

# Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 17 May 2006

**THE SPEAKER (Mr F. Riebeling)** took the chair at 12 noon, and read prayers.

## NEW BUSSELTON HOSPITAL

### *Petition*

**MR T. BUSWELL (Vasse - Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [12.02 pm]: I have a petition that has been signed by the Clerk, certifying that the petition conforms with the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly. I have confirmed that it contains 945 signatures. This brings the total number of signatures on this matter to 3 000. It reads -

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

We, the undersigned, say the new \$65 million Busselton Hospital recently announced by Minister for Health Hon. Jim McGinty should be constructed at the existing hospital site on Bussell Highway.

Now we ask the Legislative Assembly to consider this petition when making its final decision following the three-month public consultation period and vote to keep the hospital at the current location.

**Mr J.A. McGinty:** It will be a great new hospital for Busselton.

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** It certainly will be. I thank the government for its investment.

[See petition 114.]

## PAPER TABLED

A paper was tabled and ordered to lie upon the table of the house.

## SUNSET HOSPITAL SITE BILL 2006

### *Notice of Motion for Leave to Introduce*

Notice of motion given by **Mr J.C. Kobelke (Leader of the House)** on behalf of the Minister for Housing and Works.

## DRAFT CONSUMER CREDIT (WESTERN AUSTRALIA) CODE AMENDMENT ORDER 2006

### *Notice of Motion*

**Mr J.C. Kobelke (Leader of the House)** gave notice on behalf of the Minister for Consumer Protection that at the next sitting of the house the minister would move -

- (1) That this house approves the draft Consumer Credit (Western Australia) Code Amendment Order 2006, a copy of which was laid on the table of the house on 2 May 2006.
- (2) That the Legislative Council be acquainted accordingly and be invited to pass a similar resolution.

## SWAN RIVER AND CATCHMENT DRAINS - NOTICE OF MOTION

### *Removal of Notice - Statement by Speaker*

**THE SPEAKER (Mr F. Riebeling):** I advise members that private members' business notice of motion 1, notice of which was given on 26 May 2005 and renewed for a further 30 sitting days on 20 October 2005, will be removed and will not appear on the next notice paper.

## KIMBERLEY POWER PROJECT

### *Statement by Minister for Energy*

**MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn - Minister for Energy)** [12.04 pm]: I rise today to tell the House of the commencement of an exciting era of power provision in the Kimberley. On Saturday I had the pleasure of officially breaking the ground to signify the start of construction of the new Broome power station.

**Mr C.J. Barnett** interjected.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** It was a long time coming, member for Cottesloe. If the member had not been diverted by tidal energy, it would have been quicker.

The Broome power station is the first to be built as part of the west Kimberley power project, a Horizon Power-led project under which new power stations will be built in five west Kimberley towns. The start of construction represented a significant day for the west Kimberley region and the commencement of a \$600 million investment. That is an investment of about \$180 million in capital works and associated costs, and over \$400 million in power purchases over the next 20 years; it is an enormous commitment to the development of the west Kimberley region of the state.

The new power stations will replace existing diesel-fired power stations, some of which are up to 30 years old, and in most circumstances do not meet legislated noise emission standards. The power stations, to be built, owned and operated by Australian company Energy Developments Limited, will improve the quality and reliability of power supplies in Broome, Derby, Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing and Camballin-Looma and will provide a significant improvement to the amenity of the five towns. Horizon Power will purchase all its electricity requirements in these towns from EDL for distribution to its customers. Electricity for all but the Looma power station will be generated using liquefied natural gas, delivering a cleaner and more environmentally responsible power supply. The Looma power station will use diesel fuel. Natural gas will be sourced from the Dampier-to-Bunbury pipeline and liquefied at a new plant to be built at Karratha, and then transported by truck to the towns. LNG not required for the power stations will be available for other customers, thus introducing a new and competitive fuel source to the region.

It has been a significant couple of months for regional Western Australia, and I congratulate Horizon Power and its project partners, EDL, for bringing the west Kimberley power project to this significant stage. I wish them all the best for the completion of the project and for the ongoing safe and reliable operation of the five new power stations.

### **SOUTH WEST SEXUAL ABUSE COUNSELLING SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

*Statement by Minister for Community Development*

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah - Minister for Community Development)** [12.07 pm]: I am pleased to inform the house that the Carpenter government has allocated funding of \$668 000 in the 2006-07 state budget to strengthen counselling for children and young people in the south west who are affected by sexual abuse. The greater Bunbury and Peel regions are two high-growth, high-need areas and the Department for Community Development, through its planning processes, has noted the need for an increased range of services in these localities. This funding will enable children and young people to receive professional, caring support, as well as help families deal with the challenges involved with child sexual abuse.

The Carpenter government recognises that it is vitally important to make sure that the needs of families outside the metropolitan area are properly addressed. I note that family counselling and domestic violence response services have been doing their best to assist with the demands of this type of service, even though they have not been specifically funded or equipped to do so. The funding of these new services will complement other government initiatives in addressing the effects of child abuse in the Bunbury and Peel regions and will expand the department's child sexual abuse treatment services program. Through this program, the department currently funds its services in the Perth metropolitan area, one in Geraldton and a part-time service in Bunbury. The department is also developing three new services in the north of the state in partnership with Aboriginal communities. The new funding builds on previous child sexual abuse treatment allocations. In the 2002-03 budget, \$1.6 million was allocated over four years for child sexual abuse counselling, treatment and support for Aboriginal people. This government is providing a total of more than \$140 million in new funding to the Department for Community Development, which is the single biggest budget allocation of additional funding in the history of the department and its predecessors.

I thank Hon Adele Farina, MLC, for working so hard to make sure that the needs of her constituents were recognised. I also acknowledge the interest that the member for Bunbury has in this issue. The Carpenter government is committed to caring for our children and is a government that listens.

### **MEMBER FOR KIMBERLEY - PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

*Standing Orders Suspension - Motion*

**MR T. BUSWELL (Vasse - Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [12.09 pm] - without notice: I move -

That so much of standing orders be suspended as to allow the member for Kimberley to make forthwith a full and public explanation on her reported comments relating to the former Premier Dr Geoff Gallop, which included -

I believe that when a person suffers from mental illness they're not a fit witness to their own decisions.

This is a significant and serious matter. We are seeking to suspend standing orders, effective immediately, to provide the member for Kimberley an opportunity to come into the house and explain the apparently outrageous comments attributed to her in *The West Australian* this morning. It is important that she have an opportunity to do this quickly; that is why we have sought the suspension of standing orders. To be perfectly frank, it is disappointing in the extreme to not see the member for Kimberley in the chamber this morning, being prepared to stand and explain her comments to the Parliament. It is more than just the Parliament, because the accusations and outrageous allegations that the member for Kimberley has made against the former Premier are, by extension, allegations against every person in our community who suffers from not only depression, but also the full gamut of mental illnesses that plague modern communities. It is therefore imperative that the member for Kimberley come into the house and explain the basis and foundation of those comments to not only the Parliament and former Premier, Dr Geoff Gallop, but also the broader community of Western Australia.

Only two conclusions can be drawn from those comments; only two logical outcomes can be arrived at in examining the comments made by the member for Kimberley. The first is that the member has in her possession evidence to support her claim, and evidence that would suggest that Dr Gallop's capacity to perform his job as Premier was impaired by depression, particularly during his last three or four months in that position. That is a very, very serious allegation, and the ramifications for good governance in this state are very, very significant. It is important that the member have an opportunity to present to the house any evidence she has in support of her claim. As I said, it is a serious claim. If there is evidence in support of the claim that Dr Geoff Gallop was incapable of effectively fulfilling his duties as Premier because of his mental illness, it is incumbent upon the member for Kimberley to let the house know about it.

Of course, people could draw a second conclusion from the comments made by the member for Kimberley, and it is a very disturbing conclusion; that is, that these comments were not based on fact at all, and were not based in any way, shape or form on any manner of clinical assessment of Dr Geoff Gallop's capacity to do his job as Premier. If indeed that is the case, it is an absolute disgrace that a person has an opportunity to make those comments as a member of the Parliament of this state. Standing orders need to be suspended to enable the member to come into the house and provide an explanation. If the member has made these comments as part of an orchestrated campaign to assist the return to cabinet of the member for Yokine, the member for Kimberley should and will be widely condemned for casting these sort of slurs and accusations upon not only the former Premier, but also the enormous percentage of the Australian population afflicted with a mental illness, in particular depression. One in five Australians will be directly affected by depression at some stage in their lives. One in four women and one in six men in Australian communities will be affected by depression. Depression does not just affect them; it affects their families and friends and the support networks around them. They are the people whom the member for Kimberley has insulted. They are the people to whom the member for Kimberley has presented this affront. If her comments have been made as part of a premeditated and orchestrated campaign to assist in the return of the member for Yokine to the cabinet - I do not say this to reflect on the member for Yokine; we have our opinions on the member for Yokine and we will discuss those in due course - it is nothing short of a disgrace. This motion is about a member of Parliament making a very serious accusation, not just about the former Premier, but also about the one in five Australians who will suffer a mental illness. The member for Kimberley needs to come into the chamber now and give an explanation to the Parliament about why she felt justified in making those comments.

I said that I would be brief and I will. There is an implicit message in the comments of the member for Kimberley; that is, if a person who has a mental illness is struggling to cope with that mental illness and is struggling to normalise his or her life in the workplace, that person's efforts in the workplace could be called into judgment at any time because of that mental illness. It has been a disgraceful attempt to undermine, and is an affront to, people who suffer a mental illness. The right of people with a mental illness, as well as of many groups in society that face challenges, to be accepted in a normal workplace is a very significant factor in their treatment. One of the main problems confronting mental illness in this country is the need to destigmatise mental illness, yet the member for Kimberley has inflamed the stigmatisation of people with a mental illness. It is completely and absolutely unacceptable. We say two things to the member for Kimberley. First, we are extremely disappointed that she would even think of making those comments. If she has proof to support her claims, please bring it forward, because that would be significant. Secondly, she needs to clarify in this house whether she made these disgusting comments as part of a concerted, orchestrated, planned and structured campaign to return the member for Yokine to the cabinet. There is a broader issue, and it relates to the expectations of members of Parliament. The public rightly has certain expectations about how members of Parliament will behave, what they will say and how they will treat different groups in our community. This case is a prime example of those expectations not being met.

**MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe)** [12.17 pm]: I support the motion to suspend standing orders, which simply would allow the member for Kimberley to make a full and public explanation in this Parliament about her comments. Indeed, I hope she makes an apology. The member for Kimberley is not paired. There is no reason she should not be in the chamber right now. These comments obviously were made yesterday; they were

reported in *The West Australian* this morning. It is now a quarter past 12. There has been plenty of time for the member to consider her position. There has been plenty of time for either the Premier or other senior ministers to speak with her. There is no reason that the member for Kimberley should not be available in this chamber to either confirm her comments, if that is what she believes, or apologise and refute those comments, which would be, in my view, the proper thing to do.

I never thought the time would come when I would rise in this Parliament to defend former Premier Dr Gallop, but that is what I am doing. I do not know how sick he was; I never discussed it with him. I have not spoken with him since he retired as Premier. However, I accept his explanation that he was unwell and considered that he should step down. For a member of his own party now to effectively question his competence as Premier is distasteful and reflects poorly on that member and poorly on members opposite if they do not immediately act on that. The member for Vasse, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, has made the point that it is a slight on those with mental health problems. I will not pursue that line of argument any further. There is no reason that we should not suspend standing orders and allow the member for Kimberley to make either an explanation or an apology, if that is her call. This matter cannot be left while the Labor Party thinks about its strategy and while the factions talk about what might happen. It is not about that. This is about a slight on a former member of Parliament and a former Premier of Western Australia. It is a slight on a leader of the Labor Party by a member of the Labor Party, yet it is the Liberal Party that has risen in this house to demand an explanation from the member and it is the Liberal Party that has stood to defend the standing of the former Premier, Dr Gallop. I hope that the government will immediately support this motion and have the member for Kimberley walk into this chamber, make an explanation and hopefully apologise for making those very distasteful comments.

**MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont - Treasurer)** [12.20 pm]: I rise to speak on this motion with some hesitation. I find it difficult to be required to discuss the mental health of my friend and former colleague and former leader, Dr Geoff Gallop. We must all be conscious of the sensitivities of discussing in public another person's mental health. Such discussions can be most unhelpful to the person concerned. Nevertheless, the issue has been raised. I agree entirely that the member for Kimberley should make a personal explanation to this house. I understand that the motion as it is currently drafted, if passed, could not be immediately implemented because I am advised that the member for Kimberley is not currently within the house or its environs. Nevertheless, on behalf of the government, I give an undertaking that the member for Kimberley will give a personal explanation to the house. That is the advice that is available to me. I suggest that we therefore defeat this motion and accept the undertaking I have given that the member for Kimberley will make a personal explanation.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** When?

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** At the earliest opportunity.

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** The undertaking is that she will give a personal explanation at the earliest possible opportunity. I ask the house to accept that and to not pass this motion but to await the implementation of the undertaking that has been given.

Since the issue has been raised, it is necessary for me to make a few comments about the former Premier. I had, and still have, the utmost confidence in the judgments Dr Geoffrey Gallop made as Premier. Dr Gallop took the state Parliamentary Labor Party from its lowest level of representation ever to its highest level of membership ever. We have the largest state Parliamentary Labor Party in its history. Along the way, he made some very difficult and principled decisions. He made a principled and difficult decision to adopt a stance on native title, which was seen as controversial at the time but which has now been vindicated. That was a courageous decision and it showed great judgment. He made a great decision to save our old-growth forests, which was a controversial matter at the time and which has since been vindicated. I will not go into too many other references like that that might be construed by members opposite as excessively political. Members on our side of the house have a great deal of respect, and indeed affection, for Dr Geoff Gallop. We have no reason whatsoever to doubt the quality of his judgments right up to the day that he advised me that he would advise his cabinet that he would resign. It came as a great shock to each member on this side when Geoff advised us that he was suffering from depression. We had seen no inkling that he was suffering from that condition or that his judgment was in any way compromised. I absolutely and categorically reject any assertion to the contrary. I do not know whether I need to say any more.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** No, you don't.

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** I think I have covered the points. I demand that the member for Kimberley come to this house and give a personal explanation. I ask the members of the opposition, given the difficulty of implementing the motion immediately, to accept the undertaking. Members opposite will always have the opportunity to come back should that undertaking, for some reason, not be honoured, but I am demanding that that personal explanation be given.

**MR R.F. JOHNSON (Hillarys)** [12.25 pm]: I appreciate and accept the comments by the Deputy Premier of Western Australia, and I know that they have been made with a conscious view to what is right and what is

wrong and when somebody has erred. We all accept his loyalty to the past Premier. I believe, to get out of this situation - because the member for Kimberley is not on the pairs' list and should be here, as her first duty to Parliament is to be here - that by moving a very simple amendment, the house will have its way.

*Amendment to Motion*

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I move -

To delete the word "forthwith" and substitute the word "today".

That will give time for the member for Kimberley to answer the questions that need to be answered. The Deputy Premier has given a commitment that the matter will be heard today. However, this whole house has the right to pass this motion, because the whole house has a view - I suggest a unanimous view - about the comments that have been attributed to the member for Kimberley.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** I respond by interjection that we will accept that. It is not necessary for the functioning of the house, because that statement can be made under another section of standing orders. However, given that the matter has been raised and the motion should officially go on the record, we will accept and support it.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Fine. I have therefore moved the amendment, Mr Speaker, and the amended motion, if carried, will read -

That so much of standing orders be suspended as to allow the member for Kimberley to make today a full and public explanation on her reported comments relating to the former Premier Dr Geoff Gallop, which included -

I believe that when a person suffers from mental illness they're not a fit witness to their own decisions.

Amendment put and passed.

*Motion, as Amended*

Question put and passed with an absolute majority.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS - WEDNESDAY, 17 MAY**

*Standing Orders Suspension - Motion*

**MR J.C. KOBELKE (Balcatta - Leader of the House)** [12.28 pm]: I move -

That standing order 60 in relation to private members' business be suspended for Wednesday, 17 May 2006.

The effect of this motion, if carried, will be to do away with private members' business, which would have normally run from 4.00 pm to 7.00 pm this afternoon. This is because this week we are dealing with the second reading of the appropriation bills. The budget debate for many years has had private members' time either reduced or suspended, given that it is a general debate and that members can speak on any matter of interest to them. I thank the opposition for being cooperative in this matter. It means that we will not have to sit excessively late hours, as we have in some past years, to have a full debate at the second reading stage. In that way, all members will have an opportunity to contribute over the three days' sitting without having to sit excessively long hours.

Question put and passed.

**DINNER SUSPENSION**

*Statement by Speaker*

**THE SPEAKER (Mr F. Riebeling):** Given that the motion to suspend private members' business was passed, I advise members that the house will adjourn between 6.00 pm and 7.00 pm for a dinner break.

**REVENUE LAWS AMENDMENT BILL 2006**

*Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr E.S. Ripper (Treasurer)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the Treasurer.

*Second Reading*

**MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont - Treasurer)** [12.32 pm]: I move -

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill seeks to implement the abolition of stamp duty on mortgages and hire of goods, which was announced on 21 March 2006. The bill also makes amendments to implement the additional taxation measures that were

announced in the 2006-07 budget. These include a new land tax scale and a range of measures that will improve the equity and administration of the taxation system. Each of these equity and administration measures has been identified and considered during the state tax review process, with preliminary findings indicating the measures should be introduced by the government.

Specifically, the bill proposes amendments to the Stamp Act 1921 to halve the rate of stamp duty on mortgages from 1 July 2006, and completely abolish mortgage duty from 1 July 2008; abolish stamp duty on hire of goods arrangements from 1 January 2007; extend the stamp duty relief available to first home owners who have entered into shared equity purchase arrangements with the State Housing Commission; remove the requirement for the lodgment of a statement in relation to an acquisition of property as a result of a person becoming bankrupt; and change the party liable to pay stamp duty on gifts and settlements from the donor to the donee.

The proposed amendments to land tax and rates and charges concessions are to introduce a new land tax scale for 2006-07 and subsequent financial years; extend the current one-year land tax exemption for building new residences to two years from 1 July 2006, with appropriate transitional arrangements for a residence that is under construction on 1 July 2006; extend the primary residence exemption that applies for trust property used by a disabled beneficiary to situations in which a property is not in a trust but is owned by a parent, grandparent or sibling of the disabled person; provide an extension to concessions for local government and water rates available under the Rates and Charges (Rebates and Deferments) Act 1992 in similar circumstances; and insert an anti-avoidance provision targeted at people avoiding a higher aggregated land tax liability by acquiring land with a minor interest in different ownership, or transferring a minor interest in existing property ownership.

I will now examine each of these proposed changes in greater detail. Part 1 of the bill contains the short title of the act and the proposed commencement provisions. Part 2 of the bill contains amendments to the Stamp Act. The first measure relates to stamp duty charged on mortgages. It is proposed that the rate of stamp duty will be halved with effect from 1 July 2006.

The bill also contains amendments to abolish mortgage duty from 1 July 2008. Following the abolition of mortgage duty, a home buyer taking out a \$300 000 mortgage will save \$750 and a small business borrowing \$500 000 will save \$2 000. In total, these amendments will save borrowers about \$73 million in 2006-07 and \$493 million over the period until 2009-10.

The second measure relates to the abolition of stamp duty on the hire of goods. It is proposed that from 1 January 2007, hire of goods duty will be abolished on hiring charges received on or after that date. It is anticipated that the saving to Western Australian hiring businesses, such as video and DVD stores, party-hire proprietors, car-hire companies and equipment-hire firms, will be in the order of \$15 million in 2006-07 and \$138 million over the period until 2009-10. These savings are expected to flow to both household and business consumers.

The third measure proposes to extend the stamp duty relief currently available to first home owners who purchase their home under a joint equity arrangement with the State Housing Commission. These arrangements involve the State Housing Commission assisting home owners who are unable to finance the entire purchase price of their intended home by buying or retaining some of the equity in that home. The home buyer then has the opportunity to purchase further interests in his home from the State Housing Commission in the future. Generally, to be eligible for the stamp duty relief, the home owner must be eligible to receive a first home owner grant under the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000 in respect of the purchase. Currently, this requirement can be met only in respect of the initial interest that a home owner acquires. When purchasing a further interest in his or her home from the State Housing Commission, a shared equity purchaser is not eligible for stamp duty relief, as he or she is not eligible to receive a first home owner grant in respect of that further purchase. This proposed measure extends the availability of stamp duty relief to purchases of further interests from the State Housing Commission and encourages these purchasers to acquire further interests in their home. This measure is intended to operate retrospectively from 1 July 2004 to assist home buyers who may have purchased both an initial and further interest since that date, being the date on which the first home buyer stamp duty concession was introduced.

The fourth measure seeks to remove the requirement under the Stamp Act for the lodgment of a statement in relation to the transfer of property to creditors as a result of a person becoming bankrupt. Section 31B of the Stamp Act requires the lodgment of statements for certain undocumented acquisitions. Amendments to this section, effective from 1 January 2004, inadvertently captured certain bankruptcy-related transactions. Amendments to this section are proposed to exclude transfers of property to creditors upon bankruptcy from the operation of this section. This measure is intended to operate retrospectively from 1 July 2004 to address the problem created by the amendments to section 31B that were effective from that date.

The final stamp duty measure contained in the bill proposes to change the person liable to pay the stamp duty on a gift or settlement of property. Currently, when a property is gifted, the transferor or donor is liable to pay the stamp duty assessed. This bill seeks to change the liable party to the donee or transferee. It is anticipated that

this will encourage the making of gifts to charitable bodies. Following these amendments, a charitable body receiving a gift would be liable to pay the duty. However, when the gift was made for public or similar charitable purposes, an exemption would apply. These last three stamp duty measures will have only a minor cost to revenue, but will improve the equity and administration of the taxation system. It should be noted that the amendments to give effect to the abolition of stamp duty on non-real business property from 1 July 2010, which was also announced on 21 March 2006, have not been included in this bill. It is intended that discussions will occur with other jurisdictions that are implementing similar reforms, and amendments will be introduced closer to the scheduled abolition date.

Part 3 of the bill contains the new land tax rate scale for 2006-07 and subsequent financial years. On the basis of preliminary land values for 2006-07, land tax and metropolitan region improvement tax revenues were forecast to grow strongly. In order to ease the impact of rapidly growing land values on land tax liabilities for landowners, the government has decided to adjust the land tax scale. From 1 July 2006, the land tax exemption threshold will increase by \$20 000 to \$150 000. This will free around 18 000 landowners from paying land tax in 2006-07 who, in the absence of this change, would have been required to do so. In addition, the second tier threshold will be increased by \$100 000 to \$390 000 and the third tier threshold will be raised by \$125 000 to \$875 000. All taxpayers will benefit from these threshold increases, including those in the upper value ranges. Reducing the incidence of bracket creep is a priority identified in the state tax review, as expressed in public submissions and by reference group members. As a result of these and previous amendments to the tax scale, the government will have effectively capped growth in aggregate land tax revenues at less than half the growth in the Perth median house price over the past five years. The cost of this measure is estimated to be around \$37 million in 2006-07 and \$165 million over the four years to 2009-10.

Part 4 of the bill contains amendments to the Land Tax Assessment Act. The first measure extends the current one-year land tax exemption for renovating or constructing new residences to two years, when this period is required to complete the home. Anecdotal evidence from the real estate and building industries indicates that it is currently taking longer to construct a home due to high demand and skilled labour shortages. Extending the land tax exemption for homes under construction to a maximum of two land tax assessment years will reduce the risk of persons renovating or constructing new homes incurring land tax bills while waiting for completion. The bill contains transitional arrangements to allow the exemption for the 2005-06 year to apply to a person who would otherwise not be eligible because he failed to finish the home and take up residence on or before 30 June 2006. This will ensure that those persons completing construction in 2006-07 and beyond will not be disadvantaged by the longer building periods to construct a home. The cost of this measure is expected to be around \$2 million per annum.

The second measure provides a land tax exemption, similar to that currently available for private residential property held in trust for, and used by, a disabled beneficiary as his or her primary residence. This legislation will extend the availability of land tax relief to parents and certain other family members who currently are required to pay land tax on property occupied independently as a principal place of residence for a disabled family member. Extending the land tax exemption to properties held in the name of the parents, grandparents or siblings will remove a disincentive for the private provision of accommodation for a disabled child, grandchild or sibling. It will allow access to the land tax exemption without the need to transfer the property into a trust structure, with the associated stamp duty and capital gains tax implications. Consistent with other land tax residential exemptions and rebates, the exemption will be conditional upon no rental or other income being derived from the property. For consistency, the Rates and Charges (Rebates and Deferments) Act is also being amended to provide concessions for local government and water rates to cover these situations. This measure will have only a minor cost to revenue but will increase the equity of the taxation laws.

The final land tax measure seeks to address a practice whereby minor interests in property are held by, or transferred to, different owners in order to defeat the aggregation provisions. The act provides that the assessment of land is to be kept separate and distinct from an assessment of any land that is owned by any one of the joint owners individually, or by any of them as joint owner with any other person. By structuring property holdings so that each land item is assessed separately, aggregation of property holdings can be avoided, which results in significant land tax savings, due to the progressive nature of the land tax scale. It has been identified that some owners with multiple land holdings are avoiding paying a higher aggregated land tax rate by structuring their holdings so that another person or entity, usually related to the owner of the majority interest, holds a minor interest in the land. In a large number of cases identified, the interest held by the minor party is one per cent or less. This practice undermines the equity of the taxation system in allowing people with property holdings of similar aggregate value to pay different amounts of land tax. It is allowing a significant amount of land tax to be avoided each year, thereby placing a greater burden on those taxpayers who do not seek to minimise their liabilities in this way.

The proposed legislation does not define a minor interest, as this is likely to encourage the creation of minor interests that fall just outside the defined amount. However, the legislation does provide a series of factors that

the commissioner is to consider when making a determination to disregard a minor interest. Once a determination has been made, the legislation requires the commissioner to notify the owner and to provide the reasons for the decision. In respect of minor interests of five per cent or less, the onus will be on the taxpayer in any review proceedings to establish that the purpose, or one of the purposes, of the creation of the interest was not to reduce land tax. This onus of proof provision will not apply to minor interests that are greater than five per cent. However, it is important to note that the taxpayer will be given ample opportunity prior to assessment and at the objection stage to provide all facts and circumstances that support the underlying reasons that may exist for the minor interest, regardless of whether the minor interest is above or below five per cent. It is estimated that additional revenue of around \$10 million each year will be raised by dealing with this contrived avoidance. This additional revenue has been directed to increasing the general land tax scale thresholds, thereby reducing the land tax bills for the many thousands of taxpayers who do not engage in this avoidance activity.

A detailed explanation of these measures is contained in the associated explanatory memorandum. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Dr G.G. Jacobs**.

## WATER RESOURCES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2006

### *Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr J.C. Kobelke (Minister for Water Resources)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

### *Second Reading*

**MR J.C. KOBELKE (Balcatta - Minister for Water Resources)** [12.45 pm]: I move -

That the bill be now read a second time.

Today I am pleased to introduce the Water Resources Legislation Amendment Bill into the house. This bill attests to the government's commitment to managing water resources in Western Australia effectively, sustainably and strategically. It builds upon the achievements of the State Water Strategy and amendments arising out of the recommendations of the Machinery of Government Taskforce that seek to establish institutional arrangements that support the minister. Importantly, it signals the commencement of the government's comprehensive reform of water and water-related statutes. These new provisions enhance clarity about roles, responsibilities and functions. A substantial portion of the amendments included in this bill was contained in the Machinery of Government (Water Resources) Amendment Bill 2003 and the Water Resources Management (Administration) Bill 2003. The house considered these bills in 2003.

First, I turn to the administrative and operational matters. The bill abolishes the Water and Rivers Commission by repealing the Water and Rivers Commission Act 1995, and makes the necessary consequential amendments to various statutes that currently confer functions and powers upon the Water and Rivers Commission. I note that the government remains committed to obtaining community and expert views about water resources management. Accordingly, the bill establishes the Water Resources Council, comprising people with expertise or experience in a wide range of areas, including conservation, economic development, community interests, mining and agriculture. Moreover, the inclusion of indigenous and regional representatives will ensure that diverse perspectives, and sometimes competing demands, will be considered by the Water Resources Council. The benefits of establishing the Water Resources Council are manifold, and include representative engagement in decisions concerning water use and management during a period of significant reform.

In addition, the bill will allow the minister to establish advisory committees to advise the minister on the administration of water legislation. Committees established under the Water and Rivers Commission Act 1995 will continue as committees appointed by the minister. The Water Resources Council and advisory committees will ensure that water resources management matters are shaped by the views of local communities and key stakeholders as well as expert advice. The bill establishes formal and direct mechanisms for community and stakeholder participation in decision making about water use, conservation and management. The bill also establishes a Water Resources Ministerial Body through which the minister can exercise statutory functions that are more conveniently undertaken by a body corporate, such as dealings in land, property or assets. The commission's freehold land will be transferred to this ministerial body.

The government has received advice that a licence to take water terminates upon the death of a licence holder. Not only does this mean a loss of an important asset at a difficult time, but also it may mean that the continued use of water to maintain crops or other business could be illegal. Such consequences were never intended and, accordingly, the government has taken the opportunity in this bill to amend the relevant provisions of the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914 to maintain the licence after death and allow the executor or administrator of an estate of the deceased licensee to arrange for its transfer, as appropriate.



Issues surrounding delegation are also addressed in the bill. The minister may delegate his powers to the chief executive officer; another officer of the department; an officer of another department or employee of an organisation; another minister; the CEO of another department or organisation; or any other person or body. As the majority of the commission's powers will be vested in the minister, broad delegation powers are necessary to ensure operational efficiencies arising from the day-to-day administration of water resources.

Transitional provisions are included to ensure that the staff, assets and liabilities of the Water and Rivers Commission are transferred to the Crown. These also seek to ensure that no individual or initiative may be inadvertently disadvantaged or compromised by the abolition of the Water and Rivers Commission. The bill includes various administrative provisions, including those dealing with confidentiality and protection from liability.

