west because places such as the south coast, the great southern and other areas provide enormous potential for the expansion of this industry.

I understand that Evans and Tate will be spending in the order of \$2m to move from its base at Swan Valley to the new property it has purchased and on the obvious need to construct a new winery, restaurant and tasting area. The industry is going ahead in leaps and bounds, which is fantastic. I could mention a large number of other wineries, but those two wineries spring most to mind. Having given members some of the detailed history of those two companies, as an aside but nonetheless an important one, I must also briefly raise the issue of planning, especially since a number of planning schemes have recently been or are currently placed before the public in the south west for assessment.

I am on the public record as saying that I strongly support the ultimate goals that these planning schemes are trying to achieve. For that reason I look forward to being able to support them in this place when the time comes. It must be remembered, however, that we are all only human. No-one - I repeat absolutely no-one - whether that person be a member of Parliament, a normal member of our community or even a public servant employed by the Ministry for Planning or another government department, can accurately claim to predict the future. Knowledge can be predicted with only a very rough degree of certainty; nothing in life is certain. It would be dangerous to try to predict the future. In the context of my comments about the wine industry, it would be difficult to predict that land use controls which are put in place today will be there forever or are necessarily the best land use controls. Anyone who dared to predict 30 years ago that Busselton, Capel, the Augusta-Margaret River Shire and other areas in the great southern region would become the centre of a major and expanding wine industry, would have been locked away as mentally unsound. Even 20 years ago the future was said to be in marron farming. Sadly, a lot of people lost very large sums of money at the time when marron farming was being pushed as a major new industry. I am familiar with the marron industry because 20 years ago I was employed by the then Department of Fisheries and Wildlife in Busselton. One of my paid tasks was to assess the marron aquaculture industry and to determine where it was headed and to look at the problems. At the end of the day the marron industry failed in the south west, not because there was a problem with the marron or anything the farmers were doing, but the water they were putting into their farm dams was so pure that the marron were forced to cannibalise each other to build up salt levels sufficiently to allow the smaller number of marron to live in each cubic metre of the dams. Some 20 years ago marron were said to be the future for the south west. Sadly it failed for technical reasons.

The wine industry was seen 20 years ago as just a small industry which had a certain amount of potential but it was restricted, so people thought, to doctors and other people with the financial means to be able to establish new vineyards. The reality today is that there are about 160 vineyards in Western Australia, the overwhelming majority

of which are in the south west of the State and are expanding. The message is that we should not unduly constrain the imagination of individuals. As a Government committed to the principles of free enterprise, one of our major responsibilities is to sustain the future by refusing to unreasonably constrain the present. Returning to the issue of growth in the wine industry, I must fully support the member for Swan Hills' comments which were made in this place last Wednesday. She addressed this place on the subject of taxation and the difficulties caused by the High Court decision of 6 August.

A submission that was presented to certain members of this place by the Wine Industry Association of Western Australia was entitled "Fair Treatment for the Western Australian Wine Industry" and subtitled "A Proposal to the Treasury, Government of Western Australia and Office of Racing, Gaming and Liquor". It put forward six points which it hoped this Government would follow through to ensure that the wine industry of Western Australia would not be adversely impacted upon by the 6 August decision of the High Court and the subsequent arrangements between State and Federal Governments. The six items are contained in a summary of the document. It seeks the reinstatement of the Western Australian Government's 15 per cent rebate for all cellar door sales, including mail order and restaurant sales. It is calling for the reinstatement of the previous tax position through rebating of the full 15 per cent of wholesale sales tax for wine that is used in its own activities, such as tasting. It is asking for a reinstatement of the previous tax position by rebating the full differential of the wholesale sales tax increase, which was 1.14 per cent paid to wholesalers. It is seeking a commitment of the Western Australian Government to provide all rebates to wineries on the same day as the wholesale sales tax remittance to the Commonwealth. It is seeking support from the Western Australian Government in discussions with the Federal Government to negotiate a deferred wholesale sales tax liability in recognition of the significant impost on cash flow caused by the changes to tax collection. Finally, it is calling for support from the Western Australian Government to reinstate the form of small business exemption threshold on wineries. I fully support all of those initiatives. Obviously, some negotiation is still to take place and I believe that the wine industry is prepared to move on some of the six points to which I have referred, which are not rock solid. I understand that anything up to 15 per cent of the wine produced in the industry can be consumed in trade sales, tastings on site and so on. Therefore, the rebate of wholesale sales tax for wine sales from the cellar door can be important.

A topic which I believe will grow in importance over the coming years is the Busselton airport. Criticism has been made in the south west as well as here in Perth of the \$100 000 guarantee that has been provided to Skywest Airlines for the first six months of its operations at Busselton airport. I must admit that there has been some criticism, even in the Busselton area, because electors have been concerned, not so much with the sum that has been guaranteed but with the fact that Skywest has been reported as saying that the return airfare between Busselton and Perth is \$200. In early negotiations with the various airlines, and certainly over the past two or three years as Busselton airport has taken shape, most Busselton people were led to believe the fare would be \$160 or \$180. A fare of \$200 is a little more than they were expecting and it has taken them by surprise. However, I am pleased to advise the House that the Cape Naturaliste Tourism Association Inc, which is the body representing the Shire of Busselton in the negotiations with the airlines, has recently publicly announced full details of the fare arrangements with Skywest. After I have quoted from the item, I will briefly table this paper in the House. I will advise the House of some of the general details which will come into effect as at 1 October of this year when Skywest starts flying from Perth to Busselton and return. There will be six return flights a week: Sunday, one return flight; Monday, two return flights; Wednesday, two return flights; and Friday one return flight. The most important aspect relates to the fare structure. The full economy airfare with no restrictions and being fully refundable is \$200 return or \$100 one way.

I am pleased to advise that most tickets will almost certainly be sold at far lower prices. For example, a two day advance purchase return fare, which is fully refundable, is \$172. It gets even better. I know I am sounding like a certain television advertisement here. However, in addition to that is a 10 day advance purchase fare, which requires a minimum stay of two nights away, with any changes being made 10 days before travel otherwise a 50 per cent fee will be charged. We are talking serious business here, because the return air fare for this 10 day advance purchase air fare is only \$120. Also a \$126 fare can be used in conjunction with accommodation. The requirement for that is a minimum two nights away. Another very attractive fare is a 21 day advance purchase fare with a minimum stay of one Saturday night away. Changes must be made 21 days or more before departure and the fare is non-refundable. Some restrictions apply, but nonetheless \$110 for a return airfare Perth-Busselton or Busselton-Perth is very attractive. The fare for international travellers is \$108. I ask that Skywest Airlines' flight schedule be tabled.

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

Mr MASTERS: I congratulate Barry Brown, the general manager of the Cape Naturalise Tourist Association. The association is organising car hire packages with at least one of the larger car hire companies.

The most exciting part of this airfare package is that the Cape Naturaliste Tourist Association has put together a two or three day fare package with a view to encouraging primarily business people to leave Perth over the weekend or

when they have a break in their activities and fly down to Busselton to be picked up by a complimentary bus, pay a cheap bus fare, or have a hire car waiting for them. Their accommodation, restaurant reservations and visits to tourist attractions and so on will be pre-booked. This two or three day package will make use of the \$120 advance purchase fare, among others, and will start a tourism trend that will reap great benefits to my electorate of Vasse.

I have no doubt that Busselton and Dunsborough will remain the preferred holiday locations for Perth families; they have so many attractions of which I am sure all members are aware. The tourism future will involve two or three day package tours for not only visiting business people but also older couples, especially overseas couples who have been fortunate enough to leave their children behind and are looking for some indulgence, nice wines, in winter a roaring log fire and in summer glorious beaches. Many of these people will not have the time for a one or two week holiday, but will want to enjoy the best that Vasse and the western part of the Warren-Blackwood area has to offer. That means the best food, wine, scenery, great weather and tourist attractions that will be out of this world.

The Government should be commended for its investment in the Busselton airport as well as for its guarantee to underwrite Skywest's flight arrangements. I am also confident that the Government will be commended in time on its decision to rebate fully the wholesale sales tax on cellar door wine sales as confirmation of its commitment to the south west, the wine industry and business in general. Vasse and the wine industry have a very bright future. With goodwill on all sides I am sure the wine industry will go from strength to strength.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Barnett (Leader of the House).

BILLS (2) - RETURNED

1. Cement Works (Cockburn Cement Limited) Agreement Amendment Bill.
2. Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No 4).

Bills returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.35 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Answers to questions are as supplied by the relevant Minister's office.

GOVERNMENT INSTRUMENTALITIES - ANNUAL REPORTS

Costs

1729. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Lands; Fair Trading; Parliamentary and Electoral Affairs:

- (1) For each department or agency under the Minister's control, what was the cost of producing the 1995-96 annual report, including -
 - (a) artwork;
 - (b) publication;
 - (c) distribution?
- (2) How do the costs for the 1995-96 annual report compare with the costs associated with the 1994-95 annual report?
- (3) Was the 1995-96 annual report produced wholly within the department or agency?
- (4) If not -
 - (a) what services were provided by contractors;
 - (b) at what cost?
- (5) Who printed the 1995-96 annual report?
- (6) How many copies of the 1995-96 annual report were printed?
- (7) To whom was the 1995-96 annual report distributed?
- (8) Was environmentally-friendly or recycled material used in the production of the document?

Mr SHAVE replied:

Department of Land Administration

- (1) The Department does not record detailed costings of DOLA resources required in the preparation and production of annual reports.
- (2) The Department does not record detailed costings of DOLA resources required in the preparation and production of annual reports therefore no comparison of costs associated with the 1994-95 annual report can be provided.
- (3) No.
- (4) (a) Printing.
- (b) \$7,850.
- (5) Vanguard Press.
- (6) 650 copies.
- (7) State members of Parliament, Western Australian Government departments and agencies, like departments and agencies in other jurisdictions in Australia, selected international agencies with close ties to DOLA, customers on request.
- (8) Yes.

LandCorp

- (1) (a) \$10,000
- (b) \$15,000
- (c) \$600
- (2) The cost of the 1994/95 Annual Report was \$30,500.
The cost of the 1995/96 Annual Report was \$25,600.

- (3) No.
- (4) (a) Artwork and publication.
(b) \$25,000.
- (5) Eclipse Corporation.
- (6) 800.
- (7) Federal and State members of Parliament, Joint Venture Partners, Board Members, Local Government, Media, State Government Agencies and Suppliers.
- (8) Yes.

Ministry Of Fair Trading

- (1) (a) \$450.00
(b) \$17,100.00
(c) Distribution was undertaken by the Ministry in conjunction with its normal operations and no separate costs were kept.
- (2) The cost of the 1994-95 annual report was \$14,500.00
The cost of the 1995-96 annual report was \$17,550.00
- (3) No.
- (4) (a) Artwork and publication.
(b) \$17,550
- (5) Frank Daniels Printers
- (6) 500.
- (7) State and Federal members of Parliament; State Government and central Federal Government and agencies and authorities; peak industry groups with an interest in ministry affairs and activities; Western Australian, federal and international consumer representative groups; academics; State and Federal libraries; and the general public on request.
- (8) No.

Western Australian Electoral Commission

- (1) (a) \$2450.00.
(b) \$3508.00.
(c) \$250.00.
- (2) The cost of the 1995-96 annual report was \$6208.00.
The cost of the 1994-95 annual report was \$5750.00.
- (3) No.
- (4) (a) Artwork.
(b) \$2450.
- (5) Supreme Printers.
- (6) 500.
- (7) State and Federal members of Parliament; political parties registered with the Western Australian Electoral Commission; Returning Officers for the 57 Legislative Assembly electoral districts; Electoral Commissioners in other State and Territory Electoral Commissions; the Australian Electoral Commission; political commentators and observers interested in the political process in this State.
- (8) No.

HEALTH - MENTAL

Exmouth - Future Plans

1944. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What mental health care services are currently available for residents of Exmouth?

- (2) What mental health care services are planned for the residents of Exmouth?

Mr PRINCE replied:

- (1) A Gascoyne Community Mental Health Team member (Social Worker) visits Exmouth from Carnarvon monthly, other team members including Community Mental Health Nurses and Clinical Psychologist visit on a needs basis. A psychiatrist from Perth visits Exmouth 3 monthly as a planned regular visit provided by the Gascoyne Health Service. Additional visits can be arranged on a needs basis. Gascoyne Community Mental Health Unit has a 1800 number for telephone consultation and advice during business hours.

Geraldton Community Mental Health Unit runs a 24 hour crisis line with a 1800 telephone number.

A full time Psychologist is provided in Exmouth by Centre Care for financial and relationship counselling. This service commenced in February 1997, since this time there has been a decrease in the number of referrals received by the Gascoyne Health Service mental health team in Exmouth.

- (2) The above services are planned to continue. The service provided by the Gascoyne Community Mental Health team member (Social Worker) will expand from a three day to a five day monthly visit. The Gascoyne Community Mental Health team plan to provide education on mental health to hospital and community health staff in Exmouth.

SWIMMING POOLS - INDOOR

Heating - Cost

1968. Mr CARPENTER to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

- (1) In its 1996 election campaign the Coalition promised to "investigate ways of heating the many indoor swimming pools in Western Australia which are currently only used for approximately 10 weeks a year". \$1 million was promised for the initiative. Can the Minister outline what progress has been made on this matter?
- (2) Specifically which swimming pools have been examined for heating?
- (3) When were they examined?
- (4) By whom were they examined?
- (5) What pools have been earmarked for heating?
- (6) If none, why?
- (7) When will these pools be heated?
- (8) What is the estimated cost of heating pools identified as suitable?

Mr MARSHALL replied:

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

- (1) The Ministry of Sport and Recreation is implementing this important initiative.
- A Technical Focus Paper is being commissioned which examines pool heating alternatives. This paper will be used in subsequent educational forums and seminars concerning provision of aquatic facilities.
 - Within the next Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF) round a grant priority has been established whereby local government and community groups can request a contribution towards planning studies which examine alternative pool heating options.
 - Within the next CSRFF round there will also be a grant priority for pool heating initiatives.

CSRFF applications close at the end of September. When these applications are received we will have a clearer indication of which pools are requesting support for heating, when they wish to install heating, and estimated costs.

- (2)-(5) Not applicable.

- (6) Refer to (1).

(7)-(8) Not applicable.

HOSPITALS - NURSES

Clinical, Registered and Agency

2007. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many clinical nurses and registered nurses (excluding agency nurses) were employed by Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, Royal Perth Hospital and Fremantle Hospital in each of the last five years?
- (2) How many agency nurses were employed by each of these hospitals in each of the last five years?