I turn now to the new ministerial powers contained in this bill. These ministerial powers will demarcate the respective roles and responsibilities of the minister and the Department of Water, as the water resource manager, on the one hand, and water service providers on the other. The bill provides that the minister administering the Water Corporation Act 1995 consult with the Minister for Water Resources before approving the statement of corporate intent and the strategic development plan of the Water Corporation. It is also proposed that the Minister for Water Resources be consulted on the appointment of board members to the Water Corporation.

Currently, sections 49 and 58 of the Water Corporation Act 1995 provide that the minister administering the Water Corporation Act cannot agree to the strategic development plan and the statement of corporate intent without the concurrence of the Treasurer. Although these provisions are retained, they are also enhanced. In the existing portfolio allocation, the Minister for Water Resources and the minister administering the Water Corporation Act are the same minister, and therefore the Minister for Water Resources is informed about the proposed strategic focus of the Water Corporation. However, this portfolio allocation may change, and it is important to give legislative support to the role and responsibilities of the new water resources portfolio, irrespective of the allocation of statutes.

As members of this house would be aware, since the Water Corporation is the dominant service provider, these documents have a direct impact upon the provision of water services and the management of water resources throughout most of Western Australia. The Minister for Water Resources will not have a power of veto over appointments or these strategic documents. However, consultation about these matters will contribute to a more coordinated approach to water resource management and information exchange, particularly when different ministers are responsible for the administration of water resources and the administration of the Water Corporation.

To accommodate possible future changes to portfolio arrangements, the Minister for Water Resources will have the capacity, as far as is consistent with good governance, to delegate powers relating to the administration of the Water Corporation to the minister administering the Water Corporation Act 1995. This will ensure that the existing efficiencies relating to approval processes will be maintained.

In addition, clause 141 inserts a new section 106 into the Water Agencies (Powers) Act 1984 to enable the Minister for Water Resources to direct the Water Corporation or water boards to have regard for a general policy of government relating to water resources. The minister will be required to table the direction in Parliament within 14 days. Such a direction will not operate to mandate compliance with these general policies, and there will be no penalties for non-compliance. In this way, the commercial independence of the Water Corporation and water boards will be preserved.

Clause 114 inserts new section 14 into the Water Agencies (Powers) Act 1984 to enable the Minister for Water Resources to obtain information relating to water resource management. It also provides that when the licensee objects to the request for information, the Minister for Water Resources must consult the minister administering the Economic Regulation Authority Act 2003 before confirming the direction. The direction is to be tabled in Parliament, and new provisions address liability and confidentiality issues.

The bill sets out the functions of the minister, providing a formal basis for cooperation and information exchange between the water resource manager and water service providers. Importantly, the minister cannot delegate his powers to direct water utilities to have regard to government policy or provide information. The new powers introduced in this bill provide a strategic policy framework that will now underpin water resource management in Western Australia.

Meeting the challenges of managing, conserving and developing Western Australia's water resources is dependent upon several factors. Since 2003 the government has implemented various initiatives that address the complex interaction between the increasing demand for water and the decreasing rate of rainfall. Equally important is the need to implement institutional arrangements that support the efficient and effective administration of the water resources portfolio. This bill goes some way towards placing effective water resource management at the centre of the government's water reform agenda. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr J. McGrath**.

**DINNER SUSPENSION***Statement by Speaker*

**THE SPEAKER (Mr F. Riebeling):** During debate on the last bill, it was suggested by the opposition that we not take a dinner break. The government has concurred with that suggestion. I have checked with the Clerk, who has advised that the staffing is sufficient. We are fortunate that the upper house is not sitting, so there is also sufficient Hansard staff to cover the proceedings. As a result, we will not take a dinner break this evening.

**FAMILY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2006***Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr J.A. McGinty (Attorney General)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the Attorney General.

*Second Reading*

**MR J.A. MCGINTY (Fremantle - Attorney General)** [12.55 pm]: I move -

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill continues the state government's implementation of important, comprehensive and wide-ranging reforms to family law in this state. These reforms will enable the Family Court of Western Australia to exercise in relation to exnuptial children and de facto relationships similar powers to those that will be able to be exercised by the Family Court of Australia in respect of children of a marriage and married persons. Importantly, the bill deals with shared parental responsibility, bankruptcy and child support issues.

The commonwealth Constitution provides that the commonwealth Parliament may make laws in relation to "Marriage" and to "Divorce and matrimonial causes; and in relation thereto, parental rights, and the custody and guardianship of infants;". Accordingly, the commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 provides for matters arising in disputes between married couples, including disputes in relation to their children, throughout Australia. However, the commonwealth Constitution does not expressly give the commonwealth Parliament power to legislate over de facto relationships and exnuptial children. In this context, other Australian states, except Western Australia - South Australia has referred power only in relation to exnuptial children - have referred to the commonwealth Parliament the power to make laws regarding de facto relationships and the exnuptial children of those relationships. Rather than referring state power to the commonwealth, this Parliament has enacted state legislation to provide for de facto relationships and exnuptial children. Consequently, this Western Australian legislation ensures that persons in de facto relationships and exnuptial children have the benefit of, and are subject to, the same substantive laws as married persons and their children.

The Family Court Act 1997 of Western Australia creates the Family Court of Western Australia and makes provision in relation to matters between de facto couples in this state, including property settlements, maintenance and parenting arrangements for exnuptial children when there is a breakdown in a relationship. The commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 also vests the Family Court of Western Australia with federal jurisdiction in relation to matters under the commonwealth Family Law Act 1975. As a result, the Family Court of Western Australia deals with property settlements and maintenance relating to married and de facto relationships. Consequently, when it is appropriate, this bill proposes that recent commonwealth family law amendments should be implemented in the Family Court Act 1997 of Western Australia.

I will outline the principal reforms that will be implemented by this bill.

**Federal Magistrates Service:** The commonwealth Parliament has amended the commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 in relation to the jurisdiction of family law magistrates in Western Australia. Family law magistrates have jurisdiction to deal with defended parenting cases and with disputes concerning property to a total value not exceeding \$700 000. There is no such limit if parties consent to a family law magistrate hearing their case. This bill will ensure that family law magistrates dealing with matters in the Family Court of Western Australia have the same jurisdiction.

**Family Law Amendment Act 2003, Commonwealth:** Commonwealth legislation also provides power for courts exercising jurisdiction under the commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 to make orders binding on third parties when dealing with property settlement proceedings under that act. Within defined limits, those courts have power to make orders binding on persons, such as creditors to one party to a marriage, and companies. Also, amendments to the commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 ensure that the provisions relating to parenting plans and the parenting compliance regime operate effectively. Changes to the structure and operation of the Family Court of Australia that make the processes and procedures of that court more accessible to self-represented litigants were also made. Consequently, the bill makes similar amendments to WA law.

**Family Law Amendment Act 2005, Commonwealth:** There have also been amendments to substantive and procedural aspects of the commonwealth Family Law Act 1975. In particular, that act deals with the

enforcement of court orders, introduces the term “divorce” and allows for recovery of child maintenance paid by a person found not to be the child’s parent. The bill will implement these reforms, including amendments to matters such as cost orders, suspension of sentences of imprisonment and private arbitration.

Bankruptcy and Family Law Legislation Amendment Act 2005, Commonwealth: The commonwealth Bankruptcy and Family Law Legislation Amendment Act 2005 amends the commonwealth Bankruptcy Act 1996 and the commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 to implement recommendations made in the “Joint Taskforce Report on the Use of Bankruptcy and Family Law Schemes to Avoid Payment of Tax”. This commonwealth legislation deals with issues concerning the interaction between family law and bankruptcy, prevents the misuse of financial agreements as a means of avoiding payment to creditors, and provides a more effective means of collecting income contributions from bankrupts who do not receive their income as a salary or wage. The commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 now provides that orders made in property settlement proceedings under that Act will be binding on third parties - that is, persons other than the married persons; and relevant bankruptcy and family law property settlement issues relating to married couples, including any non-financial contributions made by a non-bankrupt spouse to the acquisition of family property, can be dealt with simultaneously in a single proceeding before courts exercising federal jurisdiction under the commonwealth Family Law Act 1975. The effect of these amendments is that the interests of the bankruptcy trustee may be taken into account in proceedings before the Family Court of Australia. This bill will ensure that similar powers are available in the state jurisdiction of the Family Court of Western Australia.

Proceeds of Crime (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Act 2002, Commonwealth: This act included provisions in the commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 to ensure that proceeds of crime orders must be notified and appropriate action taken when an application is made for a property order by a married person. This bill will make similar amendments to the Western Australian Family Court Act 1997 when an application is made for a property order by a de facto partner.

Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Bill 2006, Commonwealth: This commonwealth legislation contains major reforms developed after a lengthy consultation process, including a December 2003 House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs paper, entitled “Every picture tells a story”, which recommended changes to family law to encourage parents to share custody of their children. The commonwealth legislation containing provisions relating to shared parental responsibility are in nine schedules. These provisions are an endeavour to change the context of family breakdowns from litigation to cooperation. The bill implements for de facto partners and exnuptial children the provisions in those nine schedules.

I will briefly outline the provisions in each schedule. Schedule 1 supports and promotes a cooperative approach to parenting and advances the commonwealth government’s longstanding policy of encouraging people to take responsibility for resolving disputes in a non-adversarial manner. The bill provides for a presumption of equally shared parental responsibility, meaning that both parents will have an equal role in making decisions about long-term issues for the benefit of their children. When parents fail to fulfil their responsibilities, the court is able to take appropriate action. Schedule 1 also contains changes to better recognise the interests of children in spending time with grandparents and other relatives if it is in the best interests of the children. The schedule addresses concerns about the existing definition of family violence by introducing an objective test and promotes agreements outside the court system. The bill will require people to attend family dispute resolution and make a genuine attempt to resolve their dispute before applying to the court for a parenting order. This requirement does not apply when there is family violence or abuse.

Schedule 2 strengthens the existing enforcement regime by giving courts a wider range of powers to deal with people who breach contact orders through the ability to impose cost orders, bonds, “make up” time and compensation. Schedule 3 changes court procedures to make the process less adversarial. Schedule 4 ensures that separating and divorcing parents will have access to quality counselling and dispute resolution services without the need to go to court. Schedule 5 implements the recommendations of the Family Law Council to clarify the role of independent children’s lawyers as best-interest advocates. Schedule 6 makes the relationship between parenting orders and family violence orders clearer and easier to understand. Schedule 7 makes a minor amendment to the jurisdiction of the court. Schedule 8 removes the terms “residence” and “contact” to emphasise the more focused term of “parenting orders”. Schedule 9 relocates to various legislative provisions some defined terms, such as “child” and “child welfare officer” used in part VII of the commonwealth Family Law Act 1975.

Applications for property settlement: In addition, the bill amends section 205ZB(1) of the Western Australian Family Court Act 1997, which provides that on the breakdown of a de facto relationship, an application for property settlement and maintenance must be made within one year after that relationship ends. The equivalent provision in section 44(3) of the commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 provides that a former partner to a marriage is to take action for property settlement and spousal maintenance within one year after divorce. As divorce proceedings cannot be instituted until there has been a one-year separation, there is effectively a two-

year period for married persons to make application. De facto partners ought to be treated equally before the law. Accordingly, the bill will amend section 205ZB(1) of the Western Australian Family Court Act 1997 to provide that an application for property settlement and maintenance ought to be made following the breakdown of a de facto relationship within two years of the breakdown. The amendment will also limit the number of applications made for leave to proceed out of time.

Child support: Members will be aware that unlike other states this state has not referred state powers to the commonwealth Parliament in relation to child support legislation. Rather, this Parliament has adopted commonwealth legislation relating to child support provisions concerning exnuptial children that are based on powers referred by other states. This is done pursuant to section 51(xxxvii) of the commonwealth Constitution. Consequently, this bill also proposes to adopt amendments to the commonwealth child support legislation so that those amendments can apply to exnuptial children in this state on a similar basis to their application to children of a marriage. Currently, in the commonwealth Parliament there are further amendments to the commonwealth child support legislation. If and when those amendments are enacted by that Parliament, the state government will be in a position to consider whether those amendments should also be adopted by this state Parliament. This bill will place de facto partners and exnuptial children in the same position as married persons and children of those marriages.

I understand that the commonwealth amendments, particularly those relating to shared parental responsibility, are proposed to commence on 1 July 2006. Therefore, if the provisions of this bill do not commence until after 1 July 2006, there will be for a time a significant difference between the law applicable to married persons and their children and laws applicable to de facto partners and their children. Of course, that is to be regretted. However, as the commonwealth Parliament has not yet enacted its parental responsibility legislation - although it is anticipated any day - and this bill must reflect enacted commonwealth legislation, this difference in applicable laws has been unavoidable. In this context, it would, of course, be of assistance if this Parliament were able to consider and enact the bill without undue delay.

As I have outlined, this bill contains significant and far-reaching amendments to a number of aspects of family law in this state. It will reform and improve not only substantive aspects of the law, but also procedures and court processes, including family counselling. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr R.F. Johnson**.

## **VOLUNTEERS (PROTECTION FROM LIABILITY) AMENDMENT BILL 2006**

### *Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Minister for Seniors and Volunteering)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

### *Second Reading*

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah - Minister for Seniors and Volunteering)** [1.08 pm]: I move -

That the bill be now read a second time.

Foodbank WA, the major non-government agency that receives donated food in Western Australia, approached the state government to encourage the development of legislation to protect food donors from liability when they donate food for charitable purposes. Foodbank believes that businesses are sometimes reluctant to give away excess food because they fear being sued for something that happens to the food once it has left their control. Foodbank currently receives regular donations from more than 400 food manufacturers and retailers. The donations supply more than 450 charitable agencies in Western Australia. The bill seeks to protect businesses that donate food and encourage even more donations. This will not only provide further assistance to disadvantaged Western Australians, but also contribute to reducing an estimated 250 000 tonnes of wasted food that the Western Australian waste management system deals with each year. The intent of the bill is to provide protection from liability for a wide range of businesses involved with the growing, manufacture, preparation and wholesale and retail sale and transportation of food or grocery product that make a donation of food or grocery items that are then distributed to disadvantaged people through a non-government organisation. Victoria introduced similar legislation in 2002. Since the enactment of that legislation, it is understood that food donations from businesses have increased threefold. The Victorian legislation does not include a provision for protection from liability for donors of other grocery items. Discussions with Foodbank indicate that products such as toothpaste and sanitary products are donated; it is, therefore, expedient to include coverage for these and similar items in the proposed legislation.

The Health Act 1911 requires that food that is sold for human consumption should not cause an individual illness or injury and must not be adulterated, deteriorated or unfit for human consumption. However, this requirement

is limited to food that is sold, and to food premises in which food is dealt with for subsequent sale to the public. The bill will protect donors from being liable for any death or injury that results from the consumption of donated food, or use of a donated grocery product, if it becomes contaminated in some way due to inappropriate handling or storage once the item has left their control. The bill will not protect individuals or businesses from liability if it is found that a donor had intended to cause death or injury through deliberate conduct. A donor will need to have ensured that the food is safe to consume at the time of donation in accordance with existing food safety legislation in order to be protected from liability by the bill. In addition, a donor will have to inform the person or organisation that receives the donated food for distribution about how that food is to be handled and stored, if there is a particular requirement, to ensure that it remains safe for consumption. This will include advising about the period of time left in which the food is safe to be consumed, or the fact that the food needs to be transported and stored in a particular way.

Discussions with Foodbank indicated that the bill should be kept as simple as possible in order to attract new food donors. The bill will, therefore, provide protection from liability only when no fee is charged to the recipient for the donated food or grocery product. This means that the bill will not provide protection from liability for organisations when food is sold at a low price to the disadvantaged, as these organisations are covered by the provisions of the Health Act 1911 and its regulations. Other areas in which protection will not be provided because a fee is involved include, but are not restricted to, situations in which donated food is used as part of a low-cost budgeting program and a small fee is charged for the meal that is prepared; and situations in which donated food has been used to make other products, such as chutney or jam, that are sold to raise funds at fetes or similar events. Once a distributing organisation receives donated food, the organisation will be responsible for the safe handling and storage of the food in accordance with existing food safety laws. The distributor will not be protected from liability by the bill. The bill does not provide protection from liability when food is donated for advertising and promotional purposes; only charitable and benevolent purposes are covered.

It is important to note that the bill will not add to existing processes and procedures regarding the safe handling and storage of food for either food-donating businesses or distributors. However, the bill will provide a level of comfort to food donors so that if food that was safe and fit for human consumption when it was donated becomes contaminated at some other point, they will not be liable for any harm that the food or grocery product might have caused. It is strongly believed that this fact alone will encourage an increase in food donation. The bill will amend the name of the legislation, which will be known as the Volunteers and Food and Other Donors (Protection from Liability) Act 2002. The new name reflects the scope of the new provisions and maintains a name that provides valued volunteers with the recognition they deserve.

Finally, this house is currently considering the Food Bill 2005, which will reform Western Australia's food regulatory system currently included in provisions of the Health Act 1911. The proposed bill will complement the provisions of the Food Bill and will provide those businesses that contribute to assisting disadvantaged Western Australians with the recognition they deserve. I commend the Volunteers (Protection from Liability) Amendment Bill 2006 to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr R.F. Johnson**.

**APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (NO. 1) 2006**  
**APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (NO. 2) 2006**

*Second Reading - Cognate Debate*

Resumed from 16 May.

**MR T.R. SPRIGG (Murdoch)** [1.15 pm]: I am very pleased that I have the opportunity to address the government's 2006-07 budget as it relates to the electorate of Murdoch. I was scheduled to speak yesterday afternoon and my notes at that point were good and well set out. However, because I had to add the points that I thought of this morning at 2.15 am, 2.45 am, 3.15 am and 4.30 am, my notes are not as well set out as they were yesterday.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke**: Reading your own speeches doesn't help your insomnia?

**Mr T.R. SPRIGG**: Fortunately, minister, I remembered those points and inserted them in my speech this morning.

I decided to attack the budget issue by seeking the opinion of as many of my constituents as I could since the budget was brought down last Thursday. The Treasurer might be happy to know that out of the 20 people with whom I spoke, two people thought the budget was not too bad and that it would not affect them too much. They did not know a lot about the budget and were fairly ambivalent about it. However, most of the others had a bit of a problem with it. One of those is a lady called Anna Ward, who lives in Applecross. She is a self-funded

retiree who lives off the proceeds of the 12 residential properties that her family owns around the state. Ms Ward was obviously hoping that the budget would provide some land tax concessions; however, they were not forthcoming. Anna pointed out that over the past five years, her land taxes have increased by 46 per cent. At the same time, inflation increased by 20 per cent. Anna cannot increase the rent for her properties. Indeed, she does not want to increase those rents to offset the increase in land tax. I look forward to seeing what will happen after the state tax review, which seems to have been delayed. As I recall, it was meant to happen some time ago, but the Treasurer is now saying that it will happen next March. After that review, I am hopeful that the government will provide land tax concessions.

The other important issue for the electorate of Murdoch relates to government infrastructure. Indeed, there are many infrastructure projects in the metropolitan area at the moment. The government is always thumping its chest about its infrastructure projects. However, it pays lip-service to the problems associated with the building of that infrastructure and the disruption that it causes to family living. A couple of months ago, I revealed in this house that the government had paid compensation to three west Leeming residents who were affected by roadworks in their area. I then asked the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure whether she could outline the criteria under which that compensation was paid. As members can appreciate, since revealing that information, I have had many people knocking on my door saying that they too are entitled to compensation. I will run through some of the problems that have been highlighted to me by people in my area. I will read out a couple of letters. In doing so, I hope I do not get into the same sort of trouble that I got into when I last read out a letter in this house. I have a letter from Shane Peterson who lives in Bateman and whose back fence is about five metres from a road. In a letter to Leighton Contractors he states -

Last Friday 12 May 2006, I received your letter dated May 2006 in which you announce asphaltting works with intermittent vibration in proximity to my property from 7pm to 5am on Sunday 15 May 2006.

That was last week. Further -

There are several issues which I kindly ask you to address;

1. Could your letters include the date rather than only the month and the year?

That seems a fair request -

2. Why did your most recent plus previous letters announcing disruptive night works arrive less than 7 days before works are due to commence?

3. Why did you not offer to pay for residents to rent alternative accommodation for the night, as has been done previously?

I point out that that amount of money is only \$150. That is terrific. It is good that it has been offered, but it has been put to me by a family comprising father, mother and two children that, unfortunately, \$150 does not get them anywhere. They could not actually move out of their home into alternative accommodation for that amount of money. The letter continued -

4. When will the limestone wall be built along our existing backyard fencelines to ameliorate noise from traffic and construction, like the one already constructed in the south eastern quadrant of the South St/Freeway intersection?

He continues -

To help you answer these questions, I extend my warmest hospitality to both you and minister McTiernan to sleep through a night's construction cacophony and nerve-numbing vibrations at my house during the next nightworks adventure.

The letter is signed by Shane Peterson of 5 Rowney Close, Bateman. This illustrates some of the problems that people are having with these roadworks.

I have a letter also from Patricia Bartlett of 38 Hassell Crescent, Bull Creek, and I will read part of it. Her letter refers to the fact that Minister MacTiernan had previously mentioned in this house that she thought compensation for some of these people might come when the property was rezoned. Patricia Bartlett writes -

We built this house 27 years ago, when South Street was one road West, and one road East.

We had at least 150 metres of bushland buffer (and incidentally we were told at the time by the Melville Council that it was nature reserve and would never be built on).

There was no Freeway - so we did **not buy on a major road** and then complain about it.

Once again, Ms McTiernan has distinguished herself, as she always does, by showing contempt for the average suburban couple.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr G. Woodhams):** I draw the member's attention to the fact that when referring to a member of this house, that member is to be referred to either by their electorate or the title they have within this house.

**Mr T.R. SPRIGG:** I apologise, Mr Acting Speaker. I was quoting from the letter. The letter continues -

It is sad that when politicians are attempting to get into office they are more than happy to talk to the constituents - but once they get there, they don't want to know you!!!!.

That was from Patricia Bartlett of Bull Creek. There are many other people. Vanessa Baetsen has built her own noise wall and is now seeking compensation for it. We hear about the government's big budget surplus; surely some of this money could be directed to these people whose living amenity is being absolutely destroyed while this work is going on.

Daniel Walker lives in Bull Creek also. He is now so close to the freeway that people in cars travelling past can look into his living room and see him there because the vegetation has been removed. There will be no security or noise wall provided. Mr Des Bone of Leeming lives next door to people who received compensation. He has the same problems but no compensation has been offered to him. David Griffiths of Mt Pleasant lives 50 metres to 60 metres away from the freeway roadworks, and he is finding it really difficult to sleep at night. Nicole Gill, also of Mt Pleasant, is pregnant and it has been suggested by her doctors and medical staff that her lack of sleep is affecting her baby's health. Colin McGhee of Leeming lives near the Roe 7 works and says that his backyard is now lit up like the New Year's Eve fireworks display. There is so much lighting at Roe 7 that it is obviously affecting him. There has also been damage done to his house. He has been offered a measly \$10 000 by the contractors to cover the costs, yet his damage is worth something like \$30 000. I have mentioned before the huge power poles in my electorate that are being erected almost in people's backyards, and which have certainly diminished property values. I refer to people like Pamela Lumsden and Peter Taylor who live in west Leeming. Surely this particular energy line should have been put underground; there is no doubt about that. However, because it was not, and as the properties have consequently diminished in value, I put it to the government that it should pay compensation to residents who have been so much disrupted in this way. The disruption has gone on and on. The minister keeps on saying that the government delivers on time and on budget, but we all know that is not true. This project is not on time and it is not on budget. As a result, the disruption to these people goes on longer and longer.

The other issue in the electorate of Murdoch is associated with Roe Highway stage 8. Roe Highway stage 7 is a terrific road, but it is a road to nowhere. It should have gone right through to Stock Road, which would relieve the traffic congestion on Leach Highway, South Street and Farrington Road. The City of Melville is doing work on Farrington Road now to calm the traffic in that area, and that will do some good. We support the government's six-point plan to get trucks off the road in that area. There is no problem with it, and it is a terrific plan, but it is not working sufficiently to ensure safety on these roads at the moment.

In these debates, most members talk about funding needed for various aspects of the schools in their area. Two schools in my electorate have been desperately trying to get funding for various projects. The Leeming Primary School is 20 years old this year and has never been repainted. The school has applied for funding to the district office for the past couple of years, but that has not been forthcoming. I sincerely hope that that funding will come this year. Rossmoyne Primary School is 40 years old, and has a renewal plan. There are many schools of that age around Western Australia, and the people at Rossmoyne are suggesting that their school could be a prototype for renewal. Can the school be patched up, or should it be bowled over and rebuilt? What is the best option? The Rossmoyne P&C and others connected with the school have worked very hard to get some answers, but have not yet been successful. It is also interesting that both Leeming and Bullcreek primary schools have received federal government funding for specific projects. Sometimes it seems that federal government funding for our schools is easier to get than state government funding.

I also spoke to some of the business people in my electorate to get their feelings on a couple of issues. I took the time to talk to the two tavern operators in my area. I am pleased that the Minister for Racing and Gaming is in the house at the moment, because the operators of the Kardinya and Bullcreek taverns are extremely concerned about the legislation being introduced to grant Sunday trading rights to liquor stores. The new licence category will impact the on-premises trade of the taverns, as will the provisions allowing restaurants to serve alcohol without a meal. I ask the minister to consult widely with the hotel industry before bringing this bill to the house because the viability of these businesses, in the view of their owners and operators, is very much in jeopardy.

We were very pleased a couple of years ago when the government made the announcement that it would build the new Fiona Stanley hospital right next to the St John of God Hospital in Murdoch. However, this has created some potential problems with road access from the south. I know the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has a proposal on her desk at the moment about this, and I am most anxious to find out where that road access will come from, and make sure that this precinct, which will be very busy in a few years' time when the hospital is built, will be as safe as possible. The residents of Murdoch want to make sure that their safety is assured.

An iconic place in the electorate of Murdoch is the Air Force museum in Bullcreek. That has been run by volunteers for a long time. It is a dilapidated building that is starting to fall down. There are moves afoot right now to try to get some federal and state government funding to build a new museum. It was thought at one stage that the museum would have to move, but it has been an icon building in Bullcreek for some time. We hope the government will consider providing some funding to get the new Air Force museum up and running and to keep the planes and other exhibits in the museum in good condition.

Recently I spoke to some teachers in my electorate. I do that on a pretty regular basis. A week or so ago they came in to see me about their log of claims. However, while they were there, we got around to talking about outcomes-based education. I ask the Premier and the Minister for Education and Training to listen to the concerns of the teachers. The teachers in my electorate are very concerned about the haste with which this form of outcomes-based education is being introduced. They are asking that before it is implemented, teachers be given more professional development so that they can gain a better understanding of the system. When teachers from a school such as Rossmoyne Senior High School - which was mentioned in today's *The West Australian* and was one of the top schools in the whole of Australia in 2004 - are saying they need to know more about outcomes-based education and that it needs to be delayed, the government should certainly take notice.

I am very pleased the government is trying to address the nurse shortage in our hospitals. St John of God Hospital is in the electorate of Murdoch. It is a private hospital. However, even that hospital is finding it difficult to obtain nurses. My 90-year old mother has been in that hospital for a period after fracturing her hip. The nursing staff at that hospital are really frazzled. Many public and private hospitals around the state are experiencing the same difficulty. I commend and congratulate the government on this initiative. Let us hope that we can get those nurses up and running and into the hospitals as quickly as possible.

Police is another important issue. I am pleased the government is trying to put more police officers on the streets. The government is aiming to recruit an extra 250 police officers by the end of this Parliament.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** It is actually 350, but they do not have a hope in hell of getting that number.

**Mr T.R. SPRIGG:** That is the promise. I thank the member.

The latest figures show that the government recruited 90 police officers in the last quarter. However, 99 officers have left, so that is a figure of minus nine. That is very disappointing. Although Murdoch Police Station is sometimes understaffed because people are away on leave and so on, the police are doing a terrific job under Sergeant Mal Anderson. I also compliment the security services that are provided in my area by the City of Melville and the City of Cockburn. The fact that security officers are driving their cars around the place certainly gives some comfort to the residents of the electorate of Murdoch.

**Mr J.B. D'Orazio:** Good idea, was it not?

**Mr T.R. SPRIGG:** Good idea? It was the member's idea, was it not? Yes, I knew that.

I am proud and privileged to serve the people of the electorate of Murdoch, and I will continue to do that to the best of my ability.

Before I finish, I will touch on some issues associated with my shadow portfolio of sport and recreation. I think everyone in the sporting area is awaiting with bated breath the interim report from the Langouant major stadium task force. It has been difficult having to wait for such a long time. We initially heard that the report would come out in March. However, it still has not come out.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr T.R. SPRIGG:** I have some questions for the Minister for Sport and Recreation on this matter. I have studied the budgets for both last year and this year, but I cannot see anywhere a line item about the cost of the Langouant task force. It may be buried somewhere else. I would also like to know how much has been budgeted for that task force in the forward estimates. Another report is due to come out at the end of the year. The people on the Langouant task force are the experts, so I am sure they will be able to tell us where the new multipurpose stadium should be located. We need a stadium with about 70 000 seats. It would be great if Perth did get such a stadium, because I would love to see the day when this state can bid for events like the Commonwealth Games. I was lucky to attend the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne recently. It would be fantastic if Perth had a multipurpose stadium and could bid for events like that.

A multipurpose stadium would cost a lot of money. The stadium would also need to be managed independently of any one particular sport. Rugby is facing an issue at the moment with having to play its games at Subiaco Oval. I am referring, of course, to Western Force. As a result, rugby is looking at forming a strategic alliance with the Western Australian Cricket Association. That may mean it will end up playing its games at the WACA ground in a couple of years, with a possible crowd of 35 000 people to watch it play.