Mr PRINCE replied:

Hospital		92/93	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97
Sir Charles Gairdner	Nursing FTEs	-	943.17	877.58	865.20	859.76
	Agency FTEs	-	13.77	29.72	12.16	15.40
	TOTAL	-	956.94	907.29	877.36	875.16
Fremantle	Clinical Nurses	111	130	130	174	167
	Registered Nurses	315	295	382	369	381
	Agency Nurses	8	11	12	16	22
	TOTAL	434	436	524	559	570
Royal Perth	Clinical Nurses	1131.60	1017.14	1029.23	1023.96	1042.40
	Registered Nurses	-	226.04	205.50	183.89	165.12
	Other Nurses	-	16.57	35.57	48.34	52.71
	Agency	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL	1131.60	1259.75	1270.30	1256.19	1260.23

HEALTH - METROPOLITAN HEALTH SERVICE

Board - Membership

2013. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Who are the chairman and members of the newly appointed Metropolitan Health System Board and what are their qualifications and current substantive positions?
- (2) What remuneration will the chairman and members receive?

Mr PRINCE replied:

- (1) Metropolitan Health Service Board members:

Executive Chairman	The Hon Ian William Payne McCall AO
Qualifications:	Bachelor of Laws
Current Position:	Part Time Executive Chairman
Independent Member	Mr John King Atkins
Qualifications:	Bachelor of Laws Bachelor of Jurisprudence Master of Laws (London)
Current Position:	Managing Partner, Parker & Parker
Independent Member	Ms Judith Anne Adams
Qualifications:	Nursing - General & Maternity Certificate (NZ) Midwifery Certificate (NZ) Post Basic Diploma in Theatre Nursing (NZ)
Current Positions:	Vice President - Healthcare Association of WA Councillor - Australian Healthcare Association Councillor - National Rural Health Alliance
Independent Member	Ms Michele Kosky
Qualifications:	Bachelor of Arts (Honors) Master of Philosophy
Current Position:	Executive Director, Health Consumers' Council
Independent Member	Mr Graham McEachran
Qualifications:	Bachelor of Science in Pure Mathematics & Mathematical Statistics

Current Position:	Partner, Ernst & Young
Independent Member Qualifications:	Dr Agatha van der Schaaf Bachelor of Medicine & Bachelor of Surgery Bachelor of Medical Science with Second Class Honours in Biochemistry (Division A) Member - Royal Australasian College of Physicians Fellow - Royal Australian College of Physicians
Current Positions:	Physician, Nuclear Medicine - Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital - Head of Department Clinical Assistant Physician, Nuclear Medicine - Fremantle Hospital Visiting Physician, Nuclear Medicine - Princess Margaret Hospital Specialist, Nuclear Medicine - External Appointment Royal Perth Hospital.
Independent Member Qualifications:	Professor Louis Landau Bachelor of Medicine & Bachelor of Surgery Member - Royal Australian College of Physicians Doctor of Medicine Fellow - Royal Australian College of Physicians Vice Chancellor, University of Western Australia
Current Position:	
Ex-Officio Member Qualifications:	Dr Bryant Stokes Bachelor of Medicine Bachelor of Surgery Distinctions in Medicine and Surgery Fellowship - Royal Australian College of Surgeons Member - Royal Australian College of Medical Administrators Justice of the Peace
Current Positions:	Chief Health Officer, Health Department of WA Director - Quality Improvement Unit, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital Senior Neurosurgeon - Royal Perth, Sir Charles Gairdner, Princess Margaret and Fremantle Hospitals Clinical Associate Professor of Neurosurgery - University of Western Australia Director, Medical Research Foundation, Royal Perth Hospital
Ex-Officio Member Qualifications:	Mr John Burns Bachelor of Commerce Fellow Certified Practising Accountants Diploma of Hospital Administration Associate Fellow - Australian College of Health Service Executives Associate Fellow - Australian Institute of Management Justice of the Peace
Current Position:	Acting Chief Executive Officer, Royal Perth Hospital
Ex-Officio Member Qualifications:	Ms Pat Martin Registered Nurse, Midwifery with Distinction Diploma Nursing Administration Graduate Diploma Health Sciences Master in Applied Science
Current Position:	Acting Chief Executive Officer, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital
Ex-Officio Member Qualification:	Mr Peter Howe Bachelor of Health Administration
Current Position:	Chief Executive Officer, Fremantle Hospital
Ex-Officio Member Qualifications:	Dr Gareth Goodier Bachelor of Medicine & Bachelor of Surgery Masters in Health Administration Fellowship - Public Health & Medical Administration
Current Positions:	Chief Executive Officer, Princess Margaret/King Edward Memorial Hospitals
Ex-Officio Member Qualifications:	Mr Peter Campos Diploma in Accounting Bachelor of Business (Accounting) Member - Australian Society of CPA's.
Current Position:	General Manager, North Metropolitan Health Service
Ex-Officio Member Qualification:	Mr Philip Aylward Bachelor of Business
Current Position:	General Manager, Swan Health Service
Ex-Officio Member Qualifications:	Ms Helen Morton Associate Diploma in Occupational Therapy
Current Position:	General Manager, Armadale/Kelmscott Health Service

Ex-Officio Member Qualifications:	Mr Hugh Thomson Bachelor of Business (Accounting) Associate Fellow - Australian College of Health Service Executives Member - Institute of Credit Union Directors Member - Australian Institute of Company Directors Commissioner of Declarations
Current Position:	Acting General Manager, Bentley Health Service
Ex-Officio Member Current Position:	Mr Peter Baulderstone General Manager, Rockingham/Kwinana Health Service
Ex-Officio Member Qualifications:	Mr Russell McKenney Bachelor of Health Administration Diploma in Accounting
Current Position:	General Manager, Graylands Selby Lemnos Hospital & Special Care Facility

- (2) Remuneration packages for the Executive Chairman and Independent Board Members are currently being determined by the Health Department of WA, in consultation with the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal. No remuneration will be provided to Government officers.

HEALTH - METROPOLITAN HEALTH SERVICE

Board - Strategic Planning of Hospitals

2014. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Will the Metropolitan Health System Board be responsible for strategic planning for the nine metropolitan hospitals represented by the board?
- (2) Who is responsible for the strategic planning of hospitals contracted out to the private sector, such as Joondalup Hospital?
- (3) If yes to (1) above, what will be the role of the Department of Health with regard to strategic planning?
- (4) If no to (1) above, which group or body is now responsible for strategic planning for health services in Western Australia and in particular the metropolitan area?

Mr PRINCE replied:

- (1) No. The Metropolitan Health System Board will have responsibility to implement the strategic plan.
- (2) The strategic planning for hospitals contracted out to the private sector, such as Joondalup will be included in the Metropolitan Health Services Plan. This plan will be developed by the Health Department of WA in consultation with clinicians, health consumers and the community.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) The Health Department of WA.

HEALTH - PATIENT ASSISTED TRAVEL SCHEME

Eligibility Criteria

2057. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the concerns being expressed by residents of the Pilbara including representatives of the Shire of Roebourne and the Karratha Chamber of Commerce about the current eligibility criteria for the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme?
- (2) What action is being taken to address these concerns?
- (3) Will the Minister give a commitment to review the criteria to ensure people living in remote areas of the State are assured of access to the full range of specialist services they need?

Mr PRINCE replied:

- (1) No. I am not aware of any particular concerns raised by the Shire of Roebourne or the Karratha Chamber of Commerce. Residents do raise issues relating to the Patients Assisted Travel Scheme from time to time.
- (2) The West Pilbara Health Service provides a balance of travel support and visiting specialist services to the community. The Health Service regularly reviews PATS usage patterns to determine the best method of

accessing specialist services. As local issues arise the Health Service General Manager has discretion to consider extenuating circumstances that may exist.

- (3) No. The Patient Assisted Travel Scheme is only one means of providing access to specialist services in remote areas. The State Government's policy is to provide specialist services as close as possible to the people who need them rather than requiring people to travel to access such services. The balance between travel support and the provision of services locally is determined by the Health Department and the Health Services in accordance with the needs of the community and within the context of this policy. This is continually reviewed to achieve the best possible access to services as possible for all Western Australians. The current PATS criteria is considered appropriate. Any specific, individual concerns can be addressed through the relevant Health Service General Manager.

STILLBIRTH AND NEONATAL DEATH SUPPORT GROUP - FUNDING

2080. Mr McGINTY to the Minister for Health:

In reference to funding promised to "Stillbirth and Neo-Natal Death Support (WA) Inc" (SANDS) I ask, now that the option of providing a redeployee to be the Co-ordinator of SANDS has been exhausted, what action do you intend to take to meet your promise to fund this group?

Mr PRINCE replied:

No funding has been promised to SANDS. The initiative to find a suitably qualified person who was being redeployed and who could undertake SANDS administration was suggested at a meeting between myself and representatives of SANDS late in February 1997. The administration of King Edward Memorial and Princess Margaret Hospitals (KEMH/PMH) offered to assist SANDS in finding such a person. The search to find such a person was unsuccessful in part because the key selection criteria supplied by SANDS were narrow and very specific. In recent correspondence with the Vice President of SANDS, I have requested that SANDS explore with KEMH/PMH the broadening of the selection criteria which it was hoped would lead to the recruitment of a suitable person. However, SANDS has had no further contact with the Hospitals on this matter. The question of funding the Co-ordinator of SANDS was dealt with by myself in Parliament on 11 March 1997. I indicated that as far as I am aware, no promise for funding had been made to SANDS and that it would be necessary to take resources from someone else if SANDS was to be funded. This is still the case. KEMH/PMH has recently extended its support to SANDS by the provision of further accommodation.

ENVIRONMENT - KEMERTON INDUSTRIAL PARK

Expansion Study Report

2084. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for Planning:

Would the Minister advise when the next Kemerton expansion study report will be released?

Mr KIERATH replied:

It is anticipated the draft Kemerton Expansion Study, together with several other industrial land and port access studies for the Greater Bunbury area, will be considered for release in October.

HEALTH - DENTAL

Service - Review

2094. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Since 1995 has there been one or more reviews of the Perth Dental Service/Hospital?
- (2) How many reviews have been or are being carried out?
- (3) When were the reviews carried out?
- (4) Who carried out the reviews?
- (5) What did each review examine?
- (6) Are copies of the reviews publicly available?
- (7) If not, why not?
- (8) What were the recommendations emanating out of each review?

(9) Have the recommendations been endorsed by the Minister /Government?

Mr PRINCE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Three.
- (3) 1995, 1996, 1996/97.
- (4)
 - (a) 1995 - Office of the Auditor General.
 - (b) 1996 - Ms Fiona Howarth/Dr Garth Dever.
 - (c) 1996/97 - Committee established by the Commissioner of Health. Committee membership as follows:

Professor Norman Palmer	Chair
Dr Stuart Gairns	Member
Professor John McGeachie	Member
Mr Noel Smith	Member
Mr David Neesham	Member
Ms Joyce Wong-Lee	Member
Ms Dianne Christensen	Project Officer
Dr Mark Tennant	Project Officer
- (5)
 - (a) Office of the Auditor General - Performance Examination.
 - (b) Howarth/Dever - Terms of Reference (Please see attached tabled paper I). [See paper No 678.]
 - (c) Palmer Committee - Terms of Reference (Please see attached tabled paper II). [See paper No 678.]
- (6)
 - (a) Auditor General - Yes.
 - (b) Howarth/Dever - Report to Commissioner of Health.
 - (c) Palmer Committee - No, still under consideration.
- (7)
 - (b) Howarth/Dever - Internal Report
 - (c) Palmer Committee - still under consideration.
- (8)
 - (a) Auditor General - copy of Recommendations (Please see attached tabled paper III). [See paper No 678.]
 - (b) Howarth/Dever - copy of Recommendations (Please see attached tabled paper IV). [See paper No 678.]
 - (c) Palmer Committee - No, still under consideration.
- (9)
 - (a) Auditor General - tabled in Parliament.
 - (b) Howarth/Dever - report to Commissioner of Health.
 - (c) Palmer Committee - No, still under consideration.

HEALTH - GONOCOCCAL CONJUNCTIVITIS

Aboriginal Communities

2103. Mr GRAHAM to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has the Health Department been advised of any cases of gonococcal conjunctivitis in Aboriginal communities?
- (2) If yes to (1) above -
 - (a) in which communities have cases been reported;
 - (b) how many cases were reported in each community;
 - (c) what treatment was offered for the infection;
 - (d) was written consent sought from each patient prior to any treatment taking place;

- (e) was each person treated informed of the reason for treatment prior to any treatment taking place;
- (f) how many people treated were minors;
- (g) what was the cause of the infections;
- (h) how is the infection spread;
- (i) were any people treated without giving their consent;
- (j) were any people treated without them being given the reason for the treatment;
- (k) is the infection contagious;
- (l) how is the disease spread?

Mr PRINCE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2)
 - (a) The Kimberley and the Goldfields.
 - (b) Kimberley 43 cases, Goldfields 48 cases.
 - (c) Procaine penicillin and probenecid.
Ceftriaxone.
Amoxycillin and probenecid.
 - (d) No.
 - (e) Yes.
 - (f) 85.
 - (g) Neisseria gonorrhoeae
 - (h) The infection is spread by non-sexual means and has been associated with poor hand and face washing and there is the possibility of the infection being carried by flies.
 - (i)-(j) No.
 - (k) Yes.
 - (l) See (h).

PLANNING - BRICKNELL TUART CONSERVATION PARK

Homeswest Compensation

2116. Mr OSBORNE to the Minister for Planning:

- (1) Is the land west of Ocean Drive in Bunbury, currently owned by Homeswest, to be set aside as the Bricknell Tuart Conservation Park?
- (2) Will Homeswest receive compensation for the loss of development revenue it would otherwise have received?
- (3) Will the land be designated as a Parks and Recreation Reserve in the proposed statutory regional plan currently being prepared by the Ministry of Planning as a mechanism of providing compensation?

Mr KIERATH replied:

The Greater Bunbury Region Scheme is currently being prepared and will be open to public advertising when it is released. At this stage no decision has been made to reserve any land for recreation or any other purpose. I will however consider advice on this matter when the scheme is forwarded for my consideration.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS - PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION

2121. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Does the Government intend to publish information on government contracts as alluded to by the Minister in *Hansard* on 28 August 1997?

- (2) What information will be provided?
- (3) Will the information to be provided detail -
 - (a) the name of the successful tenderer;
 - (b) the tender price of the contract;
 - (c) a brief description of the work to be undertaken under the contract?
- (4) When will this information be published?
- (5) Will the information be made available on a weekly or monthly basis?
- (6) If the information is to be made available on the Internet, will it be updated on a -
 - (a) daily;
 - (b) weekly;
 - (c) monthly basis?
- (7) Will the information be presented in such a way that it is easy to scan the contracts that have been let, to obtain the name of the successful tenderer and other details referred to above?
- (8) If not, why not?