One of the things I have thought of for many years now is that in the good old days at public events and sporting events the national anthem was played. Of course, in those days it was *God Save the Queen*, the national anthem of Great Britain. It is time to bring that back again.

Several members interjected.

**Mr T.R. SPRIGG:** Sorry, not *God Save the Queen*, but the Australian national anthem. It is time to have a public debate on whether the national anthem should be played at public and sporting events. People say we do not know the words to it. After we leave school the only time we hear it played is on Australia Day, Anzac Day, at the football grand final or when a medal presentation is televised.

**Mr T. Buswell:** I sing it every morning.

**Mr T.R. SPRIGG:** That is good. Patriotism is great.

**Mr J. McGrath:** It will be played tonight at the Danny Green fight.

**Mr T.R. SPRIGG:** It will indeed.

Another issue I have about sport and recreation is the Perry Lakes Stadium and the new AK Reserve that is being built at Challenge Stadium. The discussions on this issue have been prolonged. I have received representations from surrounding private schools because they are concerned that the Perry Lakes Stadium, where their athletics carnivals are now held, will be bowled over, the land sold and then the new stadium built. This will leave the schools in the western suburbs devoid of an athletics facility for their major sports carnivals. The alternative venue is the Ern Clarke Athletics Centre at Cannington.

**Mr A.D. McRae:** It is a very good one.

**Mr T.R. SPRIGG:** It is a good one. I have inspected it and I have been told that it cannot handle the expected crowds of between 3 000 and 4 000, including competitors, at these athletics events.

Another recreation facility about which I have some concern is the Frank Gibson Park in Fremantle. I know there is some thought that High Road will be widened and Frank Gibson Park, which is used by the Fremantle Netball Association, will be lost. I will follow this with interest. It is an issue because Roe Highway stage 8 is not being built.

I have been through the sport and recreation budget and I will put questions to the minister in the estimates debate next week. I am disappointed with some aspects of the sport and recreation budget because it seems to be a cut and paste from last year and the year before. The following comment appears at page 426 of the *Budget Statements* -

\$9.0 million will be allocated to local governments and sport and recreation organisations through the Community Sport and Recreation Facilities Fund . . .

I welcome that, but that is last year's figure. The allocated figure this year is actually \$10.8 million and that amount is certainly required for the provision of facilities. It appears that someone forgot to proofread that part of the budget.

The Minister for Sport and Recreation is new to the portfolio of sport and recreation; he is the fourth Minister for Sport and Recreation in the past eight months. I sincerely hope the government will leave this minister in this position for a reasonable time.

**Mr T. Buswell:** They are abusing the interchange bench.

**Mr T.R. SPRIGG:** Yes. I hope with the minister's other responsibilities of police, emergency services, community safety, water resources and Leader of the House that sport is not put in the background. I am sure that will not happen.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** I appreciate your support.

**Mr T.R. SPRIGG:** I am not sure how the minister was able to handle the challenge put to him yesterday as Leader of the House. It is his decision that the house will sit tonight and the sitting coincides with a major sporting event in Sydney this evening. I ask the Leader of the House whether he has been able to organise the feed of the Mundine-Green fight into Parliament House for members to watch.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** Not yet.

**Mr T.R. SPRIGG:** The Leader of the House is still working on it. In many ways the sport and recreation portfolio is a bipartisan one. I look forward to working with the minister for the benefit of the future of sport.

I put it on the record that all members are behind Danny Green in tonight's fight. He is a true Western Australian and we will be with him when he delivers that knockout blow to Anthony Mundine.

**The SPEAKER:** In conformity with the order made earlier in today's session, I give the call to the member for Kimberley.

Debate interrupted.

[Continued below.]

### **MEMBER FOR KIMBERLEY**

#### *Comments about Dr Geoff Gallop - Personal Explanation*

**MRS C.A. MARTIN (Kimberley)** [1.40 pm]: Mr Speaker, I rise to make a personal explanation to the house. I want to offer my sincere and unreserved apology to Geoff Gallop and his family for the comments attributed to me in this morning's edition of *The West Australian*. I offer no excuses whatsoever. They were offensive and without foundation. I made a serious mistake.

I also want to apologise to anyone else in the community who may have been offended, especially others suffering from depression or other mental health conditions. I accept that this condition does not render one incapable of making sound decisions. There was never any evidence that Geoff Gallop's decision-making ability was impaired in any way. I have always admired and respected Geoff as a person, as a parliamentarian and also as my leader. In particular, I have always admired his courage in becoming the first political leader in this country to seriously tackle the issues of child and family abuse in Aboriginal communities.

Finally, I also want to apologise to my Labor Party colleagues, who are understandably hurt by my comments. It is a sincere apology. Geoff Gallop, rightfully, is loved and admired by many inside and outside this chamber. Indeed, many of us on this side of the house would not be here today if it were not for him.

### **APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (NO. 1) 2006 APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (NO. 2) 2006**

#### *Second Reading - Cognate Debate*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

**MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe)** [1.41 pm]: I take this opportunity in the budget debate to make some comments on a very public debate about outcomes-based education - a debate that has, in my view and that of others, become both divisive and potentially very damaging to education in Western Australia. We should debate education issues at all levels. We should debate standards, proposed changes and the relevance of our education system.

I say by way of introduction that if those people who hold public positions or positions of authority and influence in our community are to comment on education, they need to do so on an informed basis and in a constructive way. The education system and the education of every individual boy and girl are simply too important to be treated in a lesser way. I make my comments as someone who is a product of the government school system, and, also, as members are aware, as Minister for Education for the five years from 1996 to 2001 - years in which outcomes-based education had its origins in this state.

There is nothing more important than education for countries in achieving economic growth; it is the explanation of the growth of most western nations. There is nothing more important than education in establishing and maintaining a civilised and tolerant society. For the individual child, education offers the opportunity to achieve his or her full potential, whatever that might be, and for many children it offers equality of opportunity in a community.

When I became education minister, I laid down four guiding principles that I would apply to the portfolio. I said that I would always pursue quality in education, whether that related to teaching, school buildings, course content or whatever. The second principle was that of choice - the choice between government and independent schooling, or the choice between academic or vocational learning, whatever that might be. The third was equality of opportunity; that is, we should use our education system to make sure that children in less advantaged positions have an opportunity to achieve, not only at school, but also in life thereafter. Finally, the fourth principle is the pursuit of excellence. We should always strive for excellence in education, not only among the more talented students, but also among every boy and girl whatever their level of ability. They should be encouraged and given the opportunity to achieve their level of ability. To me, that is the true pursuit of excellence. I stand by those principles today.

By way of introduction I also make the comment that our education system and our school system are both large and complex. We should not overlook that. There are 771 government schools in the state. There is a total of 1 124 schools in the state educating 371 000 students at any one time. There are more than 35 000 teachers in the system. Individual schools are often large and complex organisations. For example, Ballajura Community College has 1 913 students and 187 staff. It is a large and complex organisation. It is a very, very good school. Other schools have special and unique issues; they may be small schools, isolated schools, country schools or

schools that specialise in vocational education or whatever it might be. The point I make is that it is a large and complex system and every school is different and unique. Indeed, every child is unique.

I believe that we have a high-quality education system in Western Australia. I would never say that we should not strive to improve the system. It is a good system and deserves to be recognised as such. Schools today are very different from what they were 20 or 30 years ago. The growth of vocational education is an important change. A wider range of curriculum is in place. The use of computers and information technology is widespread. The quality of school facilities has improved. Schools are now vastly different. I would challenge anyone who wants to throw stones at our education system to visit a primary school or secondary school built in the past 15 years and tell me that it is not the equal of anything in the world. The facilities in schools are outstanding. I also have great confidence in our teachers. People should not throw stones; they should go and look at these schools. I was education minister for five years, and during that time I made 600 visits to schools. That is what we all should be doing. We should be visiting schools not only in our electorates, but also throughout the state all the time.

In the current debate about outcomes-based education, this government has sought to use advertisements to say that our students are doing well compared with students in other countries within the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development group. They are doing well. However, that, in itself, is not proof of the virtues of outcomes-based education. It is a confirmation that we have a good system and we are producing good results.

In looking at any change or advancement in education there is broadly two criteria that should be put in place. There are two questions to ask. The first is whether it is right. The second is whether it is ready. During my time as minister - that is now history - a lot of change was put in place. Early childhood education was introduced, with a new kindergarten and preprimary program for every child. The school starting age was changed. Literacy and numeracy testing was introduced. Vocational education and training participation grew from three to 30 per cent of years 11 and 12 students. Middle schooling was introduced, as were senior colleges. Students with a disability were included within the mainstream system. Aboriginal studies was introduced across the curriculum. A \$100 million computer in schools program was put in place, and so on. Many people at the time said that was too much change at once. Maybe they were right; there was certainly a lot of pressure on schools and the department and on individual teachers, students and parents. Labor has continued change in education; I acknowledge that. There has been an emphasis on literacy, online technology, behavioural management, retention rates and so on. It continues.

I turn specifically to the point of this address, which is the controversy over outcomes-based education. It seems to me that outcomes-based education is being blamed for almost everything. If anything is seen to go wrong in our schools, it is a fault of outcomes-based education. Having said that, there is no doubt that there is great anxiety in our schools amongst teachers, students and parents. We face a serious situation. Many of our schools - some of our best high schools - are facing serious problems. A staff revolt could take place. The central problem in the divisive debate at present is that it is not only about outcomes-based education. In fact, three concurrent changes that all impact on students in years 11 and 12 are taking place in our schools. First, there is a structural change in that year 11 has been made compulsory for students this year and year 12 will be made compulsory for all students in 2008. That is a big change for schools. Secondly, there is a change to the courses of study. At its peak, there were 415 different subjects, which will now be compressed into 50 courses of study. The third change is the extension of outcomes-based education from kindergarten to year 10 to years 11 and 12. The problem is that the three changes - the structural change, the change to the courses of study and the introduction of outcomes-based education - are being made concurrently. I return to the point. Is it right and is it ready?

I will take a moment to comment on the development of the curriculum framework and outcomes-based education. It was realised in this state and throughout Australia in the early to mid-1990s that we needed to introduce change in education to recognise the change in technology, to build values into our education system and to ensure that the students of this century are more equipped with thinking, analytical and conceptual skills - the sorts of skills they will require in the future. Schools were operating on the unit curriculum, which dated from the early 1980s. It was highly prescriptive. It laid down what teachers should teach, rather than what children should know, understand and be able to do. The process was started by my predecessor as Minister for Education, Hon Norman Moore. In 1995 he initiated a review of the curriculum, now known as the Temby report. I then became minister and in 1996 the then government established the interim Curriculum Council, which was charged with the task of developing a framework for education that was to be based not on what was taught, but on the outcomes achieved by students. The framework was to focus on the result, not simply what was put into the school curriculum.

Outcomes-based education had its origins in the United States under the Reagan administration. All states in Australia have gone down the path of outcomes-based education. It was agreed at a meeting of both federal and state ministers in Adelaide in 1999, known as the Adelaide agreement. Its basic principle is what students can know, understand and comprehend, rather than simply what is taught. The outcomes-based education

framework was designed also to give choice and flexibility, so that schools could do their own thing to an extent, but within the curriculum framework. It was never intended that it be a syllabus-free system. Indeed, I will read from the coalition's policy in 2001. I and my colleagues in the education area said that in the development of the curriculum framework, underpinning these analytical and critical skills must be the building blocks of knowledge - the ability to read, write, spell, add up and utilise a wide general knowledge; and that a balance between basic, generalist knowledge and analytical, critical skills is central to teaching and learning under the curriculum framework. In other words, there would be flexibility, but also there would be core content in the curriculum delivered through the syllabus. That is what was required. Outcomes-based education was also about accountability, so that schools and teachers would be responsible and held to account for the performance of students, not for what they taught, but for what students learnt and could do. It was a change in the paradigm of education. It was also about flexibility within a framework, but not a framework that would be syllabus-free. There would be core material with some flexibility.

The implementation of such a radical and dramatic change in our education system was always going to be a major task. There are two questions: is it right and is it ready? The implementation is about whether it is ready. Some people have suggested recently that this has been, in a sense, rushed. The development of the framework was done over several years. It was estimated at the time that some 10 000 people were involved in seminars and discussions and on syllabus committees and the like. Obviously, most of them were teachers and educationalists, but also some were drawn from a wide area of industry, government and the community. That curriculum framework was developed from a draft in 1997 to a final framework that I released in 1998 as the minister. It was developed over time. Even then the government of the day and I made the decision to be careful, and so we phased it in. We decided to introduce the curriculum framework, which had been designed for kindergarten to year 12, for only the years K-10 initially and over a five-year period. The question must be asked: how has it gone? I would not deny that there were teething issues and that there are some ongoing problems. Problems have arisen about having eight levels of achievement compared with 12 years of education and marrying them up. There are problems also of measuring outcomes and the like. Most people who think about education carefully would agree that the curriculum framework and outcomes-based education in K-10 is now well established and well entrenched within the system. It has been successfully implemented. I do not think that many people who are close to the issue would seriously argue that we should go backwards and abandon that framework. It has been implemented successfully for the years K-10. It is well endorsed and well understood. Some outstanding issues require attention and further improvements are needed, but it is in place.

The current controversy regarding outcomes-based education for years 11 and 12 involves, of necessity, some increasing complexities. That is why when I was the minister, I decided on a two-stage phased introduction. Years 11 and 12 is the serious end of education because it requires external assessment and examinations as well as competition between students for places in universities. It is necessary to have a level of assessment that discriminates between the most talented students and the next group of students, and to distinguish and discriminate between students' performance. Those 16 and 17-year-olds are being prepared for work, university or TAFE. It is not possible to have as wide a level of flexibility in what is taught in years 11 and 12 as can be taught in primary school or lower secondary school. The system must be brought together for no other reason than these students are competing under an external assessment. The vocational education and training sector adds another complication. The growth of VET in schools has been a major change that must be accommodated and must be considered to be an equally valid and relevant choice for students. Retention rates is also an issue. The unit curriculum was heavily focused on TEE and on those students who go to university when in reality only one-third of upper secondary school students went to university. The other two-thirds who either went to TAFE or into the workplace were largely ignored by the system. A different set of issues needed to be dealt with regarding outcomes-based education and years 11 and 12, not least of which was that the system under the unit curriculum had become unwieldy. Western Australian schools taught 415 different subjects in years 11 and 12, which is far too many.

Given all the complications that exist, the coalition Government and I, as minister, initiated a post-compulsory review. In other words, we initiated a review of secondary education for years 11 and 12. The post-compulsory review of years 11 and 12 is quite distinct from outcomes-based education. There is a relationship between them, but they are not the same thing. What has been lacking in this debate is a sharp distinction between outcomes-based education and the review and modernisation of years 11 and 12. The post-compulsory review of years 11 and 12 was conducted slowly and carefully, just like the process for outcomes-based education.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** In 1998 a working document was released and in 1999 a discussion paper was released. In 2000, after two years, the post-compulsory education review position paper was released by me as the minister. That paper set some clear objectives for years 11 and 12. The first was that both the academic TEE programs and vocational programs would be put under a single curriculum structure. The second, and most important objective, was that the 415 subjects would be reduced to 50 courses of study. There was to be a

single-system structure for assessment, whether it be a school-based assessment or an external assessment. The qualification was to be a new Western Australian certificate of education. These changes to what was actually taught and learnt in schools - in other words, the curriculum syllabus - would have been implemented slowly in years 11 and 12 over a six-year period. It was anticipated that any given school would probably offer 20 to 45 courses of study out of the total of 50.

Mr Speaker, I realise we are about to have question time, but I make the point that the changes to years 11 and 12 under the post-secondary review were in themselves major changes, and none more important than reducing the number of subjects from 415 to 50. However, that was not outcomes-based education, which is quite a different thing. I will cease at this point, but when I recommence my comments, I will suggest to the house that the reason the implementation of outcomes-based education is in such a mess is that people are not making a clear distinction between outcomes-based education and the post-compulsory review.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 2794.]

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### WATERWISE REBATE PROGRAM

#### 269. Mr J.H.D. DAY to the Minister for Water Resources:

I refer to the Auditor General's criticism today of the government's mismanagement of the Waterwise rebate program, and the lack of integrity in the government's media statements and other reports on the issue.

- (1) Will the minister apologise for using misleading figures to overstate the success of the program, including the figures used in his own ministerial statement of July last year?
- (2) Will the minister ensure that firm targets are put in place as a matter of urgency so that the amount of water saved through the program can be accurately determined?
- (3) Given that the amount of water saved is a key requirement in judging the success of the program, will the minister concede that his government's mismanagement of the program by not setting targets is a huge failure?

#### Mr J.C. KOBELKE replied:

- (1)-(3) It never ceases to amaze me how the opposition puts a negative spin on a fantastic story; it does it time after time.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Read the Auditor General's report.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I will. I will read from the overview in the Auditor General's report tabled today. The first key finding states -

Rebate applications are processed by the Water Corporation in an accurate and timely manner.

The second finding states -

The Water Corporation has been effective in making the public aware of the program.

It goes on, and I am only reading from part of the report. The third finding states -

The program has achieved water savings . . .

It also states that the Auditor General's -

analysis suggests that the rebate program is cost effective relative to new water sources.

So it is win, win, win.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Read the next dot point.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I am coming to that. The part that the member picks up -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Mr Speaker, the part that the member picks up is the Auditor General's view that, in terms of accounting, the underlying issue is that people may have bought a water-saving appliance even without the rebate. Therefore, following through as a proper accountant would, he is saying that we cannot guarantee that the money we spent on providing the rebate actually changed consumer behaviour and we cannot attribute all of that expenditure flowing through directly to water savings. In other words, some people may have bought a particular appliance, such as a water-efficient showerhead or a front-loading washing machine, without the

rebate, so that cannot be related to the rebate program. I do not believe that we should spend money excessively on monitoring the program, which is what we would do if we went down that path. Does the member suggest that we ask everyone to fill in a statutory declaration saying that they bought an appliance because they got the rebate? There is a valid point there, but the decision that we must make is whether we put a whole lot of money into monitoring to get the outcome. The Auditor General accepts that we are getting the outcomes, but says that there is not the clear accountability process that he would like to validate the percentage of savings that we believe is there and that we are claiming; I accept that. However, we must also take account of the fact, which is in the Auditor General's report, that when it comes to front-loading washing machines, we in Western Australia, through providing the rebate, have changed the behaviour of manufacturers. When we started this initiative, only 10 products on the market met the criteria for a rebate. That figure increased to several hundred after we began that initiative. The government's program changed the whole market because the majority of washing machines now being sold are water efficient. How do we put that information into figures? As a result of the rebate, we have totally changed the products on the market, which, in turn, means huge water savings. On that basis, if we wanted to use a different accounting model, we could claim more savings because some people who buy the very efficient washing machines do not claim the rebate. The point is that we accept that the Auditor General has quite rightly pointed out that the accounting basis on which the claims are made can be questioned. However, a range of other factors come into play. The outcome is very clear. We are getting good results. The opposition can quibble over how much, but clearly the money is well spent and the water that is saved is a cost per kilolitre below what it would cost to extract water from a new source.

**The SPEAKER:** It is important that we note the member for Greenough's comments about people not fixing their own washing machines.

#### WATERWISE REBATE PROGRAM

##### **270. Mr J.H.D. DAY to the Minister for Water Resources:**

My supplementary question refers to the fourth dot point on page 4 of the Auditor General's report, bearing in mind that the minister read out the first three dot points. The fourth dot point begins -

Public statements have overstated the extent of water savings generated by the rebate program.

Why did the minister fail to quote that dot point; was it out of embarrassment or in an attempt to deceive?

##### **Mr J.C. KOBELKE replied:**

I thought I had covered that dot point. The assumption in the Auditor General's report - I accept that it has some validity - is that we should be able to account for whether the rebate is the motivation for buying a water-saving device. If we were to go down that road, we could spend a lot of money on monitoring and following through. However, what would be the result of doing that? We accept that the Auditor General makes a valid point. However, given that savings are being achieved, the government believes that the figures it is using are fair and realistic. We are open to debate that they could be put in different ways.

#### BUDGET MEASURES - SERVICE DELIVERY

##### **271. Dr J.M. EDWARDS to the Treasurer:**

Can the Treasurer inform Parliament of the budget measures that will improve service delivery in Western Australia?

**Mr T. Buswell:** This will be a short answer.

##### **Mr E.S. RIPPER replied:**

It would be an even shorter answer if my friend, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition were Treasurer.

I noticed that the federal opposition was slammed by the federal government for asking only six budget questions of the federal Treasurer. I thought I would examine closely the performance of our state opposition in its first opportunity to ask questions after the budget was brought down. Opposition members have not asked me one question about the budget! It has given up the fight before it has even started. Members opposite are a completely hopeless opposition.

This budget is about much more than infrastructure or debt repayment, although it has significant initiatives in those areas. This budget is about delivering services to Western Australians. We on this side of the house believe that the government should protect Western Australian children. That is why the government is increasing funding to the Department for Community Development by \$27 million, which is a 12.4 per cent increase. Indeed, that department will receive an additional 154 staff. We also believe that education should be supported and that children deserve the best possible start to their educational life. That is why the government is spending \$312 million in 2006-07, an increase of \$58.1 million, on capital infrastructure in the public school system. We are also expanding the behaviour management and discipline strategy, as \$17.4 million has been

allocated this year to help 200 primary schools and 75 secondary schools work with students with behavioural and discipline problems. We on this side of the house believe that the government has a very important role to play in providing services to Western Australians with disabilities. That is why the government is providing a total funding increase of \$67.4 million over the next four years. Additional funding of \$28.5 million, an 11.66 per cent increase, will be provided in 2006-07 for accommodation support for an additional 113 people, 200 new respite and family support services and 670 new therapy services. The government's position is very clear. We think the government should be out there defending less fortunate members of our society, making their lives better through improved government services.

What about the other side? The opposition thinks that people should be out there fending for themselves. Listen to what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the member for Vasse, said yesterday. Referring to the former Republican Governor of Massachusetts, William Weld, the member for Vasse said that government should do less with less. That new statement from the opposition sharpens the difference between the Carpenter government and the opposition. We stand for government that defends, protects and serves all Western Australians, including those in difficult circumstances and those who are vulnerable. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has marked out a new position for the opposition. The opposition now stands for cutting services. If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition thinks that the opposition does not stand for cutting services, how else does he explain the phrase "do less with less"? The opposition wants to cut services; that is the only conclusion possible from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's speech yesterday.

#### AUTOGAS CONVERSION

#### **272. Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:**

I refer to the fact that the 2006-07 state budget papers show that no funding - not one cent - will be provided to the liquefied petroleum gas autogas conversion subsidy scheme after 2006-07. Given the massive increases in petrol prices that are really hurting Western Australian families -

- (1) Is the minister aware that, as at today, a tank full of LPG is the equivalent of around \$50 cheaper than petrol?
- (2) Why is the government making it more expensive for Western Australian families to change to cheaper and cleaner autogas?

#### **Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN replied:**

- (1)-(2) The subsidy was designed to encourage people to move to autogas. The figures provided by the member suggest that the market is already making that happen without the government's intervention. As I understand it, there is a backlog in demand for the capacity for conversion from petrol to gas. Having said that, we must do more to provide more sustainable energy options.

**Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan:** Why drop the subsidy, then?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** At this time, it was judged that the subsidy was not giving value for money, given that those conversions were taking place at a considerable rate. The government is working on a more comprehensive sustainable energy proposal, and I hope that that can be considered over the next few months.

#### AUTOGAS CONVERSION

#### **273. Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:**

I have a supplementary question. Is it the position of this government that allocating \$1.5 million to a union trust fund is more valuable to a community that is reeling in the face of high petrol prices than continuing the LPG autogas conversion subsidy to reduce family motoring costs?

#### **Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN replied:**

It is interesting that the Perth-Mandurah railway will save a resident of Mandurah presently driving a Hyundai to Perth every day around \$3 500 a year. Someone driving a Ford or a Commodore, with the cheapest possible parking price in Perth, will save around \$7 000 a year. I do not think it could be argued that the government is not investing in providing more sustainable options.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** I call to order the members for Leschenault, Vasse and Avon.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** The Minister for Resources and Assisting the Minister for State Development made the point yesterday -

**Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Leschenault to order for the second time.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** The minister made the point yesterday that every passenger on the *AvonLink* - a proposal that the member for Avon was advocating passionately - receives a subsidy of \$57.

**Mr T. Buswell** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call member for Vasse to order for the second time.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** We need to invest on a number of different fronts. Obviously, making sure that there is a fair and proper regime for the working people of Australia is one of the many things in which we need to invest.

**Mr M.W. Trenorden** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Not to be outdone, I call the member to Avon to order for the second time.

#### URANIUM EXPORTS - RESPONSIBILITY FOR SPENT FUEL RODS

##### 274. **Ms J.A. RADISICH to the Minister for the Environment:**

I acknowledge the presence in the public gallery today of the Ethnic Youth Advisory Group.

I refer to the United States' plan by which countries that export uranium will be required to take back spent nuclear fuel rods. Does the minister support this plan?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

I thank the member for Swan Hills for the question. I am aware of the US neo-con plan by which countries that export uranium will be expected to take back the spent nuclear waste. I note from an article in today's national newspaper that the Prime Minister has indicated his support for nuclear power in Australia. I note also that yesterday the Premier said that one of the prominent federal members of Parliament from this state, Hon Wilson Tuckey, has said that he supports this proposal because he would rather the uranium came back in that form than as a rocket. I note also that the Prime Minister has not directly ruled out this proposal. He seems to be able to fool the people in the national press gallery. They seem to be so captivated by his wit and charm that they are in awe of what he has to say on any occasion. However, what he actually said on this proposal yesterday in Washington was -

I think what can safely be said about this is that it is a proposal we want to follow. It is not something that we are proposing at this point.

However, in any event, even if he were to rule it out, it would be ruled out by the commonwealth only until December - according to the latest intelligence we have on the Prime Minister's intentions. Therefore, we do not really have any safe assurance from the commonwealth government on the proposal that we be required to take back spent nuclear waste.

The WA opposition is not exactly reliable on this issue either. The member for Cottesloe - yet again - has been running a commentary over the years on this issue. I have with me a swag of newspaper clippings. One of those articles is headed "Would-be Premier" - this article could be very current - "won't dump on N-waste". The member for Cottesloe says consistently in these articles, and in *Hansard*, that any state that exports uranium should be part of the debate on the disposal of nuclear waste. He also said a few weeks ago in this chamber that the developing African nations should receive our uranium - irrespective of the Tuckey rocket that might be heading our way! He also said in *Hansard* that people talk about the half-life of nuclear waste; however, it loses its radioactivity remarkably quickly. Here we have an apologist for nuclear material and nuclear waste! What we can work out from this is that all this talk about the need for debate is simply code for the member for Cottesloe's desire to soften up the public of Western Australia to the idea that if we are to sell uranium, we should be prepared to take it back. The people of this state can be assured that the Carpenter Labor government will not allow this. However, they do not know where the opposition stands on this matter.

#### TOWED AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS - REGULATIONS

##### 275. **Mr M.W. TRENORDEN to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:**

Given that the Road Traffic (Vehicle Standards) Regulations 2002 were found to be unworkable as they pertain to farming operations and the Road Traffic (Towed Agricultural Implements) Regulations 1995 are now in force -

- (1) Why has it taken three years to resolve the unintended consequences of the 2002 regulations?
- (2) Given that the Department for Planning and Infrastructure and the heavy vehicles section within Main Roads Western Australia have had a copy of the recommended regulations for more than 12 months, can we expect these amendments to be approved and tabled in this house before the winter recess?



- (3) If not, can the minister assure the house that resources will be put in place to progress these amendments judiciously?
- (4) Is the minister aware that as a result of the lack of decision making, police officers in regional areas are confused and unaware of which regulations to enforce?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN replied:**

- (1)-(4) I do not accept the assumptions that are embedded in that question. There seems to be a view or concern that the current provisions prevent agricultural implements from being towed on roadways if they are carrying a load. My advice is that the current regulations do not, in fact, contain that restriction on agricultural implements. I do understand that there is concern that they should and, indeed, the national view and the view of the Department for Planning and Infrastructure is that there should be such a prohibition. However, as we understand them, the current regulations do not provide that prohibition. Clearly, a policy decision is in dispute. As far as we can ascertain at the moment, the position is, and certainly our advice from Main Roads is, that towed agricultural implements are entitled to carry a load. There is pressure on us to change that and to implement new regulations that will preclude them from carrying a load. I am very surprised that the member for Avon would want us to advance with such a measure because his colleague in the upper house is urging us to go in the opposite direction. It is a complex matter. Amendments were gazetted in February this year, but there is an ongoing debate on a policy matter concerning whether towed agricultural implements should carry a load. At the moment, the regime favours the farming community. I would expect the National Party to support that.

TOWED AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS - REGULATIONS

**276. Mr M.W. TRENORDEN to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:**

I have a supplementary question. Can I presume from the minister's reply that she will not support the recommendations put to her because, as she outlined, they are the dead opposite to what is the situation?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN replied:**

There is a debate to be had.

BUDGET - DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**277. Mr M.P. WHITELEY to the Minister for Community Development:**

The state budget included additional funding to the Department for Community Development for increased staffing. Can the minister detail in what areas of service delivery the additional staff will be employed?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:**

I thank the member for Bassendean for his question. I highlight to him and other members the benefits of the massive increase to the Department for Community Development of more than \$142 million, over four years, outlined in the budget delivered last Thursday by the Treasurer. The important element for members to remember is that it is the biggest budget increase in the history of the department. I will outline to members where that money will be spent. The money has been targeted for important delivery of services. The 10 per cent increase in staffing will result in an additional 154 permanent staff, and by 2009-10, that number will have increased to 200. The bulk of staff, 133 in total, will be employed in field and direct services and will comprise child protection caseworkers; psychologists; placement and education officers; staff who support foster carers, who are an important part of the department's work; and additional senior team leader positions. We have also been looking at the importance of taking action to address staff workload issues. It is a big issue in the department. We are expanding the department's duty of care unit, which will centralise the investigation of allegations of abuse of children in care.