Mr BOARD replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2)-(3) Basic contract award information is already made available on request. The information provided includes:
 - The name of the successful tenderer
 - Accepted price, and
 - A brief description of the goods and services.
- (4) A study is currently under way on the feasibility of establishing an Internet based electronic bulletin board to enable this information to be published and be easily accessible. While this will take some time to finalise, the information will be available on Government contracts from the office of the agency involved in the Government contract.
- (5) It is intended that the information will be available after the awarding of the contract.
- (6) This issue will be addressed in the feasibility study. However, in principle it is intended to include information on the Internet based electronic bulletin board, as soon as practicable.
- (7)-(8) Issues of design will be considered in the current feasibility study.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS - INDUCTION AND REFRESHER TRAINING

Report

2123. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Labour Relations:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of an article that appeared in *The West Australian* on 25 August 1997, concerning a report which indicates less than half the businesses where workers have been injured offer induction training on their machinery, and 70 per cent fail to provide refresher training?
- (2) Does the Minister have any information on the accuracy or otherwise of that report as far as Western Australia is concerned?
- (3) Is the report accurate as far as Western Australia is concerned?
- (4) If not, what are the accurate figures?
- (5) When were those figures obtained?
- (6) By what method were the figures obtained?
- (7) What strategy does the Government have in place to deal with the lack of induction and refresher training?
- (8) How long has the strategy been in place?
- (9) What has been the success or otherwise of the strategy?

Mr KIERATH replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The accuracy of the report cannot be established and further details will be provided when the information becomes available from the National Safety Council of Australia who conducted the study.
- (3)-(6) Not applicable.
- (7) The Occupational Safety and Health Act has been in operation since 1988. The Act requires employers to provide such information, instruction and training to enable employees to perform their work in a safe manner. As part of WorkSafe Western Australia's enforcement strategy, inspections are carried out on induction and training, particularly as they relate to young and new workers. Data from WorkSafe Western Australia indicates that a number of Improvement and Prohibition Notices were issued on the following key areas:

Key area:	1995/96	1996/97	Current financial year to date
Induction	49	68	21
Training	340	481	100
Young workers	153	387	73
New workers	38	162	22

Twenty per cent of the 127 prosecutions in 1996/97 were related to the duty of the employer, which includes the duty to train and instruct employees. In addition to the enforcement provisions, the Government has recently launched an Induction video called "New to the Job". This video assists employers, managers and supervisors to introduce young and new workers and apprentices to important occupational safety and health principles. Furthermore, approximately 15,000 students have graduated from the "WorkSafe Smart Move" package available on the Internet and from high schools. WorkSafe Smart Move is occupational safety and health training for Year 10, 11 and 12 secondary students who undertake work experience or work placement as part of their school curriculum. It aims to raise students' awareness of occupational safety and health issues, before they enter the workplace.

- (8) Since 1994.
- (9) There has been a 21% reduction in work-related injury and disease rates and a 31% reduction in fatality rates since the Government took office in 1993. As part of the WorkSafe WA 2000 Vision, WorkSafe Western Australia has adopted a new target of achieving a 50% reduction in the injury, disease and fatality rates between June 1995 and July 2000.

PLANNING - WESTERN AUSTRALIAN PLANNING COMMISSION

Memorandum of Understanding with Tokyu Corporation

2124. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for Planning:

- (1) When did the Western Australian Planning Commission and Tokyu Corporation sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)?
- (2) What is the reason for the MOU?
- (3) Will the Minister table a copy of the MOU?

Mr KIERATH replied:

- (1) December 1995.
- (2) To facilitate future planning and development of the Yanchep-Two Rocks area.
- (3) No. There are aspects of the Memorandum of Understanding which are commercially confidential to the parties.

PLANNING - URBAN BUSHLAND ADVISORY GROUP

Meetings

2125. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for Planning:

- (1) Has the Urban Bushland Advisory Group met this year?
- (2) If not, why not?

Mr KIERATH replied:

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

PLANNING - GILLON STREET, KARAWARA

Bushland

2130. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for Planning:

- (1) Why is the advice given to the Minister for Planning regarding the Gillon Street bushland in Karawara considered to be confidential?
- (2) Is the Urban Bushland Strategy a Government document?
- (3) Is it Government policy to set aside 10 per cent of a total redevelopment as bushland where possible?

Mr KIERATH replied:

- (1) The matter raised is the subject of an amendment to the City of South Perth Town Planning Scheme which is to be considered by the Commission with a view to sending formal advice to the Minister.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) No.

PLANNING - URBAN BUSHLAND ADVISORY GROUP

Meetings

2135. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for Planning:

Does the Urban Bushland Advisory Group currently meet or has it been disbanded?

Mr KIERATH replied:

The Urban Bushland Advisory Group meets as required to fulfill its Terms of Reference. It has not been disbanded.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS - PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Government Policy

2150. Mr CARPENTER to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Does the Government have a policy or a set of guidelines which allows it some flexibility in the awarding of Government contracts to organisations seeking employment for clients who suffer from some sort of disability?
- (2) If yes, what is this policy?
- (3) If no, why not?

Mr BOARD replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) While there is no specific policy or guidelines, agencies have the capacity to consider the employment of clients with disabilities. The Government's new temporary personnel panel contract includes a company which offers specialist services for the placement of people with disabilities.

WORKSAFE INTERNATIONAL - COURSES AND CONSULTANCIES

Number

2158. Mr KOBELKE to the Minister for Labour Relations:

- (1) What is the number of courses and/or consultancies which have been entered into by WorkSafe International since the start of 1996?

- (2) For each such training program or consultancy, who was the agency to whom WorkSafe International was contracted, and what was the nature of the work undertaken and what was the direct income to WorkSafe in each case?

Mr KIERATH replied:

- (1) 20.
- (2)
- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Curtin University | 6 x Training |
| Edith Cowan University | 5 x Training |
| National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, Malaysia | 4 x Training and certification |
| Government of Thailand | 2 x Training |
| Papua New Guinea Government | 1 x Training |
| International Labour Organisation | 1 x Consultancy |
| Paramount Malaysia Sdn Bhd | 1 x Certification |

Projects were based on cost recovery of the WorkSafe Western Australia officers' wages. The agency concerned paid for any accommodation, travel and transport costs associated with overseas projects. Four of the projects involved overseas travel, and the remainder were conducted in Western Australia in the form of training courses and study programs.

WORKSAFE WESTERN AUSTRALIA - ASSESSORS

Number Registered

2159. Mr KOBELKE to the Minister for Labour Relations:

- (1) What was the number of assessors registered with WorkSafe as at the 30 June 1995?
- (2) What was the number of assessors registered with WorkSafe as at the 30 June 1996?
- (3) What was the number of assessors registered with WorkSafe as at the 30 June 1997?
- (4) What was the number of assessors registered with WorkSafe as at the 12 September 1997?

Mr KIERATH replied:

- (1) 94 registered assessors for operators of industrial plant. Nil registered assessors for WorkSafe Plan.
- (2) 135 registered assessors for operators of industrial plant. 10 registered assessors for WorkSafe Plan.
- (3) 158 registered assessors for operators of industrial plant. 39 registered assessors for WorkSafe Plan.
- (4) 162 registered assessors for operators of industrial plant. 46 registered assessors for WorkSafe Plan.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS - EMPLOYEES

Underpayment of Wages - Cases Lodged

2160. Mr KOBELKE to the Minister for Labour Relations:

In the 1996-97 financial year, how many cases of underpayment of wages to employees -

- (a) were lodged with the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission;
- (b) were determined to the effect that the employer had not fully paid their employees;
- (c) how many of these cases were prosecutions taken by the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations?

Mr KIERATH replied:

- (a) 645 (consisting of 284 S29(1)(b)(ii) claims and 361 S29(1)(b)(i) and (ii) claims)
- (b) Data not available.
- (c) None. The Department of Productivity and Labour Relations does not represent parties in such proceedings.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

TAXATION - REFORM

Government's Position - Consultation

635. Dr GALLOP to the Premier:

I refer to the lack of consultation and the secrecy surrounding the development of the Government's position on taxation reform and the reform of commonwealth-state relations.