I also want to highlight the fact that this budget delivers staff on the ground; that is, there are people in the field addressing the important issues of child protection in our community. This budget sees a huge boost to the staffing of the department since this government came to office in 2001. This represents a 29 per cent increase in staffing numbers over this period of government.

**Mr T. Buswell:** Put a bit of feeling into it.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** This government is committed to ensuring the protection of children and families. That is our highest priority and that is reflected in this massive boost in the budget for its development.

**Mr T. Buswell:** Put a bit of oomph into your clothes.

**The SPEAKER:** I mention to the member for Vasse that although he thinks he has the opportunity to speak during every question as often as he likes and as loud as he likes, he does not. I remind him of that again.

## PRINCESS MARGARET HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN - FUNDING

**278. Dr K.D. HAMES to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the comments the minister made last week when he said, in relation to the needs of Princess Margaret Hospital for Children, that \$15 million has already been allocated to immediately address those concerns.

- (1) Why did the minister deceive the Parliament and the public by implying that the \$15 million set aside was for immediate use to address the crisis when the money is allocated for capital works across seven years with only \$2 million budgeted for the coming financial year?
- (2) Why has the minister publicly announced \$3.76 million for immediate work at the hospital - part capital and part recurrent - and how will he fund this over budget allocation?
- (3) Will the minister now commit to increasing the recurrent funds for the hospital as requested by the doctors?

**Mr J.A. McGINTY replied:**

- (1)-(3) Recommendation 1 of the "Gaps in Clinical Service" report involving Princess Margaret Hospital is that the hospital develops a proper business case with all details of the nature of the services to be provided and the costings associated with that to be presented to government in order to seek additional funding. We have accepted that recommendation, and those business cases are being developed. A total of \$15 million has been set aside as part of the health reform process to be applied at Princess Margaret Hospital.

**Dr K.D. Hames** interjected.

**Mr J.A. McGINTY:** That money will be allocated to meet some of the more pressing needs, and there is a capacity to bring forward that allocation within the cash flows of the department. We will be managing our budget within those usual budgetary parameters.

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** Have you been caught out again?

**Mr J.A. McGINTY:** Notwithstanding the gibberish coming from members opposite, there is a capacity to bring forward that expenditure within the expenditure limits that the department operates in, in order to meet those needs. Most importantly, we have indicated our support for recommendation 1, which is to make sure that we have a proper business case, proper costing and proper identification of the services to be provided within the context of those broad subject matters that have been identified by the surgeons and the other clinicians at Princess Margaret Hospital.

## REGIONAL ROAD FUNDING

**279. Mr S.R. HILL to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:**

Can the minister shed light on the National Party's assertions that WA regions are missing out on road funding?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN replied:**

I can understand members of the National Party being a little worried because their whole campaign, indeed, their existence and their future as a political party, is under jeopardy because of the extraordinary focus that the Carpenter and Gallop government has had on the regions, as the member for Geraldton well knows. Members of the National Party are running around saying that there is nothing in the budget for roads in rural Western Australia. We need to put a few facts on the table because we know, lovely people though they are in the National Party, that research is not one of their fortes. Therefore, we will assist them with a bit of research that we have done. In 2006-07 -

**Mr B.J. Grylls** interjected.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** Learn to read a budget. In 2006-07, we will spend \$570.8 million on roads in Western Australia. That is state money that will be spent on roads. Of that, 67 per cent will be spent on rural roads; that is, \$383.4 million. It is extraordinary, is it not? Never has such a percentage -

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, members!

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** Let us look at some of the roads. I know that the member for Merredin will say, "There was nothing for the Pilbara!" Mr Speaker, as you would well know, the famous Fred's route is -

**The SPEAKER:** Members should not laugh. It might be the last one I get!

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** No, we have more planned for you, Mr Speaker!

There is \$62 million in the budget this year - not tomorrow but this year - for the Karratha-Tom Price road. There are great projects in the Kimberley. There is \$5.2 million for the much-needed Broome bypass on the Broome highway, and there is \$3.2 million for continued improvements to the Derby Highway. In the south west, there is \$11.6 million for the Bridgetown bypass. There is \$5.1 million for upgrades to the South Western Highway, plus another \$5 million, making a total of \$10 million for upgrades to the South Western Highway. Of course, there is \$2 million to start the Bunbury port access road. There is \$4.5 million to begin the construction of the Mt Barker northern bypass, and another \$2 million will be spent on Muirs Highway upgrades. The list goes on. Sixty-seven per cent of the road budget will go to rural WA, and those guys opposite cannot find it.

BARCLAY REPORT - PAMELA LAWRENCE MURDER

**280. Mr R.F. JOHNSON to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:**

Quite some notice has been given to the minister. I refer to the work of Professor Barclay, the independent consultant engaged by the Commissioner of Police to review the original police investigation of the murder of Pamela Lawrence.

- (1) Has Professor Barclay reported back to the Commissioner of Police yet, in preliminary, final or any other form, orally or in writing, on any of his findings or views concerning the original police allegation that Andrew Mallard murdered Pamela Lawrence?
- (2) If yes, on the basis of Deputy Commissioner Dawson's public undertaking that Professor Barclay's report would be made public, when will that be done?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE replied:**

I thank the member for giving some notice of the question, which was clearly necessary as it is an operational matter. I have received this reply from the police -

- (1) No. An operational draft document has been provided to the special crime squad for operational purposes only. The report is not expected to be provided to the Commissioner of Police for approximately three weeks.
- (2) Not applicable.

PARKINSON'S WA - FUNDING

**281. Dr J.M. WOOLLARD to the Minister for Health:**

Many people with Parkinson's disease will be disadvantaged by the government's decision to not increase funding to Parkinson's WA.

- (1) Has the government based its decision to not support increased funding on a cost-effective analysis?
- (2) If yes, will the minister please explain or table the extent of the research and the results?
- (3) If no, will the government conduct a cost-effective analysis within a limited time frame and review its decision to not increase funding?
- (4) If not, why not, and who will provide the service to those Parkinson's disease sufferers that Parkinson's WA is not able to assist?

**Mr J.A. McGINTY replied:**

- (1)-(4) In response to the submission received from Parkinson's Western Australia, the Department of Health will continue for a further three years the existing contract that will expire in June or July this year. The department has provided, in accordance with the indexation formula that is applied to non-government organisations, indexation at a rate of 3.4 per cent. Funding last year for the Parkinson's association was \$243 334, and that will increase to \$251 608 in the coming financial year. The Department of Health funds numerous non-government organisations. It has many worthwhile propositions before it at any point in time, and it is always a question of how much money is allocated in the budget to meet those needs. Although the priorities of government expenditure include areas such as Parkinson's nurse specialists, because they keep people well in the community and out of hospital, so this is consistent with other government expenditure, other greater priorities needed to be met from those funds that were available for addition to existing NGO contracts.

PARKINSON'S WA - FUNDING

**282. Dr J.M. WOOLLARD to the Minister for Health:**

As a supplementary question, does the Department of Health do any cost-effective analysis, or does it flip a coin?

**Mr J.A. McGINTY replied:**

I am not sure; I will ask it.

## ROAD SAFETY - YOUNG PEOPLE

**283. Mr A.P. O'GORMAN to the Minister for Community Safety:**

Will the minister advise the house of the latest plans to reduce the number of young people tragically dying on our roads?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE replied:**

I thank the member for his question and recognise his very keen interest in road safety. We are all aware that the government has taken road safety very seriously, and the two previous ministers have worked very hard to ensure that our roads are made as safe as possible. The results are there. There were 163 fatalities last year, which is the lowest number of fatalities since records have been kept, but 163 deaths on our roads is still totally unacceptable. Of those 163 deaths, about one-third, or 54 people, were in the 17 to 24-year-old age group. That number, plus a range of other statistics, shows that new young drivers have a much higher risk of being involved in accidents and fatalities.

**Mr M.W. Trenorden:** You obviously think they are the worst group of drivers in Australia.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I am not saying that. I am saying that clearly there is a much higher incidence of that group being involved in crashes and fatalities, and the government is committed to doing something about it. Based on the Road Safety Council's report, the government will implement a range of changes from 1 July next year, including night-time driving restrictions; peer passenger restrictions for provisional drivers in their first six months of driving; a zero blood alcohol content limit for not only learners and provisional drivers, but also supervisory drivers; and a graduated demerit point system, so that we ensure that young drivers recognise that they must keep concentrating on getting experience and on learning the skills they need to drive safely. Also, learners' permits will be valid for three years, as it may take some people a longer period to get their licence; therefore, we do not want them to bear the extra cost of renewing their learners' permits. The government will also tighten restrictions on supervisory drivers, including imposing a zero blood alcohol content limit on them. We believe these changes will have support from the community. A range of administrative and implementation issues must be settled, and I will discuss those with a range of groups within the community, government members and the opposition to ensure that these changes will be implemented smoothly and effectively and that, through these changes, we will see a further reduction in the unacceptable level of carnage on our roads from serious accidents.

## CLINICAL DEPRESSION - COMMENTS BY MEMBER FOR KIMBERLEY

**284. Dr G.G. JACOBS to the Deputy Premier:**

I refer to the comments of the member for Kimberley reported in today's *The West Australian* in which the member asserted that a former Premier of this state was not competent to act in the position because he suffered from clinical depression.

- (1) As the Deputy Premier promised earlier today that an explanation would be made in the house, has he sought an explanation from the member for Kimberley about why she made this statement, and will he share this explanation with the house?
- (2) Will the Deputy Premier please explain to the house what impact the claim from a member of his government that the former Premier's decision-making process was compromised by his depression will have on the perception of mental illness in the community?

**Mr E.S. RIPPER replied:**

- (1)-(2) I am very disappointed that the opposition has chosen to ask this question. This is a serious issue, and I had hoped the opposition would handle the matter with respect for the sensitivities of the people involved - in particular, the sensitivities of the Gallop family. I made my position very clear in the earlier debate. There is a great deal of respect and affection for Geoff Gallop on this side of the house. I am very disappointed with the comments that have been made by the member for Kimberley. The member for Kimberley - as I undertook, and as is required by this house - came here and gave a personal explanation which included an unreserved apology.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, members!

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** In the absence of the Premier and on behalf of the government, I have made my views on this disgraceful and regrettable episode very clear to the member for Kimberley. I have also made very clear to the member for Kimberley the views of my caucus colleagues on this matter. This matter was properly raised earlier in the day. It has been dealt with by the apology from the member for Kimberley. I think it would be wrong for any member of this house to add to the intrusion on the privacy of Geoff Gallop and his family by further pursuing this issue.

**LAND RELEASES IN REGIONAL AREAS***Matter of Public Interest*

**THE SPEAKER (Mr F. Riebeling):** Today I received a letter from the Leader of the National Party seeking to debate as a matter of public interest the following motion -

That this house calls upon the state government to prioritise and expand the release of land in regional Western Australia to alleviate the chronic shortage and, given LandCorp's monopoly over virtually all subdivisible crown land, end the agency's ability to veto private development in regional Western Australia.

If sufficient members agree to this motion, I will allow it.

[At least five members rose in their places.]

**The SPEAKER:** The matter shall proceed on the usual basis.

**MR B.J. GRYLLS (Merredin - Leader of the National Party) [2.42 pm]:** "LandCorp has shown itself to be unable to deal with the more complex issues in regional Western Australia; they are not simply about making a buck. LandCorp has a preoccupation with financial return and corporatised models, and as a result does not release land unless there is a buck in it." Who made that statement? Was it the member for Wagin? Was it the member for Stirling?

**Mr D.T. Redman:** No.

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** It is pretty difficult to get land released in the Stirling area. Was it the member for Greenough's statement?

**The SPEAKER:** Member, you have to move the motion.

Several members interjected.

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** I move the motion that is in my name.

This is a very, very important issue. The National Party has constantly put the issue of land release in regional Western Australia on the political agenda. I would expect one of my colleagues to have made this comment. I would not expect it to come from the member for Central Kimberley-Pilbara. The member made this comment about LandCorp and its involvement in the release of land in Halls Creek. I welcome the fact that the member for Central Kimberley-Pilbara was willing to enter into the public debate and make this point very clear.

There is a massive expansion in demand for land in regional Western Australia. Mr Speaker, there is a huge demand in your electorate. The mining boom has brought about a huge demand in the Central Kimberley-Pilbara electorate. There is huge demand in the Roe electorate, in Ravensthorpe and in Esperance. The demand for land is at an absolute premium across regional Western Australia. The National Party contends that LandCorp is not performing the role it has been given the duty to perform of fast-tracking the release of this land in Western Australia, and of ensuring that regional Western Australia can benefit from the growth that the mining industry is currently experiencing. During the past two question times, the National Party has raised issues about LandCorp and the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has replied in a very offhand way. She said that she could not believe we would ask these types of questions about LandCorp. I hope that the member for Central Kimberley-Pilbara has taken the time to talk with the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure to make these points. We wholeheartedly agree with the member for Central Kimberley-Pilbara on this issue.

**Mr T.G. Stephens:** I have been able to get great progress every time I have raised a matter with the minister.

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** That is wonderful. Maybe the member also should raise the matter of Ravensthorpe and Esperance, because LandCorp is not working for the benefit of regional Western Australia. The National Party moves only four or five matters of public interest each year. We rate this matter as one of the most important issues we face for the simple reason that we believe this current economic boom is a great opportunity to grow regional Western Australia. Regional Western Australia will grow only if people have the opportunity to buy land, build a house and live in the regions. If they cannot get that land, the ability to benefit from the boom is constrained. We believe that during the MPI debate today we will make that case very strongly.

LandCorp's charter is to focus on sustainable development across the state to secure economic and social prosperity for all Western Australians. As the state's specialist land development agency, LandCorp implements major government land and infrastructure projects to meet the economic and social needs of Western Australians. The current crown land release system gives the state government - or LandCorp - a monopoly on land subdivision and development, and the National Party believes that this is hindering sustainable economic and social development in regional areas.

The questions I have asked in Parliament over the past two question times have been about the salary packages and the bonus entitlements given to LandCorp employees. I hope it is recognised that the National Party does

not usually engage in these types of issues in the Parliament. However, this matter was relayed to us time and again in regional Western Australia, including in the electorate of the member for Central Kimberley-Pilbara, by people who have a vested interest in seeing their communities grow, including community leaders and shire councils. LandCorp executives are receiving a bonus for artificially increasing the price of land. When I was first told about this, I said that that could not be the case. I could not see how there could be a bonus system in place whereby if the value of land was high and the profits flowing back to LandCorp were good, LandCorp chief executives and other senior executives would receive bonuses. However, as we have found out from the minister's answers to our questions in question time, that is not the case. Substantial bonuses are being paid to senior LandCorp executives. The chief executive officer received a \$20 834 bonus in the past 18 months, the general manager for finance and business strategy received a bonus of \$14 790 and the general manager of operations received a \$14 692 bonus. On reading this, it would be expected that the release of land would be working very smoothly in regional Western Australia, that plenty of blocks would be available, that there would not be demand constraints, that prices would not be rising above what we believe they should and that we would see the continued release of land into the market. Unfortunately, as you know, Mr Speaker, that is not happening. Many regional members of Parliament know that that is not happening.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** I want to understand how LandCorp staff can get an advantage from not releasing land.

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** That is what this MPI is about today.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** I want to understand the logic.

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** LandCorp is not releasing land. By not releasing the land, the demand for and the price of the land is artificially increased. The crown land is available but it is not being divided into blocks that are made available for sale. It is being released in small lots so that the demand exceeds the supply, which increases the price of the block and which in turn increases the proceeds to LandCorp. It would make it much easier for a LandCorp executive to ask for a bonus at the end of the year if the profits were increasing rather than the accounts dominating the other side of the ledger.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** If there was such a demand, would it not be better to release the land really quickly because LandCorp would make more money?

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** It is managing the system for the future. We are more than happy for the minister to explain why this is happening. As we outline that there is a severe shortage of land, we look forward to the minister explaining why that is happening and why in regional Western Australia developers and individuals are looking for land that they cannot get when in Perth, Mandurah and on the coastal strip an abundance of land seems to be released every other weekend.

I turn now to regional Western Australia where poor housing quality, scarcity of land for development, lack of private rental accommodation and inadequate accommodation for key professionals are very common sights. The low value of land combined with high charges for headworks discourage investment in many areas. As LandCorp is forced to act in a commercial manner, we believe that it is merely focusing on the bottom line and does not have to consider the interrelationship between availability and affordability of appropriate housing, the world comprising communities and individuals, and economic development in country WA.

I turn now to some examples, as that is the best way to explain this issue to the community. In consultations with the Port Hedland Chamber of Commerce, it has been found that the Port Hedland community, in the electorate of the member for Central Kimberley-Pilbara, is experiencing a huge demand for land. We have all heard of the Pretty Pool development. I will refer to some of the facts. All of the subdivisible land in and around Port Hedland, South Hedland and Wedgefield is held by the Crown and is mainly unallocated crown land. The Western Australia Planning Commission in 1999 identified 859 residential lots in Port Hedland and 1 113 in South Hedland that could be created in a single subdivision. More than 93 per cent of the unallocated crown land identified for development in Port Hedland comprises areas adjacent to Pretty Pool, which LandCorp has the first option to develop, while Homeswest has the right to develop land in South Hedland. There is no obligation, however, on either agency to develop this land. LandCorp has been very slow to subdivide the land in Pretty Pool and, by exercising its development option, has prevented land from being sold to private developers who are prepared to accept the risk of investing in a subdivision development. LandCorp currently has plans to develop up to 450 lots in Pretty Pool, including 330 single residential lots and a number of mixed-dwelling and high-density lots. Although 450 lots are on the plan, LandCorp is not prepared to release more than 70 lots in the initial stage, based on the outcome of a registration of interest process undertaken in 2005. We very much want to hear from the minister how that registration of interest process was undertaken, as it has been relayed to me that the local community believes there is far greater demand in that area than for only 70 lots. As I said, the Port Hedland Chamber of Commerce believes that this initial release of land is inadequate for the demand to subdivide the land and will result in excessive lot prices. The chamber is calling for a review of the

land release process to prevent LandCorp and Homeswest from placing a veto on private development without a corresponding requirement to develop the land in a reasonable time frame.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** The mayor wouldn't be the president of the chamber, would he?

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** I think he is the president of the chamber.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** He is the president of the chamber!

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** Does the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure not believe that private enterprise should be able to develop some of that land in Port Hedland?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** I do not believe it should be entitled to develop Pretty Pool, and I will tell you why.

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** I look forward to it.

I move now to Ravensthorpe. I want to talk about not only Port Hedland but also areas right across Western Australia that are suffering the same problem. Two weeks ago I travelled to Ravensthorpe to talk to the shire council about the problems that it is having with LandCorp. For those members who do not know, BHP Billiton's proposed \$1.8 billion nickel laterite project is in the Shire of Ravensthorpe. The project's construction phase will span two and a half years and its life is conservatively estimated at 25 years. There are more than 1 000 staff currently on site in the camp at Ravensthorpe, and 350 full-time staff will be recruited by July 2007 and will reside in the Shire of Esperance or the Shire of Ravensthorpe. According to the company, most members of the permanent work force have indicated a preference to live in Hopetoun, as it is closer than Esperance to the mine site. Ravensthorpe Nickel Operations has stated that it needs about 60 properties in Esperance and a further 170 in surrounding areas for its live-in work force; that is, just for its live-in work force, not for associated contractors or people in the associated industries that will grow around that wonderful project for regional WA. Ravensthorpe Nickel has taken out nearly all the options on an original housing group that was built by an investment company in Hopetoun, and properties are now also being developed in Ravensthorpe.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** Is this private sector development?

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** It has already sold out. That was from much earlier in the piece when land was available in Hopetoun.

As well as that, Tectonic Resources is embarking on a gold project in that area. A public ballot was held in Hopetoun on 8 February and all 20 publicly-available lots were sold. The remaining 31 lots were committed to Ravensthorpe Nickel Operations. Demand is pushing housing and land prices upwards. Ravensthorpe Nickel - I have spoken to representatives of that company in the past 24 hours - would like to access more land to ensure that it has a residential work force, rather than a fly in, fly out operation, for not only existing RNO employees, but also those from surrounding industries. Eighteen months ago, land in Hopetoun sold for \$75 000 while land in Ravensthorpe sold for \$15 000. Blocks in the new development in Hopetoun are being sold for between \$125 000 and \$170 000, while blocks in Ravensthorpe are reaching upwards of \$80 000. Every day local real-estate agents receive calls from people wanting to buy land in both towns. Indeed, there is a waiting list for blocks. In March, the Minister for Resources and Assisting the Minister for State Development announced that 43 residential building blocks would be released through LandCorp in Ravensthorpe, mainly on the northern edge of the town site. In the shire's view, the release of 43 blocks of crown land is not sufficient to meet demand given the region's mining development and the fact that the shire is also creating an industrial park to stimulate town growth and sustainability. Land development could be a genuine revenue raiser for local government. That is something that the National Party is very focused on. We all know the challenges faced by local government in meeting the increasing demands that are placed on them. The resources boom is providing a real opportunity for local governments to become involved in not only the contracting side of the boom, but also the land development side. However, in this case the option to develop residential land went straight to LandCorp. The Department for Planning and Infrastructure does not have to consider the shire in this process. LandCorp has not involved the shire in its contracts for further associated work projects, dismissing the opportunity of letting it become a shareholder in the deal and helping it take charge of its own future. The National Party contends that LandCorp is hoarding the projects that it thinks it can make a profit on. We do not believe that that is honourable, given that it is acting for a government agency.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** Is your assertion that Ravensthorpe is a profitable project?

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** My assertion is that the Shire of Ravensthorpe would be developing those blocks if LandCorp allowed it to do so. That is what it told me directly.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** Which ones?

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** The chief executive officer of the Shire of Ravensthorpe.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** No.

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** I am talking about the blocks in Hopetoun.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** Are you talking about the 42 blocks? I thought you were talking about Ravensthorpe.

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** I am talking about Ravensthorpe and Hopetoun. The Ravensthorpe shire would be happy to hold a stake in both the Ravensthorpe and Hopetoun projects. However, it believes that it is being frozen out by LandCorp.

When I met with Ravensthorpe Nickel, it was very complimentary of the state government's attitude to a residential work force in both Ravensthorpe and Hopetoun. It was also complimentary of the Water Corporation, the Department of Education and Training and a range of other government departments. However, it was not complimentary of LandCorp. It believes that LandCorp is working in a separate sphere from not only government policy, but also the other agencies that are working toward ensuring that Ravensthorpe, Hopetoun and the whole coastal area benefit from this move. It is also concerned that LandCorp has no key performance indicators and that, therefore, the opportunity to crystallise the best possible take-up of developed land in that region has been missed.

Mr Speaker, I turn to Karratha, an area that is very important to you. In Tambrey, there is a 177-lot residential development next to the Karratha Primary School. Stage 1 comprises only 78 lots. There were over 1 200 registrations of interest for those 78 lots and more than 200 conforming ballots. This is the point that I am making: given that the land exists, that the budget includes the money to fast-track the land and that 200 conforming ballots were received, why were only 78 blocks released?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** Do you understand that you can't just get out there with a piece of chalk. It is not like laying out a soccer pitch with a piece of chalk. In a highly-constrained market you have to get in D9s, power and roads.

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** Is the minister saying that she cannot get the associated service equipment to do those projects any quicker?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** I am telling you that we are under exactly the same capacity constraints as the private sector.

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** Is the minister contending that she cannot get the workers and equipment to fast-track those land releases?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** We are fast-tracking them. I will go into detail in my response, and I will compare the performance of LandCorp with the private sector performance in Karratha. I know, Mr Speaker, that you are very familiar with the performance of the private sector.

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** The minister's time will come. I appreciate her interjections, because we are raising this as a serious concern for regional Western Australia. If the minister can provide the answers to the questions, we would welcome that. However, that is not what is happening at the moment. It is as though the minister thinks that LandCorp is doing a great job, but that is not the message we are getting back from any of these regional communities. They believe that LandCorp is missing the boat. While congratulating the other government departments and supporting the tenor of the government's policy towards those regions, we contend that LandCorp is missing the boat on this issue.

I turn now to the solution being put forward by the Port Hedland Chamber of Commerce. If the minister believes there is a conflict of interest there, she is most welcome to claim that. She should listen to the solution I put forward and tell me why it will not work. It sounds like commonsense to me. We believe that the government must acknowledge that land development in regional towns is a priority and assist in providing affordable land to grow the regions and ease the pressure on urban sprawl. Headworks assistance is obviously one of those requirements, but that is a debate that we can have another day. The proposal from the Port Hedland Chamber of Commerce has merit and is worth the minister's consideration. Its proposal is that if a private individual or organisation formally applies to the state government to purchase an area of unallocated crown land for subdivision or other development, and can prove the financial capacity to do so, LandCorp or, in South Hedland, Homeswest, would be given the opportunity, within 90 days of such an application, to formally accept or decline its option to develop the land.

Should LandCorp or Homeswest accept the option, the agency must substantially advance the development of the land within 12 months, otherwise the option lapses and the land becomes available for purchase by a private developer. Should LandCorp decline the option, the application for purchase of the land should be publicly advertised, inviting comments, submissions or expressions of interest to acquire the land within 90 days of the date of publication. Time lines should be put in place. If no objection or alternative expression of interest is received, the purchase would proceed, with the state government determining the price based on valuation. If an objection is made, it would be assessed by the government and either upheld, in which case the purchase would not proceed, or dismissed. If another party lodges an expression of interest in purchasing the property within the 90-day comment period, and that party can prove the financial capacity to do so, the property should be offered for sale by tender or public auction within a further 90 days.



To deter land speculation, the state government would require the purchaser to enter into a legal agreement such that, if substantial progress on the development has not been made within 12 months of the purchase, the government may require the purchaser to relinquish title to the property with a repayment of the purchase price less any costs incurred by the state. The government would offer no warranty on the granting of approvals, clearance of native title and heritage issues, or other requirements, which would be the responsibility of the purchaser.

I have a copy of the document prepared by the Port Hedland Chamber of Commerce and I seek leave to table it for the remainder of today's sitting. I will also ensure that the minister receives a copy.

Leave granted.

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

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** The National Party would like to see a situation in which, if LandCorp does not have the ability to access the services or the equipment to expedite these land releases, private enterprise is able to get involved in land development in regional Western Australia. We understand that there is enormous pressure for land development right across the state, and we certainly do not shy away from that. It is part of the effect of the boom in the mining sector. However, to say that LandCorp should be the sole holder of unallocated crown land is unacceptable. It is interesting that LandCorp holds the land in Karratha, Port Hedland, Ravensthorpe, Esperance and Hopetoun, where the demand is very strong, while in Merredin it is more than happy to release the land. Where demand is not very strong, LandCorp is more than happy to allow the land to pass to private developers. That is where the Nationals see this conflict occurring. Private enterprise should be able to bring land on stream and develop it where it is keen to do so. That would enable LandCorp to invest the money in some of those areas that are not considered to be very attractive by private enterprise. That would benefit communities in the wheatbelt, the mid-west and other areas across the state in which extreme demand has not been created by the mining companies. That is where the Nationals would like to see LandCorp develop some of its land.

In answer to some of the questions the Nationals have asked the minister, she has shown us lists of places where land is available. However, the LandCorp web site, which shows what land is available in small community centres such as Cue and Gnowangerup, contains perhaps one industrial block. It is not as though subdivisions are available for people to move into; there is nothing at all.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** We were happy to give you private sector participation in Gnowangerup and Cue.

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** That is right. However, the government is saying that the private sector can invest in communities that are not commercially viable; therefore, development will not occur. As a result, land is not available in those communities for residential development. There are also tight constraints on industrial development in areas that are not deemed to be commercial, yet in areas that are commercial, LandCorp is sitting on huge tracts of land that could be available for development. This land is being rolled out in small segments of 70 blocks here and 50 blocks there when demand is for about 200 blocks. That is putting upward pressure on prices and slowing down development of those regions. People who were thinking of moving into those communities cannot access housing. The lack of housing in the north west has created a huge amount of upward pressure on the rental market. A four-by-two house in Karratha or Port Hedland can be rented out for upwards of \$1 000. That is all right for people who are working for the big mining companies but not for people who are working for the local newsagent or supermarket.

The Nationals believe this is a very serious issue. We have heard the minister give a lot of support to LandCorp, and, as the minister responsible, she must do that, but she should not misunderstand the very large concern of many organisations in Western Australia about LandCorp's role in developing regional Western Australia. If the regions are to benefit in the way in which the metropolitan area has benefited from the huge resources boom in WA, land must be made available. Currently, land is not available. If LandCorp is the chief agency, I do not think its chief executive should be taking home substantial bonuses when land is clearly not available.

**MR G. WOODHAMS (Greenough)** [3.08 pm]: I rise for a couple of moments to support the member for Merredin, the Leader of the Nationals. I will highlight two locations within the electorate of Greenough where there is difficulty obtaining land. I am sure the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure is familiar with Dongara and Kalbarri, two of the fastest growing areas in regional Western Australia. In acknowledging the rapid growth in those areas, the government has committed to enhancing the development of a high school in Kalbarri. I visit Kalbarri probably a minimum of once every three weeks and talk to many people in that part of the world. Many of them want to buy land, and some of them are private developers. I would be happy to take advice from the minister. If she went to Kalbarri, she would find that some of that private land development was well and truly beyond the financial scope of the average mum and dad who would like to buy land in Kalbarri. However, land has not been made available. Once again, LandCorp is pulling the strings.

No doubt the Shire of Irwin has provided information to the minister. I am sure she still has some documents with which I provided her last year from the Shire of Irwin about land in that shire. It contains information about some of the conflicts surrounding some of the industrial areas on the outskirts of Dongara that were preventing a lot of land from being used as special rural land.

I wanted to highlight those two locations; they are areas that all members of Parliament would acknowledge are target areas for regional growth in Western Australia. The previous conservative government acknowledged that Kalbarri was very important because it funded the construction of a road to Kalbarri. In acknowledging the importance of Dongara and Kalbarri, this government might deign to fund the completion of Indian Ocean Drive. That is another topic that should be discussed. I am interested to hear what the minister has to say, particularly about Dongara, on which she has some documentation and representation from the Shire of Irwin, and also about Kalbarri and the fact that it is surrounded by national park, which constrains the development of land in that area. Certainly if anyone has the capacity to develop land in Kalbarri, it is LandCorp.

**MR G. SNOOK (Moore)** [3.10 pm]: I thank my colleagues in the National Party for the opportunity to add to this debate. The mission statement of LandCorp, as found at page 739 of the *Budget Statements*, is as follows -

The Western Australian Land Authority (LandCorp) is the State Government's commercially focused land development agency. LandCorp is responsible for ensuring that the following outcomes are delivered:

- provision of sufficient heavy, special and general industrial land to support continued economic development;
- provision of sufficient urban land through renewal projects, new town centres and revitalisation development projects for Western Australian communities;
- provision of sufficient land to support regional towns' development; and
- facilitate the development and disposal of surplus government land and property assets.

That is the role that LandCorp is required to fulfil. However, in many cases LandCorp is not fulfilling that role to the point of making land available for the development and sustainability of rural communities. Many issues in this state are placing barriers in the way of the development of land in this state. I believe that in some cases LandCorp is using some of these issues as a convenience so that it does not need to proceed with the development of land. I will give two examples in my electorate. One example is Cervantes. That is a great town. The minister was in Cervantes not that long ago to look at the potential and the development opportunities and issues in that town. Cervantes can be compared with the small town of Badgingarra on the Brand Highway. There has not been a land release in Cervantes for in excess of 11 years.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** Why is that?

**Mr G. SNOOK:** I will get to that, minister. The problem is land title. No-one has managed to resolve that problem in the past 11 years. The government has said that it knows how to resolve the problem of native title. The government has had one term and nearly 18 months in which to resolve that problem. It seems to be getting closer to doing that in Cervantes, but for some unknown reason -

**Mr J.J.M. Bowler:** You would be aware that native title comes under a federal act. Have you talked to your federal colleagues about that?

**Mr G. SNOOK:** I understand that clearly, minister. The government is responsible for developing land, so it should work through this issue that is affecting the development of land. The previous government, and also the former Premier and minister, have said that they have the answer to this problem. However, the answer is not forthcoming. There have been a lot of words, but there has not been any action. During the past 11 years the land prices in Cervantes have skyrocketed. That is very convenient, obviously, for the developer, which in this case is LandCorp, because no private land is available in Cervantes. People cannot get a vacant block of land in Cervantes, and those people who are lucky enough to get hold of a block with an old residence on it have to pay an exorbitant amount of money for it. Low-income earners cannot afford to buy a block of land in Cervantes. Development in the town is being stifled. The town is on the coast and there is a high demand for land, but there is no capacity to cater to that demand. The government has failed miserably in trying to resolve that problem. I acknowledge that the problem is complex.

If we take the alternative and go inland to Badgingarra, the cost of land is not as high as it is in Cervantes, but there is still a need for more land to be made available. That is the very essence of what my colleagues in the National Party have been talking about. The problem is that we cannot stimulate and drive the economy of an area if we cannot provide the capacity for people to move to that area. There is a demand for housing in that area. Part of that demand is being driven by the mining activity in the area. However, the situation in Badgingarra is just break even. Most businesses have to balance the good years against the bad years. They

have to collectively balance the profitable years and the not so profitable years. I challenge the minister to explain to this house why LandCorp is failing to achieve the same sort of balance.

**MS A.J.G. MacTIERNAN (Armadale - Minister for Planning and Infrastructure)** [3.14 pm]: The government will oppose this motion because it is completely ill-founded. We recognise that there are great challenges for government and great challenges for LandCorp, just as there are great challenges for the private sector, in what, one may argue, is an overheated economy. The allegations that have been made in this debate, particularly the allegations made by the Leader of the National Party, are quite disgraceful. Not only are they disgraceful, but also they do not make sense.

I will try to set out a number of issues. First, we must get clarity about LandCorp's legislation, the Western Australian Land Authority Act, and the constraints under which LandCorp operates and the way in which it works within those constraints. Under legislation developed by members opposite when they were in government - which we supported - in order to protect their mates, the property developers, a clear requirement was placed on LandCorp to meet a hurdle rate of return. LandCorp is able to proceed with developments of its own volition only if it achieves a certain hurdle rate of return. That was a commercial requirement that members opposite absolutely demanded be put in place for LandCorp to meet because they said it would be most unfair if LandCorp was competing with the private sector without that hurdle rate of return. We accepted that and said that it made sense. However, we have recognised that there are times when we want our land development agency to act outside the constraints of commerciality. The right and proper way to approach that is to provide LandCorp with a community service obligation to deliver that. That is precisely what this government has done in a very organised and strategic way. Members opposite did not take that action.

We have put in place a town site development program for which LandCorp has been given two buckets of money. One is a consolidated fund injection and the other is an expanded borrowing capacity to enable LandCorp to move forward and develop those projects that economically do not make sense, particularly those projects in the seats of most of the National Party members - the inland seats.

**Mr G. Snook:** The seat of Moore.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** The coastal developments tend to make their returns. The government is absolutely unashamed that it has tried, when possible, to get LandCorp to undertake the developments that make commercial sense. That provides the community with the best return. This is a community asset. Why should not we be seeking to get that developer profit? The money is not going into the pockets of wealthy property developers but, instead, it is going back into the community and helping us fund those projects for which the inland members have come to me and said that they want LandCorp to develop. The money we make on profitable developments can help us underwrite these projects that do not make economic sense.

**Mr G. Snook:** That is not happening. I quoted Badgingarra.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** It is not that we can fund every project at once. Under our community service obligations the government, not LandCorp, sets those priorities. If it is a community service obligation that involves a net input into those towns and land development, it is not LandCorp's responsibility to make that decision; it is our responsibility, as the elected government, to make that decision.

My good friend the member for Eyre is very much involved in this process. We have a regional policy standing committee within cabinet that looks at the particular LandCorp projects that are before it, and it prioritises them. For example, in 2005-06 the Halls Creek project was prioritised, because the committee made an assessment that there were social reasons to advance that project. The committee will not approve every development just because the shire puts up its hand. It talks to the local authorities, considers the need and whether private land is available to do the job and then it prioritises. That is not the responsibility of LandCorp. That is the responsibility of the state government and we will stick by that prioritisation. There was no town site development program under the previous government. As well as listing the sites where we have blocks of land, I listed all of these areas that the member for Merredin is probably not all that concerned about, areas such as Fitzroy Crossing, for example.

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** Go to the web site and there's nothing there.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** The member is confusing two things. I am now talking about the LandCorp project that we are working on under our town site development project, including cases like Fitzroy Crossing.

**Mr M.W. Trenorden:** Is Grass Valley on there?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** There are two different issues. One is where we have land for sale and the other is the projects that we are engaged in developing. That is how it works. It is no use going around beating up on LandCorp for not engaging in non-commercial projects. It is the responsibility of the state government to prioritise those projects, and we do that. We have our regional policy committee that makes those decisions. I

think they are wise decisions. The idea that LandCorp sits on land to make it wealthier is nonsense. It would make more sense to get the land out as quickly as possible to get more development and more money.

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** You get the price up and then release it.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** Not when there is the amount of demand that the member says we have. I acknowledge that there are lots of people who want land. Every shire we speak to wants more land and wants it more quickly, but to ignore the real problems and the real constraints and just demonise LandCorp is nonsense.

I turn now to Port Hedland. I find this one particularly repugnant. The gentleman concerned who has been feeding the member for Merredin the information knows full well the circumstances of the Pretty Pool development. I personally got involved in negotiating the settlement of native title. When the Tories were in government, they would not even talk to the indigenous community. We developed a policy that made sure that in all these town sites the Aboriginal communities were woven into the economic development and had a slice of the action. On several occasions I personally negotiated with the Kariyarra people in Port Hedland to make sure that we could settle this longstanding dispute. That was the biggest impediment to the release of land in Port Hedland that had been in existence for 12 years. I am pretty proud of the effort that LandCorp, the Department for Planning and Infrastructure and I made and what we were able to achieve. We did a very responsible thing. As the member for Merredin would know, this is very constrained land. It is very close to a flood plain. There is a great deal of debate about how much of that Pretty Pool land can be developed.

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** Is 1 000 blocks not correct?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** It is absolutely not correct. We decided to focus first on that part of the land over which there was no debate about its vulnerability to storm surge, cyclonic event and sea rise. We are getting those 70 lots done. At the same time we are working through the environmental processes. I am sure I will get a lot of assistance from my colleague the Minister for the Environment, but there are genuine concerns. We may not be able to get the other 430 lots that we were originally hoping to get. We may not be able to develop all those lots because it is quite possible that we will have to curtail that building envelope and make that area considerably smaller. However, we certainly are confident that we will get at least another 230 lots out of there. No private sector person would be able to do this quicker than we can do it. In fact, we believe that no private sector developer would have been able to solve the native title issues in the way that we did, and that private sector developers would not be able to drive the environmental issues in the way that we are driving them.

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** Now that those 230 lots have been identified, why wouldn't you say to those private operators, "You pay what you think it's worth" and then LandCorp, with its resources, can go to the next project?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** LandCorp has adequate resources to do that project.

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** Why isn't it doing it then?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** It is not doing it because environmental approvals need to be obtained. It is very simple. No private sector developer would be able to get those approvals any quicker. We are dealing with some very complex areas of land. Of course there have been constraints and problems. The member for Central Kimberley-Pilbara and I are constantly working on how we can -

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** Has he changed his mind about LandCorp?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** He is a passionate man who believes very strongly in the issues in the area. He got very caught up in the issues at Halls Creek and was not aware that LandCorp already had the Halls Creek project on its program and had been through the regional policy committee.

Some lots will come up for sale in South Hedland. As members know, the Department of Housing and Works is doing a major New Living program in South Hedland, and a considerable amount of land will come up for sale. It has joint venture partnered with a company called Jaxon Construction Pty Ltd to undertake that land development. LandCorp absolutely understands that both Port Hedland and Karratha are great priorities of the government.

I will talk a little about Karratha, because this is quite extraordinary. Again, obviously the native title issues had to be resolved, and they have been. The member needs to understand that it is hard - the private sector has exactly the same problem - to get civil construction companies to go up there. I know private sector developers who simply cannot get their blocks done in Perth because there is not enough civil construction capacity. Technically, there is a limit to the number of people and the number of machines available to do it.

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** Why don't you put it out to tender?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** It is a capacity problem.

**Mr B.J. Grylls** interjected.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** We put it out to tender for civil constructors to do it.

**Mr B.J. Grylls** interjected.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** We believe that we can do it quicker because of our capacity. I do not know from where the member has been getting his information on Karratha, but he failed to mention that on the day that we drew the ballot for 78 lots, we began the ballot process for the next lots in an even larger subdivision. On the day that we started the ballot, we rolled out to the second ballot. That ballot will be held in July. If that is fully subscribed, we will immediately take the D9s and the bulldozers across the road to the Nickol development and start on the next development, which is a 400-lot development. We are churning out those lots as fast as the civil construction capacity allows us to do so. I want to compare that performance with the great private sector performance in Karratha. We know that the previous government decided, strangely, and perhaps because of its inability to speak to the indigenous community, to give the land in Karratha to the private sector because it thought the private sector would be better able to solve the native title issues. That was in 2000. It did not solve the native title issue. The negotiation over native title was done by the officers of the Department for Planning and Infrastructure. Under this great private developer, land eventually started to trickle onto the market. LandCorp prevents the private sector from holding back land and slowly releasing it. The Leader of the National Party laughs. The private developer got the land in 2000 and released the last lots only this year, some six years later, because it said that there was not sufficient demand. Talk about inflating the price; the private developer sold its last lots for \$215 000. When the government went onto the market with 78 lots, it drove the price down to an average price of \$148 000. We drove the prices down. We did not go for the highest price. LandCorp does not set the price. The government refers to the Valuer General and private developers, and the government puts constraints on the land and drives down the price within the realms of reason, because it is inappropriate for the government to sell the community's assets for less than the market value. However, we drive down the market value. We are already in the ballot process for the next stage of the Karratha development.

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** Why is it valued at \$215 000?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** It is because the private developer had the monopoly on the land and it was eking it out. The only land that was not constrained by native title was given to the private developer, and it eked out the release of that land to do exactly what the member is accusing LandCorp of doing. That is why the government will not give land in those areas to the private sector.

I find some of the issues that the Leader of the National Party raised regarding Ravensthorpe quite unfair. When councillors speak to the member, they obviously are not always fully honest. I do not blame the member because I know what it is like to deal with some local authorities. Truth is often the first casualty in discussions with them. The government progressed the Hopetoun development. I acknowledged recently that a constraint was placed on it. These types of constraints exist. For example, parts of the lots in Ravensthorpe were subject to a mineralisation claim. Therefore, a constraint was placed on the development because of a mineral interest in those lots. Fortunately, the Minister for Resources and Assisting the Minister for State Development was able to determine that, notwithstanding that mineralisation, he would release those lots. It was not the fault of LandCorp - a constraint was placed on that land. We can go through this chapter and verse.

**Mr B.J. Grylls** interjected.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** I will most certainly consider it. One of the big constraints in the area was the sewerage issue. The shire said it wanted to construct a waste water facility, and so it was allocated the waste water licence to construct the facility in 2003. However, the shire was unable to progress with it, and in 2005 it transferred the licence to the Water Corporation. The Water Corporation and LandCorp are currently developing interim sewerage solutions to progress the release of land in advance of the completion of the permanent facility. Often these types of constraints are placed on land. Other areas have been sited whereby constraints have been placed on land by the Department of Industry and Resources. I know what it is like. Some councillors gild the lily. In most of these cases, there is another side to the story.

With regard to the issues raised by the member for Moore, it is not LandCorp's fault if we are not putting Badgingarra on the agenda because we must make serious decisions about which of the competing areas we need to progress. We have more than 50 candidates for the town site program. However, I am a bit cross about the Cervantes issue. It is not LandCorp's fault; it is a problem within government. I want to get that issue resolved. We have been applying a great deal of pressure on the forces of government to get that resolved. Again, it is an issue that we have been negotiating. We have the potential to resolve that native title issue because of the approach that we are taking to native title. The same approach enabled us to resolve the longstanding issue in Shark Bay, and we will do that again in Cervantes. However, I do apologise for the delay in Cervantes. I believe that it has taken us longer to resolve than it should have - by about six months. However, I give my commitment that it is very high on my radar, particularly after my wonderful visit there and my wonderful stay at the Pinnacles Beach Backpackers, which I thought was a very wonderful establishment, with dinner at Don Quixote's Restaurant.

**Mr G. Snook:** And the Pinnacles.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** The Pinnacles at sunset. It does not get much better than that.

**Mr G. Snook:** There would be a high value return for the government for that land.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** Absolutely. We understand that. It is just that sometimes these things must go through the processes of government, and a number of agencies need to be involved. Of course there are issues. All I say to my friends in the National Party - they are nice people - is that there is a level of naivety that is quite astounding. They should do their research and their homework. Every property developer in town will tell the one story. We hear stories about the lack of lots available in Perth. There is a lack of lots available in Perth. Thirty-six thousand lots have conditional approval. That means that there are 36 000 lots to which the developer can go, get the bulldozers out, put in the sewerage and build the limestone retaining walls, but that is not happening because there is a complete absorption of the civil construction market at the moment. We are all victims of our own success. We are all victims, in a sense, of the enormous growth and vigour of our economy. We recognise the need in all these communities. When the member for Stirling asked us to go to Frankland, we went to Frankland to see what we could do there. It is a good case. I understand that the people in Frankland are now working on a proposal; they have figured out how they can do it themselves. However, I was very keen to move the Frankland project forward as well.

**Mr M.W. Trenorden:** Are the 50 communities that you are looking at public knowledge?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** It is. I tabled that information in Parliament the other day. I have it with me. Fifty per cent of LandCorp's projects are in regional Western Australia. These are the 50 projects that -

**Mr B.J. Grylls** interjected.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** No, these are projects on which we are doing some work. We will have to prioritise. We are more than happy for the private sector to do these projects. Most of those on the town site development project list are ones that do not make sense economically. Understandably, the private sector does not want to do them.

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** If you pay your taxes in those communities, you do think they make sense.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** No, it does not make sense for the private sector to do them. We are prepared, through our town site development project, to put money into those areas to subsidise them. We are happy to do that. Of course, there is a limit on the extent to which we can do that. Within that, as we do with roads, health and education, we must prioritise our expenditure. The National Party might set the priorities in a different way from the way in which we would set them. No doubt the towns would all be ones in the wheatbelt.

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** No, I am talking about Port Hedland and Karratha -

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** Port Hedland and Karratha do not need subsidies. We are driving the prices down. As I have explained, we are releasing that land as quickly as is humanly possible. If I could give it to the Leader of the National Party's friend, Mr Ford, he would not be able to do it any faster than the government. I doubt whether we would get the same triple-bottom-line outcomes, and we certainly would not expect the Aboriginal community to receive the same benefit that we are ensuring it will receive. One of the big challenges that we must all face is that in those areas we must weave the Aboriginal community more deeply into the economic life of the community. Of course there is an issue with land release. There is an issue in the metropolitan area. The private sector is having major problems keeping up with demand. LandCorp is doing an excellent job. LandCorp does not set the priorities for subsidised development. LandCorp is not in any way, shape or form sitting on development; it understands that the directions from government are to progress land development as quickly as possible to get those blocks developed.

**Mr B.J. Grylls** interjected.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** The member for Merredin is clearly not across the facts. He is clearly not aware that immediately we released the 70 blocks -

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** The head of corporate affairs at BHP told us today that LandCorp was the worst agency to deal with.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** Of course it is concerned, because we are not prepared to give it the percentage of blocks it wants. We unashamedly say that, as indeed have other people, although I do not know about Mr Ford. Members of the Port Hedland Chamber of Commerce have made it very clear that they want blocks available for the average bear; that is, small businesses and people who want to develop lots to rent, possibly to their personnel. I am talking about the sorts of lots that we used to have in the government in ICEHA - Industrial and Commercial Employees Housing Authority - before the Tories sold all those homes off to their mates, particularly in Karratha, so that we would have a bank of that sort of land available. The state government, via LandCorp, unashamedly is not prepared to hand over all that land to the resource companies. However, we are developing land at a very fast pace, particularly in Pretty Pool, Karratha and Broome. Mr Speaker, it is a big

challenge; it is a challenge for all of us. Having a gratuitous and very nasty shot at a group of very dedicated government employees who work for LandCorp is unbecoming of those in the National Party who I know are fundamentally decent people.

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (23)

Mr C.J. Barnett	Mr M.J. Cowper	Mr J.E. McGrath	Mr T.K. Waldron
Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan	Mr J.H.D. Day	Mr P.D. Omodei	Ms S.E. Walker
Mr M.J. Birney	Mr B.J. Grylls	Mr D.T. Redman	Mr G.A. Woodhams
Mr T.R. Buswell	Dr K.D. Hames	Mr A.J. Simpson	Dr J.M. Woollard
Mr G.M. Castrilli	Ms K. Hodson-Thomas	Mr T.R. Sprigg	Mr G. Snook ( <i>Teller</i> )
Dr E. Constable	Mr R.F. Johnson	Mr M.W. Trenorden	

Noes (25)

Mr J.J.M. Bowler	Mr F.M. Logan	Mrs C.A. Martin	Mr P.B. Watson
Dr J.M. Edwards	Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan	Mr M.P. Murray	Mr M.P. Whitely
Mrs D.J. Guise	Mr J.A. McGinty	Ms M.M. Quirk	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mrs J. Hughes	Mr M. McGowan	Ms J.A. Radisich	Mr S.R. Hill ( <i>Teller</i> )
Mr J.N. Hyde	Ms S.M. McHale	Mr E.S. Ripper	
Mr J.C. Kobelke	Mr A.D. McRae	Mr T.G. Stephens	
Mr R.C. Kucera	Mr N.R. Marlborough	Mr D.A. Templeman	

Pairs

Dr S.C. Thomas	Mr A.J. Carpenter
Dr G.G. Jacobs	Mr J.B. D'Orazio

Question thus negatived.

**APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (NO.1) 2006**  
**APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (NO.2) 2006**

*Second Reading - Cognate Debate*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

**MR C.J. BARNETT** (Cottesloe) [3.45 pm]: Before the debate was interrupted, I was making the point that outcomes-based education has successfully been introduced in kindergarten to year 10. I also made the point that special and extra factors must be considered when introducing outcomes-based education in years 11 and 12, and that those factors must be acknowledged. Further, I said that there is a fundamental difference between outcomes-based education and the other proposal, which is to reduce the 415 subject areas in years 11 and 12 to 50 courses of study. The problem we face currently does not relate to the philosophy of outcomes-based education or the changes in the courses of study. Rather, it relates entirely to the implementation timetable. Indeed, others have made that point. Somehow, with all the planning and the allowances made to implement OBE, it has fallen off the tracks. The implementation timetable that this government is still trying to work to is the introduction of one subject in 2005, the introduction of three subjects at the start of this year and the introduction of a further 17 subjects in 2007, with all 50 subjects being introduced by 2009. I want to address this problem. I go back to the criteria to which I referred earlier. When making changes to the education system, a government should ask itself whether those changes are right and whether they are ready. With respect to the first question, yes, outcomes-based education is right and, yes, changes to introduce 50 courses of study are also right. However, the answer to the question of whether they are ready is an emphatic no, and that is the problem. It is worth asking: what went wrong?

Unfortunately, the first thing that went wrong was a lack of educational leadership, particularly within the Curriculum Council and perhaps even within the Department of Education and Training itself. I suggest that had this government retained Peter Browne as the Director General of Education, we would not be experiencing the problems we are currently experiencing. Certainly, we would not be experiencing them to the same extent. I also suggest that the government's two Ministers for Education and Training essentially dropped the ball. They did not act quickly enough to address problems as they arose. The problems were not of their making, but the responsibility of ministers was to recognise the problems and to act.

The second way in which the process has gone wrong is the lack of syllabus. The curriculum framework is only that - a framework that addresses what we hope children will achieve; their outcomes. It is not a syllabus; it does not detail what should be learned and what the course structure should be. The framework was never intended to be syllabus-free. Flexibility is one thing, but absolute freedom - a framework devoid of content - was never proposed, particularly in years 11 and 12. The problem is less acute in the more doing-type subjects; for example, drama, where clearly an outcome is fairly easy to identify. However, in knowledge-based subjects it is

essential that the core content be laid down in the syllabus. That has been lacking. For example, anyone studying chemistry would have to study and understand the empirical table. People studying economics would have to understand the basic mechanism of supply and demand, and so on. The failure over the past two or three years to address the syllabus content to fit within the framework has contributed to a great amount of the problem. Had that been done properly there would have been less anxiety amongst teachers and within schools.

The response that is going on at the moment is absurd. To send out draft examination papers and suggest that they are a guide to the syllabus content is absurd, illogical and bound to fail. What is needed is syllabus content. Not only will that give a guide to teachers and schools, it will also stop wasteful duplication. Why should one school have to do something while another school down the road is doing the same thing? Surely we should be sharing collective content, expertise and experience to develop that core content, but that has not been done.

I suspect that it is too late for the 17 subjects to be introduced next year. It might be done, and it may be well advanced, but it is too late for the schools. No-one is thinking about the end-users - schools. Schools will have new teachers arriving at the beginning of the year. They are about to start printing their published information for year 10 students to help them select subjects. The syllabus material needed to be out in schools about a year in advance.

The third thing that has gone wrong, and the fundamental point I am making today, one that I think has been missed in the debate, is not a result of outcomes-based education, the courses of study or compulsory year 11 and 12 schooling. The problem is that all three changes are coming at once and they are all focused on years 11 and 12. It is too much pressure and too much change, when schools must continue with all the tasks they normally have.

The question I conclude with is: what is to be done? We have a serious problem, and something must be done. It is no good for the current minister to just try to tough it out; that is not good enough. It is obvious that at least some, if not most, of the 17 courses of study for next year are not ready. Even if they are close to ready, it is already too late for schools. They do not have all their teachers, and they do not know who will be there. Schools are facing severe staffing and morale problems. Rossmoyne Senior High School, one of the outstanding schools in the state, has come out about the problems. If Rossmoyne is having trouble dealing with this, how can other schools that do not have such talented students and competent staff cope? If the very best schools are coming forward and saying that they have a problem, every other school in the state, particularly country and regional schools, have that problem many times over. My fear is that if the government does not act, the whole system could essentially unravel, and that would be an absolute tragedy for education.

We need time, and we need to make the changes properly to make sure that teachers, parents and students are confident. One solution is to delay the process for a year. That is the most common suggestion that has been made. If the program is delayed by one year, that will provide some immediate relief, but it does not address the fundamental issue; it just puts it off for another year. It is not a solution. The Western Australian College of Teaching has come up with a variant. It has said that those schools that are ready can go ahead with the 17 courses of study in 2007 while others can join in in 2008. That is just a variation of the year's delay. I do not think it is particularly sensible either. For example, we do not want English taught in different ways at different schools at the same time. It would be a messy, confused solution.

I have gathered some thoughts from senior people in education and from my own experience. We must recognise that the problem is too much change at one time imposed on years 11 and 12. The problem is not outcomes-based education, courses of study or compulsory years 11 and 12, but the combined effect of the three at once. That is the problem and that is why there is so much tension in schools. We must also recognise that courses of study changes and outcomes-based education are different beasts and we must not confuse them. We must deal directly with the issue. We need to ensure that there is enough time, not only within the Curriculum Council or Department of Education and Training, but also for effective implementation at the school level. Teachers must have time to prepare. They are already teaching their current classes and they need time to put course content, assessments and other aspects in place.

I make some recommendations in a constructive way. First, I believe that the problem should be broken up and made manageable, because it is unmanageable at the moment. We must bed down the changes to the courses of study. It is a major change to go from 415 subject areas to 50 courses of study. Let us get that right. If we concentrate on getting that right, we can probably meet the 2009 timetable. Secondly, we must get the syllabus content right. We must make sure that the courses of study have the right syllabus, not too much and not too little, and that they are practical. Teachers in my son's school have told me that there are problems with some of the current courses, but they are not insurmountable if we get the syllabus right. Thirdly, we must continue under those 50 courses of study to assess and report to parents in the way it is done now. Let us leave that for a moment. Let us introduce the outcomes-based education framework and the syllabus, but let us assess and report as is done now. If we leave it, it will not matter; there will be no loss to education at all. That is the major pressure for teachers. They say that the issues that they are trying to cope with are new courses of studies and



the new syllabus, and trying to develop and localise that to suit their students and school. On top of all that, the massive changes to assessment and reporting are totally unresolved at this point in time. That is the issue they cannot cope with and the issue that will bring the whole structure down. Let us leave it, put it to one side and get the courses of study and the syllabus in place and get those working. Let us leave the issue of assessment and reporting until later. Once the courses of study and the syllabus are in place, we can then introduce assessment and reporting. I believe that if we do that we will have a win-win situation. We will get the benefits of outcomes-based education and new courses of syllabus into years 11 and 12. Schools, teachers, students and parents will be able to cope with it; it will be manageable. That is a better solution than simply saying that we should delay. Delay simply gives people time to breathe; it does not address the issue.

The overriding issue is not that there is anything wrong with outcomes-based education; it is the way to go. The changes to the courses of study are the way to go. I agree with the government, even though I have had some issues, that compulsory years 11 and 12 and raising retention rates are the way to go. Those are three worthy changes, but they are all distinct changes. It is too much to impose on schools and on just years 11 and 12 at one given time. Let us break the task up and phase it in sensibly. We will have the courses of study in place for 2009, because that is achievable. Let us follow that up with improved changes to assessment and reporting, but in the meantime let us sort out the chinks in that system. I believe we will then have progress in education. If the government does not do something along those lines, it faces the problem of the whole system collapsing and students, teachers and parents losing confidence in our education system. That would be a tragedy because, as I said at the very beginning of my speech, Western Australia has a very good education system and we should advance it not only by making the right changes but also by making sure they are ready and implemented properly.

**MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park)** [3.59 pm]: I thank the member for Cottesloe for his speech to the budget. I always enjoy listening to the member for Cottesloe, as I enjoy listening to all members of Parliament who have been here for quite a significant time. The member for Serpentine-Jarrahdale is also a new member, though maybe not as new as I am, and as he said yesterday, it is very much a learning curve for members who have not been around for as long as others. I think it was 1990 when the member for Cottesloe first entered this place. Although I may disagree with members on either side of the house on various points, I certainly enjoy listening to those with that corporate knowledge, and no doubt I will gain a lot from that.

I have sat here for the last day and a half listening to various members speak on the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 1) 2006 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 2) 2006, otherwise referred to as the budget legislation or budget bills. It has really been quite an informative process for me. I have learnt all sorts of different things about members' electorates and about what members think about the budget. It is quite clear that there will be a government versus opposition take on the budget. I note that the member for Albany has certainly made it crystal clear who lives in his electorate. I feel I personally know every single one of them, and there is no doubt he has been spending a lot of time giving certificates to them all. Jokes aside, the problem that the member for Albany is currently facing with unexploded ordnance in Princess Royal Harbour is something I have been reasonably interested in, courtesy of my former role as an officer in the Australian Army. I noticed overnight that an article in the *Liverpool Echo* outlined the following regarding the River Mersey in Liverpool in the United Kingdom -

Rail, road and ferry travellers were stranded today after a huge World War II bomb was found in the River Mersey.

It was a 1 000 pound German bomb, which is about the same size as the device detonated in the World Trade Centre in 1993. It brought river and city traffic to a halt when it was found. The British government is currently doing all it can to remove that bomb. I would encourage the federal government to take seriously the matter of unexploded ordnance in Princess Royal Harbour. I look forward to hopefully getting a positive outcome for the member for Albany and his constituents.