- (1) Will the Premier give a commitment to consult with business and community organisations in preparing the Government's reform proposals to the Commonwealth?
- (2) Will he also undertake to provide this House with details of the Government's taxation proposals before taking them to Canberra so that Western Australians are fully informed about the position being put to the Federal Government on their behalf?

Mr COURT replied:

(1)-(2) Talk about a Johnny-come-lately on this issue!

Dr Gallop: I have been on it longer than you.

Mr COURT: I have been giving public presentations on this issue for some years.

Dr Gallop: You have been making general statements on it.

Mr COURT: I have been prepared to say that the Government would support a goods and services tax, under certain conditions, and a share of income tax arrangements, under certain conditions. Even the Leader of the Opposition finally came out and said last week that he did not have a difficulty with that issue.

Dr Gallop: I have been arguing it for years.

Mr COURT: This country had 13 years of a federal Labor Government and this State had 10 year of a Labor Government and members opposite allowed more financial powers to go to Canberra. The Leader of the Opposition does not like this Government running a hard campaign to bring about change.

Dr Gallop: Talk, talk, talk!

Mr COURT: The Leader of the Opposition is behind the times and all the proposals this Government has, it puts out publicly.

SEWERAGE - EATON WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT

Flooding - Effect on Residents

636. Mr BAKER to the Minister for Water Resources:

For some time there have been significant problems with the Eaton waste water treatment plant which have affected nearby residents.

- (1) What direction has been taken by the Western Australian Water Cooperation to assist nearby residents?
- (2) What progress has been made on behalf of the Water Cooperation to determine whether flooding from its Eaton plant has caused structural damage to any nearby properties?
- (3) What action has the Water Corporation taken to upgrade these waste water treatment facilities to prevent similar problems in the future?

Dr HAMES replied:

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

- (1) A number of cut-off drains have been installed by the Water Cooperation and these are operating satisfactorily.
- (2) The claim regarding structural damage has been referred to the Water Corporation's insurance broker, which is currently investigating the matter.

- (3) The corporation is arranging for the construction of a new effluent disposal system which is estimated to be completed by 30 September 1997. That project has been given a high priority.

DEPARTMENT OF PRODUCTIVITY AND LABOUR RELATIONS - INDEMNITY

Treasury and Cabinet Approval

637. Dr GALLOP to the Premier:

Given the statements by the Minister for Labour Relations published in *The West Australian* today that "the indemnity of 29/4 was requested by the stations to allay their concerns relating to legal action against them which was threatened by Mr Kobelke", does the Premier still maintain that the indemnity offered by the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations on 29 April 1997 was incidental and did not require Treasury and Cabinet approval?

Mr COURT replied:

The advice I have is that under the Treasurer's Instructions it did not need that approval.

DEPARTMENT OF PRODUCTIVITY AND LABOUR RELATIONS - INDEMNITY

Public Sector Management Report - Tabling

638. Dr GALLOP to the Premier:

Will the Premier table the public sector management report on this issue?

Mr COURT replied:

I take it the report is the one to which the Leader of the Opposition referred last week.

Dr Gallop: Yes.

Mr COURT: I will table it for him.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS - LEGISLATION

Union Officials - Responsibilities

639. Mrs HODSON-THOMAS to the Minister for Labour Relations:

Is the Minister aware of any recent events which highlight the need for provisions similar to those in the recent industrial relations reforms?

Mr KIERATH replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. In particular, I refer members to that part of the legislation referring to responsibilities of officers and employees of unions. It is interesting to note that these were also part of the reforms of the industrial relations legislation, which the Australian Labor Party and some unions said were totally unnecessary. Despite that, I will use some examples where necessary. Some union officials are very competent and honest people; unfortunately, some are not. Union members need protection from those types of people, especially for mismanagement or worse.

I raise a case in point concerning the activities of the Australian Workers Union, one of the founding unions of the ALP, from memory. According to newspaper reports, in 1995 the joint secretary, Steve Harrison, attacked AWU branches for hiding nearly \$12m of debt - it sounds a little like WA Inc! Last year he called for a National Crime Authority inquiry. As a reward for this man's courage and diligence on behalf of unions, in May Mr Harrison was forced out of the AWU when the right wing and the heavyweight Ludwig got together and did a deal. That is what Mr Harrison got for being honest and looking after his members. Last October there were additional reports of another half a million dollars worth of unauthorised accounts, and in June this year the accountant at the AWU national office resigned in protest over the union's handling of the financial crises. These included reported debts of group and payroll tax of \$113 000 plus penalties, \$500 000 in unpaid affiliation fees to the Australian Council of Trade Unions, and \$150 000 in unpaid affiliation fees to an international union body. In fact, the building, construction and joinery branch has not been able to meet its wages bill for the past two and a half years, not to mention the non-payment of the fringe benefits tax, WorkCover premiums and superannuation.

Point of Order

Mr KOBELKE: The Minister is taking a great deal of time to regurgitate press statements which we saw many years ago. Mr Speaker, I request that you ask him to bring his answer to a conclusion.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. Members who have been observing things in recent weeks will know that after three to four minutes in answering a question, I ask Ministers to bring their answers to a close. I give a lot more latitude to the Premier because he often has important matters to raise.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr KIERATH: How can the Opposition and some union officials say that the protection of members is not necessary, when this sort of thing goes on; or is it another case of turning a blind eye to their mates?

DEPARTMENT OF PRODUCTIVITY AND LABOUR RELATIONS - INDEMNITY

Signing - Ms Jan Cooper

640. Mr KOBELKE to the Minister for Labour Relations:

Given the Minister's public acknowledgment that he has received extensive legal advice on the extraordinary indemnity given by the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations for his television advertising campaign, will he now confirm to the House that Ms Jan Cooper signed that indemnity when Crown Law advice raised legal doubts about her capacity to do so?

Mr KIERATH replied:

In answer to a question last week, I said that I would get a summary of that Crown Law advice. It is not specific against that officer.

Mr Kobelke: Her legal ability to sign the indemnity.

Mr KIERATH: If the member has any documentation, he should table all of it. We must ask whether the document is illegal or stolen, but I will come back and answer -

Mr Kobelke: Will you confirm that advice was given?

Mr KIERATH: If he has such a thing, I ask the member to table his document; if not, he will be exposed for what he really is: An example of the danger in people getting only half the information. The only question raised was rhetoric in nature - as is often the case in legal opinions - about whether a person can offer this indemnity. I am glad for the opportunity to mention this point, which seems to have been lost in this debate: The indemnity offered was far less than the general indemnity demanded in a normally placed advertisement, and that is why it was offered.

TAXATION - FEDERAL

\$4b Surge in Revenue

641. Mr MacLEAN to the Premier:

Some notice of this question has been given. Is the Premier aware of newspaper reports that the Federal Government will record a \$4b surge in tax revenues next financial year?

Mr COURT replied:

I am aware of a report in today's *The Australian Financial Review* that Access Economics predicts a \$4b addition to the Commonwealth's taxing revenues in the next financial year related largely to the growth in revenues from wages growth. The forward estimates in the federal Budget released in May indicated a surplus growing to \$10b within three years. Basically, the Federal Government has access to the growth revenues. In addition, Access Economics predicted that the Commonwealth would raise \$4b in excess of that surplus in the next financial year.

That highlights the need for the States to be able to negotiate a much better sharing arrangement with revenues. When Western Australia has a growth rate of around 6 per cent for the last five years - it will continue to grow - yet has a real decline in revenue, one can see the problem the State Government faces in keeping within a tight Budget.

To its credit, the Federal Government has put the issue on the agenda, and we will have a debate on both the sharing arrangements and the tax reform package. However, the Labor Party has refused to put all the options on the table in this debate. It is in the country's interest to have an open debate with all options on the table, and not to be picking and choosing options before the debate starts.

The other option we will provide to the people of Western Australia is the forums to be run around the country on constitutional matters, which we want to be used as an opportunity for people to suggest how to improve the revenue sharing arrangements. That process may well lead to recommendations to change the Constitution to give the States more ability to raise the revenues with which to deliver the services for which they have responsibility.

HOSPITALS - JOONDALUP

*Inpatient Treatment - Cost***642. Mr McGINTY to the Minister for Health:**

- (1) Will the Minister confirm that he has received confidential departmental advice that the cost of providing inpatient treatment at the privatised Joondalup Health Campus will be more expensive than the cost for the same services provided in government hospitals?
- (2) In the light of the funding crisis in our hospital system, why are precious health dollars being taken from government hospitals to prop up a more expensive, profit making, privatised facility?

Mr PRINCE replied:

- (1)-(2) To my knowledge, no such advice of any nature has been received by my office; certainly, I have not seen one piece of paper making that suggestion. In fact, the cost of inpatient treatment at Joondalup Health Campus is benchmarked against the totality of the other metropolitan hospitals. It is a system by which, whatever may be the incidence of care - however that is described - the actual price paid is benchmarked against the public hospital cost of providing the same service. Therefore, it is not possible for Joondalup to have a price which is higher than the benchmark figure. Obviously, the mathematics lead to the conclusion that an incidence of service may be higher than the equivalent cost at another public hospital, but that would not be a comparison against the average, which is how the benchmark is determined. There is no suggestion of money being used to prop up anybody. I remind the member that the Wanneroo hospital, a small hospital, was not providing adequately for people in the northern suburbs. Joondalup is now a superb facility. It would be among the best in this State and it is providing a first class service to people in the northern suburbs. By Christmas, when all the units are open, it will be one of the major hospitals in the city.

HOSPITALS - JOONDALUP

*Inpatient Report - Tabling***643. Mr McGINTY to the Minister for Health:**

Will the Minister table the report he has received, entitled "Joondalup Health Campus - Transfer of Inpatient Activity 1997-98" which contains the allegations to which I just referred? If not, why not?

Mr PRINCE replied:

I will not give an undertaking to table something I have yet to see. When I have found the document concerned, I will get back to the member.

FISHERIES - LESCHENAULT ESTUARY

*Licence Buyback Scheme***644. Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN to the Minister for Fisheries:**

Some notice of this question has been given. I refer to the longstanding debate over fisheries management policies in the Leschenault Estuary.

- (1) What progress has been made on the professional licence buyback scheme?
- (2) What funds are available to facilitate implementation of this scheme and to enable fair compensation to professional fishermen?
- (3) Most importantly, is the Leschenault Estuary considered a priority for consideration under the licence buyback scheme?

Mr HOUSE replied:

- (1)-(3) Western Australia has two fisheries adjustment schemes. The first scheme has been in place for about a decade and it has been successful in removing about 160 professional licences, with the full cooperation of the professional fishermen. That scheme works on a dollar for dollar basis: The professional fishermen put in a dollar, and a dollar comes from the consolidated fund. Under the second scheme, the Government has allocated \$2m a year over the next four years - a total of \$8m - also in cooperation with the professional fishing industry to buy out professional fishermen when there is a conflict of interest with a recreational

fishery and when there is agreement with those fishermen. I am pleased both of those schemes are working well and have the support of all parties.

The member for Mitchell has made a number of representations to me about Leschenault Inlet, all of which I agree with. We have been discussing Leschenault Inlet and the issues that relate to that fishery for some time. Included in those discussions have been the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council. In my view, those discussions have been successful. The issue is progressing well. I am sure we will reach a satisfactory outcome that will allow Leschenault Inlet and some other fisheries in which there is a conflict between recreational and professional fishermen to come to a satisfactory resolution and that some professional effort will be able to be bought out to allow more of that resource to be accessed by recreational fishermen.

MAIN ROADS WESTERN AUSTRALIA - PRIVATISATION OF FUNCTIONS

Safety Standards

645. Mrs ROBERTS to the Premier:

Some notice of this question has been given.

- (1) Is there a proposal to privatise a number of Main Roads functions, including the installation and maintenance of traffic signals, highway and freeway street lighting and new direction signs?
- (2) If so, what evidence is there that the required expertise exists in the private sector to undertake these functions?
- (3) How will the Minister for Transport ensure safety standards are maintained in the event these functions are privatised?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1)-(3) I have been provided with this answer: As the member would be aware, Ross Drabble took up the position of Acting Commissioner of Main Roads on 1 September 1997. Since that time he has been meeting with his senior officers at Main Roads to discuss the organisation's future direction and operations. All options are being considered to improve the effectiveness of the road funds available. Main Roads has identified projects totalling \$2.5b that cannot be delivered due to insufficient resources. Any increased contracting will be subject to the normal government processes of tender and evaluation, which are compared with estimated costs. No evidence exists that the private sector does not have the skills.

Mrs Roberts: What evidence is there that it does? That is what I asked.

Mr COURT: Transfield Holdings Pty Ltd, which is one of Australia's great construction companies, started off by installing traffic lights.

Mrs Roberts: That is your evidence, is it?

Mr COURT: That is only one story. Does the member not think that is a very successful construction company?

Mrs Roberts: It certainly is, but we are dealing here with something quite different. We can talk about that later.

Mr COURT: Indeed. Contract works will continue to be supervised by Main Roads, which has managed changes effectively in the past. Since coming to government we have increased considerably the funding for the roads programs. It is still not enough, but there has been a huge increase on top of what the Opposition did when in government, which amounted to total neglect for 10 years. We are fixing the problem.

RACING - RADIO 1449

Cost

646. Mr MARSHALL to the Minister representing the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

The new 1449 racing radio station servicing the Peel region is a tremendous fillip for the area, particularly as the equine industry is the fourth highest income earner in the region.

- (1) Was it difficult to get the radio licence?
- (2) What expenditure was needed to set up this station?
- (3) Will the station generate increased Totalisator Agency Board income?

- (4) Can other country areas expect the same service?

Mr COWAN replied:

The Minister for Racing and Gaming thanks the member for notice of this question and provides the following advice -

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Approximately \$100 000.
- (3) It is expected that increased income will come from the radio 1449 reception area.
- (4) An assessment of other country areas is continuing with an upgrade to some existing services and some new services likely.

I might add that the member for Dawesville is quite correct in attaching importance to the equine industry in this region. Some time ago the Peel Development Commission conducted a survey of the number of horses in the area and found there were some 40 000 horses. On that basis the industry is important to the area. Not all of the horses are involved in the racing industry; many are involved in recreation or leisure pursuits. Nevertheless, the Peel region is an important racing area for the State. As a consequence, I am very sure people there will be pleased with the answer given by the Minister for Racing and Gaming.

POLICE - BURGLARIES

Contracting out of Police Work

647. Mrs ROBERTS to the Minister for Police:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of any proposals to contract out the work of police officers when they attend and complete a report on a home burglary or other burglary?
- (2) If so, what proposals is the Minister aware of and does he support them?
- (3) If not, will he give a commitment that he will not allow this important police work to be contracted out?

Mr DAY replied:

- (1)-(3) As far as I am concerned, there are no proposals for contracting out the investigation of home burglary. It is correct that a number of people have been to see me to discuss such a proposal, but it has certainly not been agreed to by me.

Dr Gallop: Who has been to see you?