Earlier today, as a member of the Public Accounts Committee, I attended a meeting on the budget with representatives from the Department of Treasury and Finance, including the Under Treasurer, Mr Tim Marney. Unfortunately, there was not a huge turn-out. The member for Avon was certainly there, and he asked some pretty good questions. Members are provided with various budget documents, and no doubt members are all frantically looking through budget paper No 2 before budget estimates next week. However, one particular paper that I found very useful is budget paper No 3, the *Economic and Fiscal Outlook*. I have not yet finished the report, but I find it to be something that really puts the meat on the bones of the specific details contained in budget paper No 2 and all three volumes. It is something that all members should read, because it really gives a good explanation as to why we are here now and where we are likely to go in the foreseeable future. I recommend that all members read that document.

Members have all reflected upon what the budget has given to their electorate, what they have gained as members, and whether their varied lobbying efforts have been successful in having resources allocated.

However, I am also painfully mindful of the fact that this is a state budget, and that we are all members of the state Parliament. Members must keep in mind that they must do what is best for the state, not just what is best for their electorates. I will get to my electorate; I am very happy with how my electorate has done. However, I am delighted with the way this state has gone. I think this is a good budget. I know my friends on the other side of the house think that it is a bad budget. I think it is a good budget for the reason that it is definitely a Labor budget. Recently the federal Liberal budget was handed down, and I think the differences in those two budgets alone can be readily seen. The Labor Party has focused on and developed a vision for where we are going.

**Ms S.E. Walker** interjected.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** The member for Nedlands should wait; I will get to her shortly. I dare say she will end up agreeing with me when I get to her.

This is a budget that considers not only what is happening now, but also what will be happening in the future. It is indisputable that this state is experiencing a boom. Many people in this state are doing very well financially. Many people who work on the terrace, and also people like fly in, fly out workers, are on extremely high incomes. This budget will return benefits to not only the people who work on the terrace or are fly in, fly out workers but also those who cannot actively involve themselves in that boom activity and make the same sorts of enormous financial gains.

As a bit of a populist measure, I want to refer to an article in the *Canning Examiner*, a newspaper that is published in my electorate. The article makes a great read. The article is headed "State Budget provides millions for region". I am quoted in that article as saying -

Western Australia's enviable economy has brought many benefits to the region through this year's State Budget.

Victoria Park MLA Ben Wyatt said the attractive yet responsible Budget meant locals could look forward to a secure and promising future.

That is exactly what I am talking about. A budget is not all about doling out money. It is about setting out a vision for where we want this state to go over the next 12 months, the next two years and the next five years etc.

Various members have focused on different parts of the budget and expressed their views on whether those parts of the budget are good or bad. One thing that I found particularly pleasing is some statistics on the forecast growth of the Western Australian economy. Those statistics will probably bore most members, but what they show is quite phenomenal. The statistics show that the Western Australian economy is forecast to grow by 5.35 per cent over the next financial year. They show also that the state's economy has grown from \$75 billion to \$123 billion since 2000-01. That is something that every Western Australian should be proud of.

Various tax cuts were announced in this budget, and also just prior to when I was elected. The tax relief in the 2006-07 budget is worth \$117 million. That will increase to \$400 million by 2010-11. All up, the tax cuts introduced by the government since July 2004 will deliver an estimated annual benefit to taxpayers of \$700 million this financial year. One tax that I want to mention is land tax. The member for Cottesloe referred to this in a speech not that long ago. I am particularly delighted that as a result of this budget the land tax scales will be adjusted by an increase in the three lowest land tax thresholds. Those adjustments will attack the growth in the value of land and the subsequent bracket creep. The increase in the minimum threshold from \$130 000 to \$150 000 will free around 18 000 taxpayers from the need to pay land tax. That is an excellent result. However, no doubt we will need to keep an eye on this matter, because I dare say property prices will continue to increase.

The budget also provides land tax relief for the parents or other family members of children with disabilities who own a second property that is used to provide an independent principal place of residence accommodation for those children. Those parents are currently required to pay land tax on that property. That disincentive has been addressed in this budget by extending the principal place of residence land tax exemption to relevant properties held in the name of parents. That means that parents will no longer need to transfer the property to a trust, with the consequent capital gains and pension income test implications that will no doubt trigger. That is what I meant earlier when I said that this budget also delivers a result for people who are unable to actively participate in the massive boom that is taking place in Western Australia.

I now turn to debt management. The New MetroRail project will be completely debt free. I am very happy about that.

**Mr D.T. Redman** interjected.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I am very happy about that, member for Stirling, because that will free up for the Western Australian community the \$75 million that would otherwise have gone into interest payments. The government has repaid over \$1 billion in debt. That has freed up a total of \$100 million a year that would otherwise have gone into interest payments. That is great result. I commend the Treasurer and the government for focusing so strongly on debt reduction.

I refer now to infrastructure investment. Yesterday the member for Yokine made what I thought to be an accurate assessment. He said, "we are building the house and Costello is collecting the rent." That says it all. I noticed on the ABC web site yesterday that Ken Henry, the federal Treasury secretary, has been forced to defend the budget infrastructure spending at a federal level, and quite rightly. I said earlier that the federal budget focused on tax cuts. The federal government was not expecting such enormous revenue growth and it focused on tax cuts. It did not allocate significant moneys to the development of further infrastructure.

The *Economic and Fiscal Outlook* sets out the implications of the economic boom for Western Australia. Over the next three years, commonwealth transfers will be reduced by about \$700 million. The commonwealth system is set up in such a way that those states that are doing well subsidise the other states. Currently, Western Australia is doing well and it is subsidising the other states. The only whinge that I have about that is that the federal government should make a conscious contribution to infrastructure development in Western Australia and across Australia. That is the only thing that will ensure that the good economic times continue.

The Western Australian government has allocated \$5.2 billion to capital works this financial year and \$18.1 billion in the four-year forward estimates. I noted with interest that the member for Central Kimberley-Pilbara said yesterday that when he entered this place in 1982 the then Premier announced a capital expenditure of \$1 billion, which was a significant increase at that time. I have been lucky. I have been in this place for two months and I am in the very fortunate position to be able to refer in this debate to such an attractive budget.

In 2006-07, household spending on the government's basket of goods and services will increase by \$31.46, an increase of 0.94 per cent. Again, that demonstrates that the Labor government has consistently kept the growth in household expenditure to an absolute minimum. In this case, it is well below the rate of inflation of about three per cent.

The Minister for Community Development is in the house and I refer to what is an outstanding result for his department; that is, a 13.5 per cent increase in funding. That department really fights those tough fights at the ground level. The minister has visited Victoria Park Youth Accommodation in my electorate. We have both witnessed the daily fights by people who are at the bottom end of the social scale. The \$30 million increase in funding to the department will go some way towards assisting these people. I return to what I said at the outset; that is, this is a budget that looks after those people who perhaps have not been able to take enormous advantage of the current financial good times.

The Disability Services Commission will receive a total funding increase of \$67.4 million over the next four years, which includes \$2.7 million in 2006-07 for a continence management and support scheme. During my by-election campaign that issue was raised time and again. I congratulate the Treasurer, the minister and the government, generally, for recognising the importance of providing for such a scheme.

I will address a couple of issues concerning the budget documents. It will probably be more appropriate for me to raise these issues in detail in the budget estimates. However, I want to raise two issues that are of interest to me because they involve two areas in which I was involved before I came into this place. I refer to the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Corruption and Crime Commission. The solicitors at the DPP are exceptional. I worked closely with them on a number of matters and their commitment and courage was outstanding. I noted that they worked in an environment of high stress and low resources, and they should be commended. I note that the DPP's budget takes into account the additional funding it received in October last year. The 2005-06 budget estimate for the DPP is \$16.7 million and the 2006-07 budget estimate is \$20.7 million. The result of that is that the number of full-time equivalents increased from 147 to 197. The workload for the lawyers at the DPP has been exceptional. I have never been so busy in my life as when I was working there.

The service and appropriation summary lists the two main services that the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions undertakes - criminal prosecutions and confiscation of assets. We are all reasonably familiar with the criminal prosecution side of things. I want to quickly focus on confiscation of assets because that is the civil side of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the area within which I have most experience. The Criminal Property Confiscation Act 2000 was enacted in the dying days of the Court government. It is a piece of legislation that has been quite successful in tackling organised crime at a level that really does hurt. Assets - criminal gains - are being taken away from criminals at a level that really does hurt, making it less attractive for people to get involved in illicit activities. There will probably be some amendments to that legislation over the next couple of years. I look forward to being involved with that. It is certainly a piece of legislation that I had much professional satisfaction in dealing with because it is unique and it is still developing a body of case law. As a lawyer, it was very satisfying to deal with it, and it is a piece of legislation that I support.

I wish to comment on the outcomes and key effectiveness indicators. The portion of contested objections to the confiscation of frozen property dismissed is 95 per cent. The confiscation team has met that objective and I am confident that it will continue to be met.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I briefly want to mention something that came on board before I started at the DPP. The Corruption and Crime Commission started with a budget of \$22.1 million, well in excess of that of the DPP. It is much larger than the DPP. The workload of the DPP, being the only prosecutorial arm of the government, increased horrendously both in respect of criminal prosecutions and the confiscation of assets team. That was a fundamental aspect why the DPP went to the government seeking additional funds. The government recognised that and provided those additional funds. I will leave the DPP and the CCC at that.

I also want to comment on science and innovation. Science and innovation was a big part of my inaugural speech in this place. Unless we focus on this area, we will be left high and dry with the commodity prices - they are vicious cycles - that drop and go against us. The level of debt in the United States is not sustainable. When the United States go off the boil, we will go off the boil. We need a broader economic base.

The member for Cottesloe is still in the chamber. I wanted to refer to a document that his son, who is a friend of mine, co-authored in March 2003 as part of an organisation called the Hourglass Group. He co-authored it with Matt Callahan, whom I went through university with. He was an inaugural winner of the *Business News* 40under40 award. Russell Barnett, a 2003 winner of the *Business News* 40under40 award, and Andrew Duff were the other co-authors. I recommend members read it. I am happy to leave it on the table for the remainder of the day. It addresses the deficiencies in WA's innovation system. I will quote Mr Barnett and his co-authors. The document states -

Given the failing performance of Western Australian institutions in securing Federal research and development funding, some greater support should be looked for from the State Government compared with other Australian States. Unfortunately, WA trails far behind all but one State not only on spending in innovation (both in terms of expenditure on pure research or 'R' and expenditure on the 'D' of development or commercialisation), but also in industry development initiatives of any kind.

I am delighted that this budget attempts to address that problem. I am looking forward to discussing this budget with Mr Russell Barnett because he is a man who spends a lot of time considering and thinking about these issues.

The government has committed \$72 million over the next four years to invest in science and innovation, including biotechnology initiatives and medical research. In my electorate \$3.275 million has been allocated to continue work on the Bentley Technology Park precinct, which will have a total cost of \$8.55 million. Bentley Technology Park comprises more than 90 organisations representing research and development technology based industry, research organisations, education institutions, support organisations, park management and government. The well-established industry sectors in Technology Park include the information and communications technology, resources and energy, environmental and biotechnology sectors. I referred to the ICT industry in my maiden speech in this place. In 2004 the ICT industry contributed \$6.6 billion to the Western Australian economy, which represented 3.3 per cent of the state's gross output; thus it is a similar size as the combined agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries. We must support these areas in every way we can. Unless we have a broader economic base, when those commodity prices turn against us and the economies of China and the United States are no longer favourable to us, we will be in trouble, and the bust will be much more vicious than ever before.

I will also refer to innovation and the role of the government in promoting the current boom. At page 113 of budget paper No 2 there is a list of outcomes and key effectiveness indicators for the Department of Industry and Resources. In respect of the state development performance, which is on page 114, reference is made to Australia's rating on the Fraser Institute investment attractiveness index. Western Australia came second in 2004-05 and was expected to come second in 2005-06. It is now estimated that Western Australia will come third in this financial year, and we hope to come third in the next financial year. I looked at the Fraser Institute investment attractiveness index. It is a survey in which companies responsible for a combined total of \$US650 million in international exploration rated the policy attractiveness and mineral attractiveness of mining jurisdictions in North America and around the world. The key is that it focuses not just on mineral attractiveness. There is no doubt that there are lots of minerals in this state and in this country. However, the survey also focuses on the policy attractiveness of mining jurisdictions and what encourages mining companies to explore and invest money in our state. Fifty-three countries and states were looked at, including Queensland and other mineral producers around the world. Western Australia is listed as coming second, second, third and third, which the state and state government should be proud of. Yes, we do have these resources, but we are also doing what we can to ensure that Western Australia is in the top three mining jurisdictions in the world and that people want to pull those minerals out of the ground in Western Australia and keep the Western Australian economy going as well as it is currently.

The member for Capel said yesterday that this is a budget that makes the government look good, and it does make the government look good. It is a good budget, it is a Labor budget and it is a budget that I am very proud to be talking up. I know that the point scoring will continue; government members will talk it up and members opposite will talk it down. However, the Treasurer made the point this morning -

Several members interjected.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** We did not hear much, because it is a good budget. I think that has been recognised. It has certainly been recognised in my electorate.

I now turn to the budget allocation for Bentley Hospital. The hospital is close to the hearts of many people in my electorate. Prior to and throughout my campaign people expressed their concern about what is happening with the hospital. Recommendation 26 of the report of the Health Reform Committee, "A Healthy Future for Western Australians" - otherwise known as the Reid report - states -

Other metropolitan hospitals should be reconfigured in the following manner:

Osborne Park and Bentley hospitals - dedicated sub-acute, aged care, rehabilitation and mental health facilities.

These are the areas that the people in my electorate and the people of Bentley want to see developed and upgraded, and that is what is happening. I am glad that another \$1.5 million has been allocated to the hospital for the continuation of that upgrade, and another \$8 million will be allocated next financial year to continue with that upgrade. I have already mentioned the \$3.275 million for the Technology Precinct at Bentley.

Another matter I will raise is the Swan River Trust. Obviously, it is not specific to my electorate; it is a matter that concerns all Western Australians. The Swan and Canning Rivers play an important role in the tourism industry and in the standard of living and the general amenity of our city and the state. The government has allocated \$1 million for the establishment of the new Swan Canning Riverpark and \$100 000 for new equipment. My electorate is bordered by the Swan and Canning Rivers. The portion of the Canning River that runs through my electorate has substantial wetlands, which will benefit greatly from that funding. I thank the Treasurer for granting more funds to the trust.

The Western Australian Greyhound Racing Association will receive \$120 000 for new equipment and minor works. Every member enjoys a flutter on the dogs. They will get to see the advantages that that money will provide.

**Ms J.A. Radisich:** Every member?

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Every member. I know that the member for Swan Hills likes greyhound racing, and I look forward to going there with her and betting on a dog.

I conclude by reiterating my support for this budget. It is a good budget that I am proud of. I have had no trouble whatsoever in selling it to my electorate because my constituents are happy with the outcome. They recognise that it looks to the future; it is not just about providing tax cuts and spending the money now. It ensures that those in the community who cannot benefit directly from the booming economy will receive some benefits.

**MR R.F. JOHNSON (Hillarys) [4.26 pm]:** Following on from my colleague the member for Victoria Park, I would like to say a very heartfelt thanks to the Treasurer for all the money he has spent in my electorate. I would love to if he had, but unfortunately he has not! I got a big zilch in my electorate. That has been the case for the past few years. In the budget papers the government has again trotted out the Western Australian Fisheries and Marine Research Laboratories, which was opened about two years ago. It remains in the budget paper as though it is something new or has been opened in the past few months. That is absolute bulldust, because it was not. That does not benefit my constituents; it benefits the government, the Department of Fisheries and people from outside my electorate who want to visit it. People in your electorate, Madam Deputy Speaker, might want to visit it because it is open to the public. I am not saying that it is not a good facility, but it is in the wrong place. I have said that for a long time.

The government does not spend money in my electorate where it is needed. The Hillarys Primary School is a very old school that has many problems regarding its maintenance and accommodation for the children. If any school in my electorate needs replacing, it is that one. The parents and citizens association has been crying out for a very long time to replace the current school with a new school. Some land in the suburb of Hillarys - near St Mark's Anglican Community School - was allocated for a new primary school. However, it was decided that it was a surplus requirement because of the decline in the number of students who were enrolled at other primary and senior schools in the area. Therefore, the government sold the land for development and received millions of dollars for it. I had always hoped that the government would put some of that money back into my electorate and build a new primary school to replace the Hillarys Primary School, but that has not happened. The school recently received some funding through the Better Schools program, which I am delighted with. However, that money could be used only to refurbish the school library. Although that is very good because the library is now a lot better than it was, the whole school and the surrounding grounds must be replaced with a more modern school. That has not happened.

I cannot see what else the government has spent money on in my electorate. However, I am not too disappointed, because I live with the fact that when a person is in government, particularly if he has a marginal seat, if he bleats long and hard enough to the Treasurer and the Premier, the chances are that he will get something good in his electorate.

My electorate of Hillarys is a beautiful electorate. I say that it is the pearl of the northern suburbs. Other people might have a different view, of course. It is mentioned in the budget papers that some development will take place in Sorrento Quay and Hillarys marina. The government is saying that it will assist with the further development of Hillarys marina and Sorrento Quay; I have said for a long time - I have said it to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure - that that is a big mistake, because Hillarys marina and Sorrento Quay are overdeveloped already. During the summer months, if people want to get into and out of Hillarys marina and Sorrento Quay on a Friday night, a Saturday night or even during the day on a Sunday, they can wait for three-quarters of an hour to do so, because there are not enough parking spaces, and the entry to and exit from Sorrento Quay are not much different from what they were when they were first built, when it was envisaged that there would be a million visitors a year. The number of visitors to Hillarys marina now is more than four million a year. That is four times the number of people that the inner roads and the car park were basically planned for. Some work needs to be done and some money needs to be spent there. However, instead of spending the money on extra parking facilities and improved entry to and exit from the wonderful facilities of Sorrento Quay, it appears as though the government will go with added commercial development. There comes a time when an area is overdeveloped. I would say that this is a classic case. Enough is enough. It is the local people in my electorate who very often suffer as a result of the problems that go with such a busy and popular place. It is a lovely facility. I would not say anything but that at any time. However, a halt must be called at some stage, because it is not fair to the local residents.

Because no money has been spent in my electorate, there is not an awful lot to say, apart from harping on. However, I will say something about my shadow portfolio areas of responsibility. This government is in crisis in the justice area. WA Police has a lot of problems at the moment, and I believe the Attorney General has a lot of problems in his area also. Certainly, the Department of Corrective Services is in crisis, and I will expand on that. However, first of all, I want to bring an issue to the attention of the house, and I will do it by way of my speech on the budget. I am very disappointed that on 2 February, after I asked numerous questions of the Attorney General in this house last year about a particular issue, the Attorney General passed the buck to the then Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the member for Midland. Eventually, I sent my letter to the then Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the member for Ballajura.

I wanted answers to some questions. They were very simple questions, and they were all to do with Jason Wimbridge. I am sure that my colleague the new member for Victoria Park will be aware of that person. He is a very dangerous criminal. He was caught by the police for an armed robbery at the Bendigo Bank. He also did some pretty awful things. He cut a person's fingers off and various other things. He is a very vicious person. He was actually on bail. When the police went before the magistrate to have him remanded on bail, WA Police said that it wanted to oppose bail, quite rightly. However, the magistrate closed the session and took all the information and submissions from the police - the prosecution, if one likes - and the defence in camera. As I understand it, a police officer, who was not representing WA Police, spoke for Jason Wimbridge and asked that he be allowed out on bail. I do not think a person needs a great imagination to work out why on earth a police officer would want that bloke let out on bail, after committing those crimes. However, the magistrate let him, a dangerous criminal, out on bail. Although he was out on parole, his parole was cancelled, so approval was sought from the Parole Board to enable him to be on parole again. I do not know whether it was the same police officer who spoke on his behalf to the Parole Board. I am informed by the Attorney General that the chairman of the Parole Board at the time was very unhappy about the board's having to recommend that he be on parole again.

This involved a magistrate, a police officer - I am assuming that Police WA was true to its word and opposed the bail - and the Parole Board, including the chairman of the Parole Board at the time, who I was told was very unhappy about letting the bloke out on parole again. Some influence was brought to bear I believe by a police officer, who was not necessarily acting on behalf of the Police Service - perhaps in a different capacity - and the Parole Board let Wimbridge out on parole again. A dangerous criminal, who had been convicted of armed robbery, was wandering around. It must have been a set-up or a sting of some sort because the next we heard of him, the tactical response group and other people had been firing guns at him in a jewellery shop. Subsequently, we heard allegations that he had been shot. I cannot find out which hospital he was taken to or whether he is serving his sentence in prison or has been remanded. I have asked the Attorney General; the previous Minister for Police and Justice, the member for Ballajura; and the previous Minister for Police to that member, the member for Midland. Nobody wants to give me an answer. I asked those questions in this place last year. Given it was a new year, I decided to write a letter to the Commissioner of Police. In answer to a question I asked last year, the Attorney General showed serious dismay that Wimbridge had been granted bail and that, despite having committed all those offences, he had been granted parole again. It was a schedule of offences that

should have precluded him from being granted bail. Notwithstanding that, the magistrate decided to grant him bail and the Parole Board allowed him to be out on parole.

I therefore took the view that I needed some answers. The Attorney General said last year that the police commissioner was the only person who could apply for the transcript of that bail hearing because he was a party to the hearing. I am told that he applied for the transcript and the magistrate refused to give it to him. The Attorney General told me that the police commissioner would appeal to the Supreme Court to have that decision overturned so that he could acquire the transcript of the bail hearing. I am told that was successful and presume that the police commissioner was given the transcript. I took the view that, with a new year starting - I know I will not get answers in this place - I would put my questions in writing. I wrote to the Commissioner of Police on 2 February and stated -

I understand that you have recently obtained a copy of the transcript in relation to a bail application by Jason David Wimbridge.

My request follows questions I have asked in Parliament . . .

I asked him to supply me with a copy of the transcript. As shadow police minister, I think I am entitled to look at that sort of information. Information about cases like this should be made public. I was fobbed off in the usual way with the suggestion that I ask the minister. I knew that would happen but I wanted it on record that I had written to the police commissioner. The commissioner's response stated that, under this government's rules, people in his position are not allowed to converse with us on matters like this or answer any questions and that I must go through the minister. I knew that would happen. On the same day I wrote to Mr D'Orazio, who was then the Minister for Police and Justice, saying exactly the same thing that I said to the Commissioner of Police. To this date I have not received a response. I took it up earlier today with the member for Ballajura, who claims that he replied within two weeks to every letter he received. I think I sent the letter the day the member for Ballajura became the police minister. Within a day of that he was heading to New Zealand on holiday. I know that because I was going on holiday and at one stage it was likely that we would be travelling on the same aeroplane. The member for Ballajura had to delay his departure because he was being sworn in as the new police minister; however, I sent off the letter. He said to me on the day he became police minister, or it may have been the day before, that he had only just got into the job and I had already given him an official letter. I said yes and that I wanted an answer. He said that was okay and I said that he could answer it when he got back from his holiday. I am not criticising him, as he seems to think that he did reply to my letter, but I can say in this house that I cannot recall having received his letter. A copy of my letter to him has been on my file ever since then and, if I had received a letter, it would be on the file as the response. I still want to know the answers to my questions. I am sick to death of seeing the flagrant cover-up by this government and the various ministers involved to stop the truth about a very dangerous criminal being told to the people of Western Australia, to me as the shadow police minister and to this Parliament. I want to see the transcript of that case. I want to know why a police officer who was not representing the police service had so much sway that a dangerous criminal got out on bail. I want to know why that police officer - I assume it is the same police officer - had so much sway with the Parole Board. I must ask: who runs the Magistrates Court and the Parole Board when dangerous criminals are allowed out into society? I am annoyed about the efforts of this shadowy grey figure, for whom there is no name. I want to know his name, as I want to raise this matter with the police if it is the case -

**Ms J.A. Radisich:** A rubbery, shadowy figure!

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Yes, the grey ghost. I want to know who it was and what is behind it all. I suspect that the bloke could be considered an informer. He might have been giving the police information about bigger criminals. I do not care about that, because in between the time he was granted bail and let out on parole he went around Perth armed with a gun putting Western Australians' lives at risk. That is not good enough. I want to know the answers, and I will not go away until I find out the answers. The Attorney General has not given me the answers and the new Minister for Police and Emergency Services has not given them to me. I will send a copy of my letter to the minister, but I guarantee that I will get the same response. I want to see that transcript. I believe I have every right to see it, because I need to be satisfied on this issue. If there is some big operation in which this person is a protected witness, the minister should come and talk to me about it and I will keep stum. If a bigger picture needs to be considered, the minister should talk to me about it. That is all he need do; take me into his confidence. The minister may know nothing about the matter, but he should know about it because the actions of that dangerous criminal going around the streets of Perth are a disgrace. We need to know why the magistrate and the Parole Board allowed him to do that. That is the area that I want the minister to consider. I will certainly give him the background on it, although all he need do is read *Hansard* tomorrow and get his people to read it, as I will not go away. If I do not get an answer within the next few weeks, I promise the minister that I will again remind the people of Western Australia that this government is prepared to condone a cover-up of this nature. It is not good enough. The lives of Western Australians are too important. I will therefore let the minister know about that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I seek an extension, as I may be prepared to carry on talking for a little longer.

Several members interjected.

[Member's time extended.]

**Dr S.C. Thomas** interjected.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I know. The member for Swan Hills loves the sound of my voice!

**Ms J.A. Radisich** interjected.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** We have an affection for each other, do we not, a mutual respect? I am trying to do the numbers for her. I am going for the member for Swan Hills. I am talking her up to her colleagues!

I want to touch on another matter, which does affect the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to some extent, although it is really aimed at the Minister for Justice. The Department of the Attorney General and the Department of Corrective Services - formerly the Department of Justice - continue to be in crisis. I want to bring the Fines Enforcement Registry to the attention of the house today. The Fines Enforcement Registry is an absolute sick joke. There is a message to people in the community that if they do not pay their railway fares or their parking tickets, and they are not bothered about losing their licence when they get speeding tickets - which does not seem to matter these days - they do not need to pay their fines.

**Ms K. Hodson-Thomas:** It doesn't matter if you drive without a licence.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** If I get time, I will talk about the Western Australia Police's debacle and how drivers incorrectly lost their licences or earned infringement points on two Australia Days when they should not have. Incorrectly including one Australia Day in a double-demerit, long-weekend campaign is forgivable; however, if it happens twice is unforgivable.

I again refer to the Fines Enforcement Registry. Nothing happens to people who do not pay their fines. I will outline to members what happened on one day in one Magistrates Court when 36 offenders appeared before a magistrate. Members know that more than one magistrate operates throughout Western Australia. Different magistrates in different courts deal with different matters. Indeed, Perth, Fremantle, Joondalup and Albany all have Magistrate Courts. On this particular day, 36 people, who had outstanding fines, appeared before a magistrate on charges that did not relate to their outstanding fines. They appeared on charges for assaulting a police officer, being drunk and disorderly and for causing criminal damage. One particular offender - members may have read about him in the paper recently; I have been dealing with this issue for some time - owed \$20 000 in unpaid fines. Members would think that he would be the worst offender. However, I am told that the worst offender had \$32 000 worth of outstanding fines. That has not been reported in the newspaper. On one day, 36 people appeared before a magistrate in a Magistrates Court on offences that had nothing to do with the non-payment of fines. Indeed, those offenders knew that they could get away with not paying those fines. How much money do members think that those 36 people collectively owed in outstanding fines? Do members think it was \$20 000, \$30 000, \$40 000, \$80 000 or \$120 000? Collectively, those 36 people owed \$134 000. Will anything happen to those people who have outstanding fines? Absolutely not. What makes me feel even more sick is that one of those offenders had a string of offences, including assaulting a police officer, which is a disgraceful act. He was guilty of loads of other offences, including being on a premises unlawfully and causing criminal damage. His list of offences is enormous. That bloke had had many previous convictions. He had been fined before for similar offences, but those fines were added to his accumulated balance. It is a bit like a bank balance, but it is in the red all the time. That is probably the reason that he ended up owing \$20 000. The magistrate decided that this offender was not learning any lessons. He had been backwards and forwards before the courts for a number of years on similar offences and was either fined or given a community-based order. People in those circumstances are given community-based orders, community service orders, conditional release orders, work and development orders or pre-sentence orders. Most of them receive community-based orders. As members know, 40 per cent of people given these orders never complete them. Some of them do not even start them. Those orders are a joke. They are given to offenders because this government does not want to send anyone to prison for the non-payment of fines or for offences other than really serious offences. That is why the Attorney General repealed prison sentences of six months or less. Nobody would be sentenced to prison for less than six months.

The Attorney General abolished those sentences. The magistrate in this case felt that the public had had enough from this antisocial individual who had committed so many offences over such a long time, and gave him a sentence of seven months' imprisonment. He had to make it seven months, because he cannot do it for anything less than that. I thought that seven months was a bit light. They cannot give sentences of six months and one day, because that makes a joke of the situation. I would do that, because it deserves to be shown up as a joke. There should be prison sentences of any amount. This person was sentenced to seven months in prison, but the Aboriginal Legal Service then appealed to the Supreme Court. What did the Supreme Court do?

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** Upped the sentence.



**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** That is a bit harsh. I accept that prison is a last resort. However, the Supreme Court upheld the appeal. The bloke is now back on the streets creating a nuisance to anybody who goes anywhere near him. He is probably wandering around Northbridge now, either drunk or abusing some solvent; I do not know. He is only a young bloke. He is an adult, but I think he is in his early twenties. He is now back in Northbridge, I can guarantee. The community-based order was reinstated. The judge knows the man will not fulfil his CBO, so why bother to even have them? At least 40 per cent of people with CBOs against them do not have a hope in hell of completing them, and a goodly percentage do not even start them.