Mr DAY: I will not give names of people who may come to see me in a private capacity. I can certainly assure the House that I have not endorsed any proposal to contract out the investigation of home burglaries. I would need to be very strongly convinced that it would be in the public interest for it to occur.

HEALTH - PEEL HEALTH SERVICE

Board

648. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Will Peel Health Services have a separate board or will the plan to include the new Mandurah hospital under the Metropolitan Health Service Board stand?
- (2) Where does the Pinjarra hospital fit into the proposed new arrangements?
- (3) Will the review to either renovate the old or build a new Pinjarra hospital continue?
- (4) When can the decision in answer to (3) be expected?

Mr PRINCE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)-(3) The question of whether Peel Health Services has a separate board or whether the Mandurah hospital comes under the Metropolitan Health Service Board is somewhat misleading. It was never intended to happen.

Mr McGinty: Why did you do it, then?

Mr PRINCE: I have not done it at all. Peel Health Services, which has a board at the moment -

Mr McGinty: I thought they all resigned in protest against you.

Mr PRINCE: They did not. Peel Health Services administers the Mandurah hospital, the Murray District Hospital and community health services for the whole area. With the rebuilding of the Mandurah hospital from 38 beds to 130 beds, which is what it should have been in the first place, and the management of the new Mandurah hospital by Health Solutions, the question arose of who would supervise the contract for the new Mandurah hospital. The only thing that was said about that matter was that it must be managed by someone. It seemed logical that it should be managed by the Rockingham Health Service, which was then to become part of the Metropolitan Health Service Board. The Peel Health Services Board objected to that. It would prefer some form of local management in the Mandurah area. That issue is being debated at the moment. The chair of the Peel Health Services Board resigned; the rest of the board did not.

Mr McGinty: They did resign. They might well have revoked it, but they resigned.

Mr PRINCE: They are still there. A number of meetings were held with the board, and many other people who are involved, including the mayor of the city, who has been to see me about the issue.

The Murray District Hospital is an old structure.

Mr McGinty: What was the answer to the first part of the question? Is it going to be covered by the Metropolitan Health Service Board?

Mr PRINCE: No, it will not, and never has been.

Mr McGinty: Will it be supervised by the Rockingham Health Service?

Mr PRINCE: A decision has not yet been made on who will supervise the management of the Health Solutions WA Pty Ltd contract. At the moment we are working out where it will be supervised from. The people in Mandurah want it to be done locally, not by the Rockingham Health Service. That is the substance of debate at present.

The Murray District Hospital is an old structure which has been added onto; some of the additions are in good condition and some not. The Pinjarra area needs a new hospital structure. It must cater for accident and emergency services. Its other needs are the subject of considerable consultation and feasibility studies. The question whether to renovate the existing building or to build anew, and exactly what form of new building it might take, is being worked out at the moment. Strong opinion favours a form of multipurpose service. That would seem to be a good way to go about it. However, the detail of all that work is not yet complete. When it is I will be talking to the member concerned. I am sure the member will continue to take part in those debates.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT - CONDUCT OF BURNS

Climatic Conditions

649. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) Is the Minister aware, at a time of increasing concern about Perth's air quality, that a decision has been taken by the Department of Conservation and Land Management to disregard the Bureau of Meteorology's haze prediction advice in determining when and where it will conduct burns?
- (2) What action will the Minister take to reverse this decision and to ensure proper consideration is given to the bureau's assessment of climatic conditions before any burns are carried out by CALM?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (1)-(2) I do not think that is true. The Department of Environmental Protection and the Bureau of Meteorology have sat down with the Department of Conservation and Land Management to work out a new way of forwarding to CALM the information on which days burning is inappropriate. I do not think the member's information is correct.

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY - LINKS WITH THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

650. Mr JOHNSON to the Minister for Labour Relations:

In the light of the Australian Labor Party's ongoing support of the Trades and Labor Council's industrial disruption because of recent industrial relations legislation, will the Minister inform the House of the links between the trade union movement and the ALP?

Mr KIERATH replied:

I thank the member for the question.

Dr Gallop: Why doesn't the member read Politics 101?

Mr KIERATH: It was interesting to hear the groan from the Leader of the Opposition. Only a couple of months ago, while the Leader of the Opposition was being interviewed on radio, he tried to distance the ALP from the trade union movement. A caller put a proposition to the Leader of the Opposition that the ALP was the political arm of the trade union movement. The Leader of the Opposition said that that claim was "way behind the times".

I do not trust the Leader of the Opposition, so I thought I would see what the state constitution of the Australian Labor Party states about this matter. It is fascinating, because it states that the genesis of the ALP was the trade union movement's desire for a more effective voice, and that trade union members were largely responsible for the formation of ALP policy. It states also that the ALP and the trade union movement have similar objectives, and that the ALP supports trade unions in their pursuit of industrial goals and many unions support the ALP in the pursuit of its political goals.

I am quoting from the ALP's constitution, not the Leader of the Opposition's press releases or public comments. That sounds to me like a pretty cosy symbiotic relationship. It is hardly the at arm's length type relationship that the Leader of the Opposition attempted to imply. It gets better, because the constitution states that every ALP member must join a union if eligible. It will be interesting to know how many ALP members are eligible to join a trade union.

We can see this transparent attempt for what it is. It is clear that the Leader of the Opposition is trying to position the ALP in Western Australia away from the trade union movement and to reflect what his good mate Tony Blair has done with the New Labour Party in the United Kingdom. It is interesting to compare the two parties. New Labour in the United Kingdom has distanced itself a little from the trade union movement. However, it also supports secret ballots, freedom of association and the abolition of closed shops, which this ALP is not yet prepared to do.

Given the requirements of the Labor Party's constitution, the Leader of the Opposition will need to achieve major constitutional change in order to distance himself from the trade union movement. I hope that the next time the Leader of the Opposition tries to paint a false picture in the media, he will look at his own party's constitution.

COMMERCIAL TENANCY LEGISLATION - COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Implementation

651. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Fair Trading:

I refer to the report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology entitled "Finding the Balance", which recommended a raft of changes to commercial tenancy laws, and ask -

- (1) Does the Government support those recommendations which will give small business tenants the right to retain their business premises at the end of the lease period or periods?
- (2) If so, will the Government implement those recommendations in any Bill it introduces to amend the commercial tenancy laws?

Mr SHAVE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)-(2) The Government is aware of the recommendations that have been made and the comments that have been expressed. The Government does have a concern about people who are leasing premises in shopping centres. We will take into account all of the recommendations involved. It may be that we will amend the existing Bill, but it may also be that -

Dr Gallop: You will not.

Mr SHAVE: That is exactly right. The issue of commercial tenancy has been discussed exhaustively in the public arena. It does not matter what we do at the end of the day: On the one hand, the property council will say that we have sold out to the small retailers, and on the other hand the retailers will say that -

Dr Gallop: Where do you stand, Minister? That is what we are interested in.

Mr SHAVE: I happen to be in the middle. It will please the Leader of the Opposition to know that whatever decisions I make will not please either side totally. We will come out with a balanced position on the issue, and with what we consider is a fair position.

The Green Bill has been introduced and discussed extensively. We are approaching the drafting stage but to extensively change the Bill and canvass the various alternatives raised by the recent report is probably not the way we will go. We will consider amendments to the commercial tenancy legislation as we proceed. I will have discussions with other Ministers and if we find that there are some worthwhile and fair recommendations we will consider making those alterations as we proceed with the Bill. We are very close to the stage of introducing the Bill to Parliament, and to suddenly take into account a report of an independent group in another area, and transfer that to our legislation, would mean starting the process again. I do not believe that that is the way the Government will move at this time.