This government must do something serious about fine defaulters for a start. It must do something serious about people who commit these crimes, and it must be serious about people who do not complete their CBOs. During the time of the previous Minister for Justice, I was asked about some ideas I was forming for weekend detention. The then minister said it was the most stupid idea he had ever heard. I told him privately to go and talk to his mates in the other Labor states, where weekend detention is an ongoing policy. I call it the Rivkin factor. Members will recall that René Rivkin used to spend his weekends in jail. The reason I called for weekend detention was that it could apply to those people who are working and have committed a breach of the law, or fine defaulters who do not intend to pay their fines. Young blokes and women who behave antisocially and cause all those problems at parties could be in detention at weekends when all their mates are out having a good time. They report at 7.00 pm on Friday and are let out at 7.00 pm on Sunday. It has been proved to work in other jurisdictions. These people soon realise that if they do not behave themselves, they will miss out on some weekend parties. I do not mind people having parties and having fun so long as they do it without causing a nuisance to others.

The then Minister for Justice said this was the most stupid idea he had ever heard. I said that he should do something, because people are not completing their CBOs and are not paying their fines. He said that if people do not pay their fines, they will go to prison. I say that that was the most stupid thing I have ever heard, because it is nonsense, and we know it is not true. These people do not go to prison for not paying their fines. There is no incentive for people to pay their fines. Thousands of people are driving while under suspension. Some of them know they are under suspension and some do not. As I understand it, the bloke the former Minister for Justice ran into in his government car was driving while his licence was suspended. Is that not an interesting scenario? However, the government will not provide us with any details about that crash. When I asked the Premier and the former Minister for Justice last week by way of interjection for the details about the crash - whether the car hit a lamppost, a tree or another vehicle - I received zip; not a word. We must ask ourselves why not. I have since found out that the then minister crashed his car into one driven by a young man in his 20s. I am also told that the impact made the other fellow's car sideswipe two parked cars. I do not know for certain whether that is true, but I heard on good authority that it is.

Other issues need to be explained because we are talking about public money and a then minister of the Crown. The typical cover-up we are seeing by this government is no different from those by the Gallop government. The Carpenter government is now covering things up; members on the other side of the house are not being open, honest and accountable. I urge government members to stop doing it. If they do something wrong, they should own up to it. People respect members who say that they have made a dumb mistake, that they will not do it again and that they have learnt a lesson, rather than members who try to cover things up by lies and deceit. That behaviour by any government or any member of Parliament is not good enough. Members of Parliament who try to cover things up when they have done something wrong are making a big mistake. The worst thing they can do is to start telling lies in this house. It would be almost as bad if they were to start telling lies to the media, because the media do not like being lied to. I have seen in the past a member or two deliberately lying to the media and the media really going after them, because the media do not like being lied to, and I do not blame them. I ask members opposite to urge the Premier, ministers and fellow members that if they do something wrong, they should cop it sweet, own up and tell us all about it.

My time is almost up and I am loath to ask for an extension. Millions and millions of dollars are outstanding in fines. It is a joke. The government needs to do something about it. I have not said the last word on this subject. I have information coming out of my ears. When I became shadow Minister for Police and Emergency Services, I was approached by people from all over the place who wanted to give me information. I have a lot more in my possession that could damage the government. If I have to, I will produce it. I therefore urge the government to be honest.

**MS J.A. RADISICH (Swan Hills)** [4.58 pm]: What a privilege it is today to be able to comment on this year's budget and to be part of the Carpenter Labor government, which is governing for not only today, but also the future. To have a budget that is building on the economic boom is fantastic. It is fantastic for people who live in my electorate of Swan Hills. We, like all Western Australians, are beneficiaries of the amazing economic times in which we live in Western Australia and Australia generally.

I want to cover a number of issues in my speech on the budget, including reflecting on the fortunes that my electorate will be enjoying as a result of not only my advocacy, but also the government's understanding of the

issues that people face in Swan Hills and its recognition of our infrastructure needs, which are being addressed through the extensive capital works program that is outlined in the current budget. I also have something to say on infrastructure funding generally and the federal government's approach to this issue, as well as sport and recreation and law. I hope that I might get time to touch on some multicultural issues and, importantly, some further labelling and health issues relating to the school canteen review.

First, to comment on what is in the budget for my electorate, I remember standing in another part of the house in 2001 to talk about the budget. Although I am sure I made a fairly exhaustive speech, the electorate did not have the kinds of investments in 2001 that it is seeing today in the 2006 budget. The past few years have been very exciting times as the economy and the state's economic position have improved. The government has been able to invest in infrastructure and services that people want. That is what we are about as a government; delivering what people need and want, and doing it in a fair and equitable way. Through the four-year building program of \$18.1 billion, which has already been mentioned, \$1.2 billion is being spent on education. That is outstanding, because we have a fine educational system and constantly improving educational infrastructure. It is important that we have the physical facilities to house what is, as we all know, a top quality public education system.

I have mentioned before that the Ellenbrook Secondary College is being constructed. I am very pleased to report to the house that the project is on time and, as far as I am aware, on budget. Some \$12 million is allocated in this year's budget to improve, progress and in fact complete those works, because the school is due to open at the beginning of next year. It is quite amazing. Every time I am in Ellenbrook I see new walls and new rooms. It seems as though they pop up overnight, and in some cases they do because a bit of tilt-up building is being used. It is great to see the pace at which the project is progressing. I thank and acknowledge the people in the control project group and implementation committee who are participating in that project, who have smoothed out the inevitable bumps along the way of that multimillion-dollar educational project.

Importantly, the Ellenbrook and north Swan area is getting, as announced in this budget, a new primary school, which will be located in the Coolamon area in north Ellenbrook. The planning and design works for this roughly \$8 million project will commence in this coming year. It will be the fourth public primary school to be a feeder school into the new Ellenbrook Secondary College. It is a great advancement for education in the area. I always approach these speeches on the budget by acknowledging the progress we have made, but, as always, there is more to be done. My next quest is to secure funding from government for years 11 and 12 of Ellenbrook Secondary College. Right now the government is having built a years 7 to 10 facility, and I look forward to the commitment to the years 11 and 12 extension of the facility.

Equally, the budget delivers \$4.286 million for the Bullsbrook District High School redevelopment. Stage 1 is a \$7 million overall project, which includes the reconstruction of the primary school and the redesign of the whole middle school and oval area. That is very much needed. Bullsbrook has an amazing school. Many of its students come from Bullsbrook itself, but many come from the electorate of the member for Moore, and those students must travel quite a way to get there. It is time those facilities were upgraded. Part of the reason that investment is being made is that the now Premier and former Minister for Education and Training, Alan Carpenter, took the time, as did the former Premier, Geoff Gallop, to visit Bullsbrook District High School to see the appalling conditions in which the staff and students have been forced to work. The government is now investing some serious dollars into the upgrading of that facility. That money is much needed.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** I should get him to visit Hillarys Primary School, then!

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** I suggest the member advocate his position.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** I might not get the same luck as you!

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** One never knows one's luck in a small town!

The proposed Swan health campus essentially involves the rebuilding of Swan District Hospital. The budget allocation of \$9.4 million for that project is the first step in what will be a \$180 million project. The upgrading and rebuilding of that general hospital at Midland will be a great boon for all the residents of the eastern suburbs, so that is certainly very welcome.

A number of other projects in my electorate are in train and hopefully will be finished in the coming financial year. One of those projects is the new specialist music centre at Eastern Hills Senior High School. I toured that centre the other day with representatives from the Friends of Music group, as well as the principal, Gerry Chapman. That \$2 million specialist music facility will be absolutely outstanding. I am sure it will be the envy of every school in the state that teaches music. I look forward to the completion of that project and the official opening later this year.

The electorate of Swan Hills has a problem with roads. The national highway runs through my electorate. Both Great Eastern Highway and Great Northern Highway run through my electorate. What we need in my electorate is both the Perth-Darwin national highway and the Perth-Adelaide national highway. Although the state budget acknowledges the needs in outer metropolitan areas such as my electorate and invests a significant amount of

money in providing road infrastructure, unfortunately I cannot say the same for the federal budget, which was released two days before the state budget. Yet again, and for at least as long as I have been a member of this place, and obviously for many years before that, there has been no money in the federal budget to develop either the Perth-Darwin national highway or the Perth-Adelaide national highway through my electorate of Swan Hills and the federal electorate of Pearce. That is very frustrating. The increasing population growth in the outer metropolitan area means that an increasing amount of traffic is using these two passenger routes. However, these roads are not only passenger routes. They are also major heavy haulage transport routes. The mix of traffic is very unsafe. Many people in my electorate comment to me about the desperate need for an upgrading of these roads. The problem from the state's point of view is that we need federal funds to be invested in the national highway network so that heavy haulage can be taken off these routes. In some cases people's driveways come straight onto the highway. That is an extremely undesirable situation, because heavy haulage is often travelling straight past those people's driveways.

The federal government's proposed orange route through my electorate was one of the first issues that was raised with me when I was elected in 2001. Representatives from the Shire of Mundaring took me to a big map on the wall and showed me an orange line that would bypass the Mundaring township and take the heavy haulage vehicles away from the residential areas between Greenmount and Mundaring. At that time I thought, oh well, it has been on the cards for the next 20 years; surely in the next few years I will be able to get some kind of funding commitment to make that happen. Perhaps I was naive in thinking that way, because five years later the federal government has still not been able to deliver on that commitment. Frankly, the federal government is refusing to deliver on it and is continually returning the shire's request to the state government. That is extremely unfair. The state government has undertaken a safety audit of the section of Great Eastern Highway between Greenmount and Mundaring. That assessment has shown that the immediate funding that is required to make that stretch of highway safe to a minimum standard is about \$6.5 million. A full upgrade of that area will cost about \$25 million. When that is put in the context of the cost of the entire orange route, which is in the order of \$200 million, the argument from the federal government then becomes, "Well, sorry, but we are not prepared to spend \$25 million on upgrading that part of Great Eastern Highway for the many thousands of people who live in the hills and who pass through that area, because we intend to build the orange route." The problem is that the federal government has neither the will nor the intention to build the orange route.

I have received some correspondence from Hon Jim Lloyd, the federal Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads. The letter, which is dated 25 May last year, states that building the orange route is part of a 20-year planning horizon. It was 20 years' planning 20 years ago! How long do we need to wait for this part of the national highway to be built? This is a key transport route to and from the eastern states for people in the transport industry. We all know how important the transport industry is to our economy and to the provision of goods and services in this state. However, what about the people who live in that area? The people who drive cars in that area are constantly threatened by these large vehicles. Another problem is that the drivers of these large vehicles sometimes speed, which makes it difficult for them to slow down their vehicles, not to mention all the problems associated with the noise that is made by the various braking systems on the trucks and so on. I call yet again on the federal government to commit the necessary funds to commence construction of the Perth-Adelaide national highway. The state government is fulfilling its role. It has undertaken, if not completed, the planning works that are required for the entire stretch of that road. There was some contention about the route and so forth, and there were some environmental issues about the Northam part of that bypass, but I understand those issues have now been resolved. Now is the time to put money into that part of the national highway.

I have been talking about the eastern part of my electorate. The problem is I also need money for the northern part of my electorate. We need to have a bypass for the heavy haulage traffic so that it does not need to use the Great Northern Highway. Again, part of that road goes through the Swan Valley. That road is a critical part of the tourism infrastructure in the Swan Valley. Many residents of the Swan Valley live alongside that road. Also, an increasing amount of passenger transport is coming from the growing areas around Gingin, Muchea, Bullsbrook and Chittering.

We need the Perth-Darwin national highway. The state government has already invested \$800 000 in the second access road into Ellenbrook, which eventually will form part of that Perth-Darwin national highway. We need the route to go from Ellenbrook, past Bullsbrook and beyond. We need to link it to the proposed industrial site that is planned for the Bullsbrook area for the industrial site so that it can become our proper employment node for that region of the northern Swan Valley, Ellenbrook and so on. I have not seen any figures to indicate an estimated cost for the Perth-Darwin national highway. However, if we look at federal government budgets we will find millions upon millions, if not billions, being spent on roads in the eastern states where there are more electorates and federal Liberal Party members of Parliament. Some attention must be focused on that part of the national highway that will be in Western Australia.

I turn now to a completely different issue. I commend the Minister for Education and Training and the Premier for instituting the review of the nutritional value of foods that are sold in school canteens. The School Canteen

Reference Group is due to report its findings to the government in August. Members are aware of the issues of child obesity, that poor eating habits can be established early in life and of the number of hours children spend in school. We can have a real impact on health outcomes if we concentrate on what happens at the school level. It is my opinion that fizzy drinks do not have a place in schools. I am sure some people will disagree with me. Some schools have said that their canteens need to sell junk food and fizzy drinks to make money. It is not an acceptable argument. I put it to the government that if it is the case that this issue is about providing funding to schools rather than what kids are eating, it becomes a separate issue that needs consideration.

**Mr A.D. McRae:** What sort of fizzy drinks are you talking about?

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** I thank the member for Riverton for asking.

**Ms K. Hodson-Thomas:** Did you prompt him?

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** No, I did not. However, he did well.

I looked at the nutritional content, or lack thereof, of some fizzy drinks that currently are available in some schools. It is cause for great alarm, which I will demonstrate. For example, Coca-Cola and Sprite are common drinks that are available to children at some schools, drinks that I am sure many members have ingested on occasion. Members know that Sprite and Coke have a high sugar content. It is something in the order of 16 teaspoons of sugar in just one can of drink. Professor Dingle from Murdoch University has stated that if we stopped drinking two cans of these drinks per day, we would all lose half a kilo per month.

**Mr G. Woodhams:** I will disappear!

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** The member for Greenough needs to keep drinking them, but the rest of us could probably cut back. It is a clear health issue because of sugar intake and the conversion of sugar to fat. What is even more concerning is diet drinks such as Pepsi Max and Diet Coke. These drinks contain artificial sweeteners. If we look at the side of the can, we see numbers - 950, 951, 338 and 221. These numbers do not mean a great deal to me. When parents buy a drink off the shelf and think, "Okay, zero sugar - maximum taste - that sounds good. I'll try to do the right thing for my children by cutting out the high sugar drinks", they need to read between the lines or read a bit more into the numbers. Obviously, I am not the first person to have investigated this. It is an issue that I want to raise in the context of the school canteen review and something I want to put to the review for consideration by the minister.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** Number 950 denotes acesulfame potassium, which is an artificial sweetener. Among other things, it causes formaldehyde to build up in the brain. The advice is to avoid it. This is what we are drinking in cans of fizzy drinks. Number 951 denotes aspartame, which is also found in Nutrasweet and Equal. Ten per cent of aspartame comes from methanol which, when broken down, creates formic acid and formaldehyde, a known carcinogen. Do we really want the students in our schools to have access to these soft drinks which, after they are ingested, create cancer-forming substances in the stomach? It is one thing for an adult to make that decision, but it is another thing for the state government to condone this kind of risk amongst young people in our community. The remaining 90 per cent of aspartame is made up from phenylalanine and aspartic acid, which are neurotoxic when unaccompanied by amino acids. This is very scary. Phenylamine is defined as an oily poisonous amine obtained from nitrobenzene and used to make dyes, plastics and medicines. This does not sound like the kind of chemical that we want to feed our children in schools. I have tried to cut back my soft drink intake for a while.

**Ms K. Hodson-Thomas** interjected.

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** That is not out of the question. It is something that we need to consider from an entire community point of view. Certainly, we need to protect our children and one way of doing that is by cutting back the accessibility of these kinds of soft drinks within the public school system. Hopefully, the private schools will support that position as well. These soft drinks contain scary chemicals that potentially will have dire effects. People who have been subjected to aspartame do not even realise that the negative health effects and symptoms they are experiencing come from their ingestion of these kinds of diet drinks.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** Does that mean I have to go back to sugar?

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** Mr Treasurer, I do not know what we do. Maybe we should have orange juice and water. After having done this research, it would probably be better to drink Sprite or Fanta, which are both full of sugar but are without the aspartame, phenylalanine, methanol, formaldehyde and formic acid that are present in diet drinks.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** You fill me with despair.

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** Murdoch University nutritional toxicologist Peter Dingle said -

... soft drinks are a major contributing factor to chronic disease such as ADHD, tooth decay, osteoporosis, heart disease, diabetes, cancer and obesity. They contain high sugar levels, food additives and very high acid levels and have no nutritional value.

Clearly, when the School Canteen Reference Group is reviewing the nutritional value of foods sold in canteens, one would have to conclude that there is, in fact, no nutritional value in any of these sorts of soft drinks that I have brought into the house for members to view. I would like to put these items on the table for the rest of this day's sitting.

[The items were tabled for the information of members.]

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** Is there anything bad in beer?

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** I do have some material on beer, but I will give it to the Treasurer privately.

**Ms K. Hodson-Thomas:** She needs money for roads.

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** I do. I refer to my criticism of Hon Christopher Pyne and Hon Tony Abbott for their contradictory positions on food labelling, with reference to the ability to implement greater food labelling for multi-fruit and vegetable products. I agree with Hon Tony Abbott's suggestion that better, bigger and improved food labelling should be made available on fast food and junk food items. Unless one is a scientist, it is impossible to know the proportion of the recommended daily calorie intake that would be ingested by having an ice-cream, chocolate or fizzy drink and how that would compare with the recommended fat intake for a person of a particular age, size, gender and so forth. I agree with Tony Abbott. I support him in his push for better food labelling on junk food items. That would be of assistance to parents who are trying to provide proper nutrition for their kids and for anybody who wants to be aware of what they are eating, how much they are taking in and what proportion of their daily nutritional needs they are ingesting.

Moving on to another topic altogether, I have some ideas relating to sport and recreation in this state. I am glad that the Minister for Sport and Recreation is in the chamber. The issue of recreation has been brought to my attention a couple of times over the past few years. Some years ago, I asked what the Department of Sport and Recreation considers recreation to be and what investment does the state government put into recreation. The state government does an excellent job of funding state sporting facilities, elite sporting facilities and a range of other activities. In terms of recreation for the average Joe or Jaye who just want to engage in occasional recreational activities, what is there? I came up with an idea which I wish to put to the minister today. Jacobs Ladder is an extremely popular recreational -

**Mr D.T. Redman:** When do you visit, member?

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** I cannot believe the member for Stirling asked that. I have witnesses. There are many members in this chamber, including myself, who take advantage of the facility that Jacobs Ladder offers. Here is a little pop quiz for the chamber. How many steps are there on Jacobs Ladder? My record is going up and down twice but I know some members can do it five times, including the members for Stirling and Serpentine-Jarrahdale.

**Ms K. Hodson-Thomas:** I think I've done it five times once but definitely four times.

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** That is brilliant. Well done. Clearly, there is an appetite in the community for more passive and active recreational opportunities. Jacobs Ladder is a classic example. We have people from all walks of life from the metropolitan area and the non-metropolitan area who take advantage of that facility when they come to Perth. Another classic example is the DNA tower. That is also used for exercise purposes. We need to expand these recreational physical opportunities and have a program called "Perth fitness challenges" so we can have different activity zones, maybe in the northern, eastern or southern suburbs where there are one or two challenging things that we can use.

**Ms K. Hodson-Thomas:** Even in your electorate.

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** My electorate is very lucky because we have the Munda Biddi cycle trail and the Bibbulmun Track. We have lots of bridle trails and walk trails. We are a bit lucky. We also have the old goat farm in Greenmount, which CALM and Lotterywest are currently investing in so it can be used by mountain bike riders. The people from the mountain bike group are actually the people who came to me saying, "There's a lot of politics in sport; what can we do with an average sort of group, not an elite group, to get some funds to invest in our activities?" There are ways within government that that can be achieved. The Public Transport Authority has a massive investment in bike paths, for example. It plays an important role and I think it needs to continue to build a relationship with the Department of Sport and Recreation so that all of these endeavours work hand in hand. I put the challenge to the Minister for Sport and Recreation to institute "Perth fitness challenges". I am sure that the many creative people we have in Western Australia could think of some innovative sites and activities that we could install to benefit the active MPs and everybody else in the state who might like to get active and try to lose those love handles.

I only have three minutes left and my time has already been extended. I was really pleased to read the inauguration speech of Chief Justice Martin. It was a great inspiration to read the comments that he made on the day he was sworn in as Chief Justice.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** An excellent speech.

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** It was an excellent speech. I am sure the member for Victoria Park has taken the opportunity to read it as well. He might have even been there when it was delivered. The enthusiasm demonstrated for law reform by the new Chief Justice is encouraging and inspirational. The Chief Justice raised many issues in his first speech that I have been concerned with. They concerned me when I was a law student and they concerned many of my peers. I have papers that I have written filed in my spare room on many of the issues that the Chief Justice has raised. One quote in particular summarises for me my hope and my happiness at the nomination of the Chief Justice. He stated -

Improving the access of all Western Australians to the Courts of this state is at the forefront of my objectives and will guide the specific proposals which I hope to present to my judicial colleagues and, where appropriate, to government.

The ambition of improving access to justice for all Western Australians is noble and something that we should all aspire to. The Chief Justice commented on the need for more legal aid funding. That need is unquestionable. I am sure all members in this house have had constituents come to them seeking assistance and sometimes even legal advice, especially if they find out their member might be a lawyer or have a law degree. There are often very few places for us to refer people in the greatest need for legal advice. I commend and congratulate organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau and the local community legal services for the work that they do in this area.

The final comment that I want to draw from the Chief Justice's speech relates to his ambition to reduce interlocutory procedures and have more alternative dispute resolutions, negotiation and mediation prior to matters coming before the court, which is becoming the flavour of the month in the legal fraternity. Although it will cut out a lot of billing hours, it is better for people to have properly trained professional negotiators and facilitators to achieve outcomes at minimum costs, and it is something that I applaud.

**MR G. WOODHAMS (Greenough)** [5.27 pm]: It gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity to reply to the Treasurer's budget speech. This is perhaps an appropriate gathering, as there is an intimate number of people in the chamber, and it is a suitable venue to provide some inspiration and thought, and perhaps also some provocation.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** I disagree!

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** I will pay the member for Hillarys afterwards! With all due respect to Don McLean and his epic song *American Pie*, I present to members this evening an ode to the budget, "Budget Pie" -

A long, long time ago . . .  
 I can still remember  
 How the budget used to make me smile.  
 And I knew if I had my chance  
 That I could make the country dance  
 And, maybe, they'd be happy for awhile

But the Treasurer made me shiver  
 With that sad paper he did deliver.  
 Mandurah rail was the headline  
 Putting more people on the breadline.

I can't remember if I cried  
 When I saw the Treasurer talk about this ride  
 But something touched me deep inside  
 The day the budget died.

So bye-bye, divide up the pie.  
 Drove my Hyundai to service station  
 But the cost was too high.  
 And them good old Labor boys were ridin' nigh  
 Singin', "Mandurah rail or I die."  
 "Mandurah rail or I die."

Did you write the rail dept off?  
 And do you have faith in Kym above,  
 If the Budget tells you so?

Do you believe in standard gauge,  
Can ticket inspectors save your mortal soul,  
And can you teach me how to tunnel real slow?

Well, I know that you're insane  
'cause I saw you sittin' on the train.  
You both had come from caucus  
A ripper of a budget had made you raucus.

I was a lovely middle age Nats' buck  
Wearing my houndstooth jacket driving a pickup truck,  
But I knew I was out of luck,  
The day the budget was . . . deep fried.

So, bye-bye, divide up the pie."  
Drove my school bus to the primary,  
But it was closed for all times.  
Them Labor boys were drinkin' Chablis Dry  
And singin', Mandurah Rail or I die.  
Mandurah Rail or I die."

Now for six years they've spending the large  
Throwing money on the city like there was no charge,  
But that's not how it used to be.  
When real electorates were provided for all  
Not one vote one value tricking the soul  
But a vote that came from you and me,

But while the people were looking down,  
The budget stole every small town.  
Parliament was adjourned;  
No money was returned.

And the Premier spoke to the Legislative Clerk  
Jim, John, and Eric practiced in the park,  
And western Power left us in the dark  
The day the budget died.

We were singing,  
"bye-bye, budget pie."  
Caught the ambulance to the hospital  
But no beds could I spy.  
Them Labor girls were demanding portfolios from guys  
And singin', "Mandurah Rail or I die.  
Mandurah Rail and I die."

Helter skelter in a spending swelter.  
The Ministers flew off to the Mandurah shelter,  
Thirty miles long and failing fast.

The budget landed foul as it was cast  
The back bench tried for a forward pass,  
But their voices were muffled, the votes already past.

Now the budget speech was sad, obscene  
While the front bench played with a train set keen  
We all got up to speak,  
The situation was bleak!  
'cause the house battled to hold a quorum  
The big 2 billion spend on boredom  
Clickety Clack Clickety Clack Clickety Clack  
Do you recall what was revealed  
The day the budget died?

We started singing,  
"bye-bye, divide up the pie."  
I'm riding my horse to the levee,  
But the Yarragadee was dry.

The Labor were saving for tickets to buy  
And singin', Mandurah Rail or I die.  
Mandurah Rail or I die."

There they were . . . all in one place,  
Generation Labor lost in space  
With no time left to start again.  
So come on: jackhammer be nimble, jackhammer be quick!  
Jackhammer under the causeway and be damn quick  
Cause surplus is the Ministers only friend.

And as I watched her on the toil  
Justifying blowouts like a kettle will boil  
No angel born in hell  
Could break that Ministers spell.  
And as the figures climbed high into the night  
To light the railway station light,  
I saw the Premier laughing with delight  
The day the budget died

He was singing,  
"bye-bye, budget pie."  
Drove my govvy car to the footy  
But the Dockers made me cry.

The back room deals caught me on the fly  
singin', "Mandurah Rail or I die."  
"Mandurah Rail or I die."

I met a member who sang the blues  
And I asked her for some happy news,  
But she just said return or one way  
I went down to the sacred floor  
Where I'd heard the budget years before,  
But the man there said the Treasurer wouldn't pay.

And in the streets: the children screamed,  
Nothing for them and the places they dreamed.  
But not a word was spoken;  
The spirit of the future broken.  
And the three men I admire most:  
The father, son, and the holy ghost,  
Couldn't catch the train to the coast  
Still not finished, another blowout at the Minister's roast.

And they were singing,  
"bye-bye, divide up the pie."  
Drove my solar powered yacht to the Swan,  
As a salt slug went by.  
Under the river the tunnel workers were dry.  
Singin', "Mandurah Rail or I die."  
Mandurah Rail or I die."

They were singing,  
"bye-bye, we've eaten the pie."  
Drove the train to the station,  
As the Labor Party went by  
Their near sited leaders were drinking diet coke - you want fries with that? - with a sigh  
Singin' their new mantra, "Mandurah Rail or I die."  
Mandurah Rail or I die.

Several members interjected.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** That was a one-off performance. Many members will appreciate that it will not be repeated.

I note that the budget documents refer to strengthening our regions. I will mention a couple of issues with the regions. I know that they have been well documented in this house, but the fact that they have been well



documented by, I think, members on both sides of the house presents a strong argument for why some of these regional developments should be pushed ahead with, and not delayed. One of the developments that has been well documented, and has been called for by members opposite as well, is Indian Ocean Drive. The government could afford to complete Indian Ocean Drive. I think the figure to complete it is about \$70 million. By building Indian Ocean Drive, the government would accept some responsibility and develop a strategy of putting people first - in this instance by creating a safe driving and travelling environment. This decision, which I think the government will make in the next year or so, for its own reasons - members can read between the lines - would strengthen and develop regional towns and economies between Perth and the north west; create some diversity; give people and successive governments, no matter of what political persuasion, the chance to develop the area; and remove some of the incredible pressure that I think members from both sides of the house would acknowledge exists in the south west of the state.

One of the really distressing things about being the member for Greenough, apart from being the member himself, is that I am required to regularly travel between Perth and my electorate along Brand Highway. I have with me one of many letters that I receive on a regular basis that make reference to the very dangerous conditions that exist on Brand Highway. The letter was written on 8 May by R.J. Paterson, who lives in the member for Cottesloe's electorate. The letter was sent to the officer in charge of the state traffic coordination and enforcement division at 24 Wellington Street, East Perth. The letter reads -

#### **Dangerous Driving on Brand Highway 8<sup>th</sup> May 2006**

This morning at 7.43 am on the Brand Highway between Cataby and Regan's Ford the driver of a road train acted in an extremely dangerous manner. The road train was being driven south on the Highway and was following another road train, one with three black (mineral sands?) trailers. The road train pulled out to pass the mineral sands road train on a stretch of the Highway which ended in a blind crest of a hill, approximately 8 km north of Regan's Ford.

Those members who travel along Brand Highway can pretty much work out the place -

After the passing road train had driven alongside the mineral sands road train for some hundreds of metres the passing lines on the south-bound lane changed to a solid line. The driver of the road train continued on the wrong side of this line for a further considerable distance to the top of the hill, at which point the two vehicles were essentially level with each other. The passing manoeuvre was not completed until many hundreds of metres past the crest of the hill. Although the driver of these trucks sit higher than in a car, we do not believe he was able to determine if an oncoming vehicle was present.

Any oncoming car would have been faced with both sides of the road taken up by two very large fast-moving trucks.

The road strain in question had the rear number plate obscured with a temporary sign of yellow and black with the words "LONG VEHICLE". The plates on the front of the truck read "PATTO".

Speed is cited as a major factor in road accidents. Dangerous driving such as this is of greater concern. We hope police can locate this driver and at least caution him.

In addition there is a dire need for more passing lanes on the Brand Highway between Cataby and Regan's Ford. In more than twenty-five years of using this road, we have never seen more heavy vehicles, and more dangerous driving of these.

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

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** To echo the concerns of members on both sides of the chamber, there is considerable concern not only in the electorate of Greenough, but also in the electorates of Geraldton, Moore and Swan Hills - it was great to listen to the member for Swan Hills - about the condition of Brand Highway and, generally, highways leading north from the metropolitan area. There is a lot more pressure on those roads. There is a need for them to be upgraded and for passing lanes to be created. The urgency of the situation has been impressed upon the minister. People in my electorate who vote for the Labor Party and not for me - I can understand why - have stopped me in the street and seen me in my electorate office to ask whether I can assist in getting Brand Highway upgraded. I have attended protest meetings about traffic on Brand Highway.

It is marvellous that members of the house will have the opportunity to attend the regional Parliament in Geraldton the week after next. Most members will probably fly to Geraldton but will acquire a hire car when they get there. I encourage members to travel a small distance down Brand Highway and then turn around and head north into Geraldton. They would essentially be travelling the same route as the road trains. They will find themselves travelling over stage 1 of the southern transport corridor. On top of that corridor is a bridge, where three-carriage road trains have to stop at traffic lights and indicate to turn either left or right to continue on the southern transport corridor. That underlines the absolute need for the regional community of Geraldton, which embraces much of my electorate, to demand the completion of stage 2 of the southern transport corridor. For

their own sake, members should undertake that journey and see for themselves some of the issues that are involved when a loaded road train sits at traffic lights alongside suburban traffic waiting to go about its business. The optimist in me looks forward to the completion of the southern transport corridor stage 2. However, the cynic in me suspects it might be held back for a year or so until the next election is called.

Education is another issue that I am passionate about. I carry the shadow portfolio responsibility for education on behalf of the National Party. Strengthening education in the regions is an excellent way for governments of all persuasions to go about their business of empowering people in the regions and giving them equal opportunities to participate. I listened to the member for Cottesloe earlier today when he delivered his reply to the budget speech. As a previous minister in the former conservative government, he helped people in country Western Australia engage in the wonderful developments that have occurred in Western Australia's education system. The member for Cottesloe and successive members in the current government, have tried to develop programs across Western Australia. I will cite a few instances of primary and high schools in regional Western Australia that are disadvantaged. By way of interjection, the member for Hillarys might remind me whether it was the Hillarys Primary School that had not been painted for 20 years.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** It is one of the oldest schools in my electorate.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** Was it 40 years?

**Mr A.P. O'Gorman:** The mid-70s.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** I think that is the information I need. I will not mention the schools that sit within the City of Geraldton, but which are part of Greenough. I will name the stand-alone primary schools in my electorate that are very old. It is possible that they are older than me. I do not know whether they are older than the member for Hillarys! An interjection is not necessary at this time, member!

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** Nothing could be older than me!

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** Perhaps nothing could be older than the Chapman Valley, Walkaway, Mingenew or Three Springs Primary Schools.

**Mr M. McGowan** interjected.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** Coorow is not in my electorate. I would love it if it were. I have a great deal of affinity with the people of Coorow, if that was the member's interjection. The problem with many of these schools is maintenance. I seek leave for an extension of time.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** Only if you tell us the poem again!

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** A long, long time ago - I can still remember it! It is only a monotone, which matches my "monoceps". That is the way I am cast.

The stand-alone primary schools are all very old. They have a poor track record of maintenance. If a stone were cast onto the roof of any of these schools, the stone would roll down the corrugated iron roof. However, it would not necessarily land in the gutter, because in many instances there are no gutters; and, if it did land in a gutter, it would fall through it, because the gutters have been rusted through. When we talk about a school budget, we talk about a schoolteacher. For my way of thinking, after parents, schoolteachers are the most important people in the world as far as our children are concerned because they have a fantastic impact on them. We hope it is a fantastically positive impact. I know teachers who have paid money out of their own pockets to paint schoolrooms because the government's budget does not allow those schools to be painted on a regular basis. From my point of view - I am a fairly mild mannered fellow - that is a savage indictment on the budget. I do not know whether the Treasurer attended Nyabing Primary School in his early days -

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** I did indeed.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** I am curious to know the current condition of that school and what sorts of upgrades have been visited upon it. That school obviously has a very successful graduate.

Several members interjected.

**Mr G. WOODHAMS:** I will not debate it at this point. It is very important to acknowledge the many small primary schools in regional Western Australia, the maintenance of which often falls to the teaching staff or the parents and citizens association or the parents and friends association. When the conditions of the school are untenable, they recognise the need to maintain the school and provide the children with a decent facility to work in.

I have alluded to the age of many regional primary schools and regional district high schools. I acknowledge the government's commitment to Kalbarri District High School. Earlier today I spoke about other issues regarding Kalbarri. I hope that the government's acknowledgement by way of a financial commitment to Kalbarri District

High School is also an ongoing acknowledgement of that community, which is one of the more rapidly growing communities in regional Western Australia. It will require much financial management and support by various government agencies. I acknowledge the government's commitment to Kalbarri District High School. I sincerely hope that honouring that commitment is a high priority of the government.

One of the dilemmas in the public education system - I am sure it is very similar in the non-government system, with which I am also familiar - is the ageing of the teaching work force. I believe that the average age of teachers is 47 years. I will not dwell on the ongoing debate on outcomes-based education.

I might make a slight reference, in the time that remains for me, to the possible movement of year 7 students to the first year of high school, because of the impact that that would have. However, I believe that one of the things that the government needs to do - once again, I suggest that it is something that a government on this side of the house would also need to do, if we accept the status quo - is to dramatically boost teachers' salaries. Teachers are incredibly important to our communities and our society, and, above all, they are important to our schoolchildren. Mr Treasurer, there must be a way in which the government can explore increasing teachers' salaries. It must also be able to explore ways of recruiting the brightest young people in the land to the teaching profession. There must be ways of looking at that profession and taking out the good bits - I believe the government has done that over the past few years, following on from the work of the previous government - to develop programs within the schools that are equal to anything that would be found in any other country in the world. However, the difficulty that we have - I am sure that the Treasurer would acknowledge this - is keeping teachers in the system. Therefore, I ask the government, firstly, to explore the possibility of increasing salaries for teachers as a base step in this process, because it is not the be-all and end-all. Salary alone should not dictate people's decision about where their future lies or what career they should pursue. In this state, we need to look more closely at the way in which we recruit our teachers and the way in which we go about keeping them. Certainly, if they are required to paint their own classrooms, that is not a way of keeping them.

One of the other elements of education to which I will refer is the Schools Plus program and inclusive schooling. That is another issue that I have also touched on in this house. I believe it is a worthwhile program, but one that is still not fully understood by a lot of people, particularly in regional Western Australia. That is not for the want of trying to understand it, but really because it has not been publicised widely enough, has not been delivered into the schools effectively and has not been driven forcefully enough by the government to let people know what their entitlements are. Inclusive education is a cornerstone, if one likes, of the education program that we have at the moment. It tries to involve everybody, regardless of their circumstances in our communities, in mainstream education. There will always be exceptions, but inclusive education endeavours to do that, and the Schools Plus program is one of the agents, if one likes, of change. However, that inclusive education program needs far better funding and far wider discussion. It needs to be put in the schools, whether that be by the Minister for Education and Training or the department itself, and the principals and people who are interested in inclusive schooling in every school in Western Australia need to be more fully briefed about the impact it can have and why it is good for Western Australians. However, that cannot be done without improved funding for the Building Inclusive Schools strategy. We should not let that struggle get away from us. It is very important to be inclusive. I would like more government money to be put into inclusive schooling.

Recently some publicity was given to a number of senior public servants who were to receive quite significant increases in their salaries. In some instances, the salaries of public servants who were earning more than \$200 000 a year were being increased by \$25 000 or \$30 000 a year. With all due respect, I am sure that those people work a long and hard day. I do not question their importance to governance in Western Australia. However, I would be quite happy to put to them - but I would prefer that the government put it to them - that, instead of that extra \$25 000 being paid to them, we put \$25 000 into laptops for kids with autism. Let us buy laptops to enable kids with autism to more effectively participate in inclusive school programs in Western Australia. That would be a forward step and one that I would applaud. That would be a challenge for the government. It would be interesting to find out whether the government would be prepared to ask some of its senior public servants to make that sort of sacrifice to develop a more inclusive society and to enable more people to participate. Many of those people who cannot participate are in regional Western Australia. They are in small rural towns and small communities. Many of them, with all due respect, live on the edge of society because they do not have a wealth of social skills to enable them to go into an education department office and advocate on behalf of their children who need different services provided to them.

In the last little while that is available to me, I will briefly touch on another health issue. It also relates to what I have been saying about inclusive schooling, inclusive societies, better funding and a more workable educational environment. One of the sad outcomes of the whole schooling process is that there is an increasing youth suicide rate in Western Australia. It is not the schooling process itself, but it has a lot to do with the whole schooling process, which I believe extends to the time before and after school; it is the process of socialisation, if one likes. The youth suicide rate exceeds the road traffic toll. That is certainly not a figure of which we should be proud in any sense. No matter what the traffic toll may be, if the youth suicide rate exceeds it, every member in this

house should feel that he or she needs to do something about it. It is not a party political issue. Therefore, I am asking that the government spend more time and energy on developing mental health programs, particularly in our rural communities, with a focus on preventing youth suicide. Some severe mental health problems plague many of our small rural towns. I believe that many of the people who have those problems have deliberately chosen to live in those towns because they feel threatened by larger regional communities and by the bigger systems that operate in the city. I can certainly understand that. However, if we are to include these people in our society and in the boom that we are experiencing, we need to meet and talk with them and understand their problems, and, more importantly, we need to find some financial solutions to help them lead a reasonable life in rural Western Australia.

**MR A.P. O’GORMAN (Joondalup)** [5.58 pm]: I will make a small contribution to this second reading budget debate. First of all, I compliment the Deputy Premier and Treasurer on bringing down yet another surplus budget. This time it is a huge surplus. In our sixth budget, the government is starting to get into its stride, whereby it is putting a lot back into the community. At this stage we are putting items back into the community in the form of infrastructure. Of course, the theme of the budget is “building on the boom”, and that is exactly what we have been able to do because of our \$2 billion surplus. We have managed to make sure that the Mandurah line will not be an ongoing debt for everybody in the state. It affects not just metropolitan people; it affects everybody in the state, including our children. Normally, when massive infrastructure projects such as the Mandurah line are built - it is a project worth \$1.5 billion or \$1.6 billion - the debt tends to be passed on to following generations. However, under this government and this Treasurer, we have managed to avoid doing that.

Before I continue any further, I will also congratulate the new councillors and the mayor at the City of Joondalup. They were elected just over a week ago. I congratulate all those people who put up their hands for those positions. The City of Joondalup has faced many difficulties and, as everybody knows, it has been dogged by a considerable amount of trouble. I wish the 13 new councillors all the very best in addressing the problems they have inherited. Hopefully, they will not recur in the future and the City of Joondalup will continue to grow, as it has in the past 25 years.

The state budgets have been a great boon for Joondalup. Over the past few years of the Labor government, funding has been provided in the budget for lots of infrastructure projects, and many more will be funded in future. The biggest single item to be funded is the extension to the Mitchell Freeway, which will total about \$180 million. That work is now going ahead, albeit a little late because of delays caused by the government’s reaction to public consultation. The government took notice of people’s concerns, particularly in the suburb of Connolly, regarding the profile of the freeway. That delayed the project by six or eight months to enable further consultation with not only the people of Connolly but also the people of Joondalup, Currabine and a number of other surrounding suburbs on the construction of the freeway past Burns Beach Road. The feedback I have been receiving from all the groups involved is that this consultation process is probably one of the best processes that they have encountered. They have said that the government has listened to each and every one of the recommendations. It is implementing all of them to ensure the best possible outcome with that freeway for the local community. The original recommendation was that the freeway be built not in two stages - that is, firstly, from Hodges Drive to Shenton Avenue, and, secondly, from Shenton Avenue to Burns Beach Road - but will now be built as one project. That is a major improvement on the previous construction plan. I am very proud to be part of a government that was able to achieve that outcome in what were very testing times. The residents of Connolly had an issue, which some people sought to exploit in the election campaign and, in doing so, they set those residents against each other. Unfortunately, the fallout from that has meant that some of those residents are still not talking to each other. That is an awful shame for a small local community. However, hopefully, over time those wounds will heal and the people concerned will communicate with each other again.

I must admit that as soon as I got the budget papers I had a quick look to see what was in them for Joondalup. There is much in the budget for developing the state, but members often want to know what is in it for their local community. The local community is always interested in the budget. People phone our office fairly quickly after the budget speech has been delivered by the Treasurer so we need to be able to provide them with information.

The first thing I saw on page 352 of budget paper No 2 was an amount of \$25 million to purchase and upgrade the former Australian Institute for University Studies facility at Joondalup. The Australian Institute for University Studies has operated for approximately 10 or 12 years. I understand that it was established by a private consortium from Malaysia. It provides an opportunity for year 11 and 12 overseas students to study for the year 12 tertiary entrance exam so that they can enter a university in Western Australia. An example of how dynamic this government is occurred early in the year when it responded to the fact that that facility would be put on the market. An allocation of \$25 million was included in this year’s budget to purchase the complex and to contribute towards its refurbishment. The outcome of that will possibly be a senior school in the central business district of Joondalup. That is something that has been sought for many years, particularly by people in

Connolly and Joondalup. It is a great outcome for that area. It also feeds into the Joondalup learning precinct of which Edith Cowan University, West Coast College of TAFE, the Police Academy and the health campus are all part. They all provide tertiary education in the Joondalup CBD. This senior college will be an addition to those facilities. An article in the *Wanneroo Times* yesterday reads in part -

ECU Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Patrick Garnett said a senior college in the Joondalup area will compliment the learning precinct.

“We are keen to see participation rates in higher education increase in this region because they are below the national average,” he said.

That is a great commendation from Professor Garnett. As the article states, he is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor at ECU. He is very supportive of the Joondalup community. He has spoken to me many times, as have Professor John Wood and a number of others at ECU, about developing a senior campus in the CBD so that it can feed into those other tertiary institutions.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate ECU on being pioneers in tertiary education. To my knowledge, it is the only public university that has purchased large tracts of land on which to accommodate itself. The other universities, Curtin University of Technology, the University of Western Australia and Murdoch University are provided with land through state government grants. Many years ago, ECU took it upon itself to purchase land in Joondalup with the aim of moving its headquarters there. I am pleased to say again that, with the foresight of the Gallop Labor government and now the Carpenter government, we have been able to assist ECU to achieve that through facilitating the transfer of land at Churchlands to ECU so that it can subdivide it and sell it.

**Dr E. Constable:** It's a bad decision.

**Mr A.P. O'GORMAN:** It is a great decision for ECU.

**Dr E. Constable:** It's a bad decision.

**Mr A.P. O'GORMAN:** I appreciate that it is a bad decision for the member for Churchlands' electorate, but for students in Joondalup, it is a great decision. Not only has ECU purchased the land in Joondalup but also it has developed some significant infrastructure for research. One of the subjects for research is Alzheimer's disease. I believe a briefing was held at Parliament House this morning on Alzheimer's, and I thank the member for Moore for organising it. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend because I was involved in a standing committee hearing. The McCusker Foundation for Alzheimer's Disease Research, has spoken to me a number of times and I am very supportive of the work it is doing out there. ECU has provided a facility for the McCusker Foundation, and Alzheimer's research is progressing nicely.

A number of other organisations around the state are becoming involved in the Joondalup family health study under the auspices of the UWA medical school. Also involved is ECU, Curtin University and the Lions Eye Institute and, hopefully, Murdoch University will also become involved. This study is a concept that was floated to me about 12 or 18 months ago by Lyle Palmer from UWA. It involves surveying large numbers of families in the Joondalup area across generations right down to the young children and committing the children to be part of the study for many years to come. Its predecessor is the Busselton family health study, which has been conducted for many years. This UWA concept will take its study to a much larger scale. I met yesterday with Lyle Palmer and Lara McDonald so that they could update me on its progress. The people of Joondalup have embraced this health study and it has taken on a life of its own. It is now looking at gathering information on all sorts of diseases and encompassing research into genetics. It will examine methods of dealing with illnesses such as diabetes, poor vision, hearing loss and all the other prevalent diseases. This research is becoming world famous. Peak researchers from around the world are looking to tap into its findings to validate some of the findings they have achieved over the years. It is therefore a great way forward. As well as that research, a competition on ethics, also connected to that genome research, was announced in *The West Australian* today.

In ploughing on through the budget, I find many good things in store for Joondalup: as I said, \$25 million for the purchase and refurbishment of the former Australian Institute for University Studies facility; \$180 million over time for extension of the freeway; and upgrading of the Joondalup Health Campus. Joondalup Health Campus is a fantastic facility. In the early days there was a lot of bad publicity about it as a few incidents got too much attention from the media, which at times unfortunately did not earn the hospital a very good name. However, I am happy to say that in the past five to six years, most of the reports about the Joondalup Health Campus have been very positive. Letters in the local paper are very supportive of both the Joondalup Health Campus and the staff. I compliment the staff at Joondalup Health Campus - formerly called Wanneroo Hospital - as they get right behind and are very strong supporters of their hospital. Next Thursday we will be holding our third annual morning tea there, which has become very successful and raises about \$1 000 every year for cancer research. All the staff at the hospital and many of the residents around the area are involved and it is a great opportunity for the staff and the community to come together. On top of that, last year we held the first Joondalup Health Campus fundraising ball. Some \$30 000 was our target, and we fell short by \$800 or thereabouts, but I am

happy to say that we were still able to purchase the items that the paediatric ward at Joondalup had requested from us. I thank all the members of the committee who were involved in that fundraising ball, which really took on a life of its own with Nicola at the hospital being the driving force behind it. On 3 September last year a very successful ball was held at Joondalup Resort. Joondalup Health Campus, therefore, is really coming of age. It is now back to being part of the community, whereas previously it had been slightly dislodged from the community.

I am very happy with the budget. I think most members around the state are very happy with the budget. It is not just me who is saying that. I am holding up to show members again my local paper, the *Wanneroo Times*. The front-page story, without prompting from me, refers to a \$14 million hospital tonic, which is about the upgrade to the hospital. It is a much-needed injection of funds and the hospital will begin its build-up to becoming a major tertiary hospital. Page 3 of the *Wanneroo Times* refers to the plans for a college in the central business district of Joondalup; it refers to the electorate of my colleague the member for Mindarie, who is unfortunately not present in the chamber, being funded for graffiti busters in his electorate; and it refers to government funds for new schools. I will not refer to them all, or I will be here all night, and I am sure many of my colleagues in the northern suburbs want to talk about them. There are very many good things happening in Joondalup; it is really coming into focus. I am sorry that I cannot do what the member for Greenough did and put the words of my speech to a song; that was very entertaining. However, at the same time it is important to recognise that the Labor government's budget is good for all of Western Australia. When I got home and read the local paper last night, every page that I turned to referred to something good happening in either the state or Joondalup. There is a scholarship fund in the budget for mental health nurses in WA. As we all know, mental health services are a major issue across the state. One in five of us - I say "us" - is prone to developing a mental health problem. Again, under this budget, the Minister for Health has put some money in - about \$2.8 million - to provide scholarships to 120 mental health nurses. That is also very good for the state of WA.

It is not all good news, though. There are a few projects that I would have liked to see in the budget but, unfortunately, are not there, and I will refer to some. Although they have been on the agenda before, I am sure that once I put them back on the agenda, the Treasurer and the cabinet will pay attention and acknowledge that these projects are absolute necessities for the development of Joondalup. One of the major initiatives that I would like to see funded is West Coast College of TAFE, which has done very well. It now has a hospitality and tourism academy.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr A.P. O'GORMAN:** West Coast College of TAFE was also hoping to secure some funding to develop a trade training centre at the Clarkson Community High School, similar to the one at Brighton but on a much larger scale, to address some of the trades skills shortage in the state, particularly the building trade. Unfortunately, that initiative did not get a guernsey in this budget, but I am sure the Treasurer and the Minister for Education and Training are looking at ways to deliver it. I will be pushing them very strongly for that. As members know, the Labor Party has a large number of members in the northern suburbs. The Labor Party has five out of six members in the Cities of Wanneroo and Joondalup, and three upper house members as well. The eight of us, therefore, work very well together to ensure that we deliver for the northern suburbs. I pass thanks onto the Minister for Disability Services, Hon Margaret Quirk, the northern suburbs representative in cabinet - the lone minister for the northern suburbs who manages to deliver a lot for those of us in the northern suburbs.

I will move onto a couple of other issues. As members know, the northern suburbs rail line, which was constructed under a previous Labor government and which carries a large number of passengers, runs through Joondalup. If I recall correctly, it exceeded all expectations in its first year of operation, and I can say that in every year since then it has exceeded expectations. I thought that once we put in three-car sets on that line, and then doubled up three-car sets, making six-car sets, it would have relieved some of the pressure, but it has generated more passengers onto the public transport system to the level that we are now facing full and overcrowded car parks. That pressure must be addressed by putting more infrastructure around train stations to cope with parking. We have put Greenwood station in the member for Kingsley's electorate, and its car park fills up very quickly. There is a shortage of parking at Edgewater, which has 600 bays. Unfortunately, because our public transport system is so good and because people like to travel on it, those 600 bays are taken up very early in the morning. Despite extra parking spaces being added to the car park at Whitfords train station, there are still problems there. However, again, because our rail system is so good, more people use it than it can currently cope with. I will therefore put on the agenda that we want a lot more upgrades to the railway stations in the northern suburbs, particularly those in my electorate: Joondalup, Whitfords on the border and Edgewater. Again, an extra 120 bays were added to the car park at Joondalup train station and within a very short period all those bays filled each day. By the time I get to the station to come to work in the morning most of those bays are full. Train stations in the northern suburbs, therefore, are in dire straits. Edgewater train station was built at the same time as the northern suburbs rail line and at that time it was considered a substantial station. It is now falling short in many ways. It is falling short in weather coverage for passengers and it needs a substantial

upgrade. People with disabilities, particularly wheelchair-bound people, have a problem at Edgewater train station as there is no lift access to the platform from the walkover bridge. There is a ramp and people with disabilities are catered for to get down to the platform; however, every other station along the line that has multiple levels is equipped at least with a lift that can move people up and down fairly quickly. The problem with the ramp is that it is exposed to the elements. Indeed, I would not want to travel down a 150-metre ramp in a wheelchair to reach the station platform while it is raining. That is one issue that the government must address in the remainder of its term. As I said, although the station itself was built at the same time as the rail line to the northern suburbs was built, the shelter - I think the number of people who catch the train at that station is unprecedented - does not cover the number of people who wait there to catch a train. We must look at that issue more closely. It has been reported to the Public Transport Authority. This week, PTA staff did maintenance on the station to make it look nice. However, more than looking nice, that station must provide a service for people. There are some issues with the location of the SmartRider log-on, log-off boxes. The PTA is addressing that issue at the moment.

People in the northern suburbs face other public transport issues. On a Friday or Saturday night, masses of people regularly catch the last train from the city to the Joondalup train station. The same could be said of any of the stations on the northern suburbs line. I am not aware of the exact time of the last train, but it could be around 2.00 am. People who catch the last train have no way of getting from the train station to their homes. A better taxi system must be put in place. Unfortunately, it is not economically viable to run buses from the station at that time of night. However, the issue could be resolved by using taxis. I have raised this issue with Swan Taxis. The member for Southern River and I held a taxi forum in my electorate on 17 March. Many people spoke about the level of taxi service in Joondalup, particularly for people with disabilities. In fact, a large representation was made by the Northern Suburbs Stroke Support Group. Representations were also made on behalf of people who are sight impaired and from right across the spectrum. We must address this issue in a better manner. Swan Taxis has suggested a transport hubs proposal, which would involve trains running until 4.00 am if possible, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights, and being met by taxis waiting at the train stations for a nominal fee. I will not mention the fee that was suggested, because I do not want to lock in the price that people should pay for that service. Indeed, the system is not yet in place. I am waiting for the proposal to be considered by the minister and the PTA. The taxis would serve the immediate surrounding suburbs for a set fee and the outer suburbs for a slightly higher fee. On Friday and Saturday nights when trains run at those hours and taxis are waiting at the stations, people will be able to get from the station to their homes.

Just outside my electorate - indeed, the member for Hillarys raised this issue in his speech - upgrades are being made to Hillarys Boat Harbour. I applaud that decision. However, I acknowledge what the member for Hillarys said, in that there is substantial development at Hillarys Boat Harbour and that we should concentrate on development further along the coast. More boat harbours should be developed. There is one at Ocean Reef. During the election campaign, the government committed a sum of money - as far as I know, it is being delivered to the City of Joondalup - for a feasibility study on developing the Ocean Reef Boat Harbour. I am hoping - I have not checked this because, as I said, it is outside my electorate - that the City of Joondalup is moving that feasibility study along and that within a short time the Ocean Reef Boat Harbour will be developed in a sustainable manner. The Ocean Reef Boat Harbour is near some sensitive environmental areas. The Joondalup Coastcare Forum has expressed concern about development around that boat harbour. Hopefully, the feasibility study will address some of those issues.

There was a lot of speculation about tax cuts in this budget, particularly due to the government's budget surplus. The Treasurer and the cabinet have dealt with this matter in a professional manner. The government has launched a state tax review. Hopefully, that review will result in further tax reductions. As has already been mentioned, over \$700 million worth of tax reductions have been delivered to Western Australian taxpayers during this government's term in office. I am sure that we will see further tax improvements. Previously when young people purchased homes in partnership with their parents they could reclaim only 50 per cent of the first home owners grants. Under the system proposed by the Treasurer, first home owners will be able to claim back the full 100 per cent once the second 50 per cent of a house is handed over to them. I applaud the Treasurer for that initiative.

I refer to the proposals that have been suggested for P-plate drivers. Many young people in the community will think that a bunch of old fogies designed these tedious regulations to prevent them having fun and enjoying their vehicles. I wish I could say that were true; however, it is not. The fact of the matter is that we are losing young people at a rate far greater than any other cohort in our community. We must address that issue. My three children went through different stages of learning to drive and obtain their licence. My first two children learnt to drive when there was no requirement for 25 hours of supervised driving. My third child, who is my second daughter, learnt to drive after the introduction of the 25 hours of supervised driving. I mean no disrespect to my eldest children; however, my youngest daughter has gained a lot more experience because of that supervised driving requirement and is a safer driver than my other children. I applaud the proposals that are on the table. They have not been designed to prevent young people from having fun; rather, they have been designed to save

young people's lives. The proposal includes exemptions for young people who travel home from work between 12.00 am and 5.00 am, which are the suggested curfew hours. The proposal will not prevent young people from earning the dollars that will allow them to have a car and things of that nature. They must realise that the number of young people dying on our roads is not acceptable. We must address that issue. Many people, including me, were rev heads when they were younger. I am sure that many of us planted our foot on the accelerator a few too many times.

**Mr D.T. Redman:** No!

**Mr A.P. O'GORMAN:** No, of course not! That is not acceptable, but most members and people across the state would have done that at some stage. We got away with it when we were younger because there were fewer cars on the road and cars were not as powerful as they are now. One of my cars has a 2-litre engine, and I dare say that it could leave a V8 for dead at a set of traffic lights if I wanted it to. That is the problem that we are facing. Cars have become very fast and powerful, even those that have smaller engines. I urge young people who are going for their licence for the first time to acknowledge that this measure has been designed to protect them, and not prevent them from having fun.

**MR D.T. REDMAN (Stirling)** [6.28 pm]: Before I begin my response on the budget, I will pick up on the comments of the member for Joondalup about the proposed measures for P-plate drivers. I want to touch on one aspect. I have not analysed the proposal closely, but I am aware that one part of the proposal is that for a period - I believe it is about six months - P-plate drivers will be allowed to drive only by themselves or with someone who is considerably older - that is, a mature person. I was the principal of an agricultural college for 10 years and was involved in the agricultural college system for 18 years. Those colleges are attended by students aged 16, 17 and 18, who are able to use vehicles on farms and who are able to use them unsupervised in some cases. It is my experience that if one student is sent off in a ute to do a particular task, that is a relatively low-risk exercise provided that the student has been trained and has passed the college's appropriate test. However, if two or three students are sent off in a vehicle to perform an unsupervised task, the greater the risk of an accident. I need to have a closer look at the proposals, but I believe that that aspect of it has merits. It is the issue of peer group pressure and egging on mates that can lead to catastrophic outcomes. In those aspects, I support the comments of the member for Joondalup.

In the 11 pages of the Treasurer's budget speech the word "regional" appears twice. The first time it appears is in a relatively superficial way on page 7, in relation to the Broome regional resource centre in the Kimberley. The second occurrence is on page 10, the second last page of the budget speech. It appears in a single paragraph in reference to what this government is doing for regional Western Australia. The number of times the word "regional" appears in the speech and the position of the paragraph about regional Western Australia is indicative of where the regions lie in the priorities in this budget, and where this government puts regional Western Australia in the allocation of funds. This will not be unusual for us. Politics in Western Australia has quite a changing face. That changing face originated in the first bill with which I dealt when I became a member last year - the One Vote One Value Bill. The political environment going into the next election will be significantly changed. The National Party and the other parties have been looking closely at where they stand both as parties and as individual members in that scenario. It is our assessment that, at the next election, in the coastal strip between Perth and Margaret River there will be 48 lower house electorates. The rest of the state will have 11 seats. Western Australia is a very centralised state, and we have always recognised this. All these points came up in the debate last year.

I refer to the pie that the member for Greenough so delicately mentioned in his address a short time ago. The process of dividing up that pie is strongly focused on where the population is, and in this case that means that strip from Perth to Margaret River. When we consider the allocation of funds to the regions in the budget we ask what the regional cut of road funding is. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure is probably accurate in saying that some 67 per cent of the total funding goes to the regions, but her description of "regions" refers to any area outside of the metropolitan area. I do not entirely agree that that is where the regional base now sits. I think it is a little further away from the metropolitan area, and if we make the necessary adjustments to what those figures actually reflect, we will see that the regions are not actually faring that well. I will provide an example of this a bit later on in my address.

When there is a \$2 billion surplus, which is unique in any state budget, and \$1.3 billion goes into paying off debt on the Mandurah-Perth railway, it is another indication of where the regions lie in the priorities for the allocation of those funds. If I were sitting on the other side of the house and considering the next election - indeed, if I were representing a metropolitan seat - I could understand how that could be a good move from the perspective of the government. It means that there is no carryover debt associated with the Mandurah railway, and in the lead-up to the next election there will be no commentary about the railway and the concerns that we have been expressing over the past 12 months about cost blow-outs and how much it is being subsidised. This is probably a master stroke from the perspective of the government. The railway may not be entirely forgotten, but it certainly will not be showing up in the budget books in a significant way. As the member for Cottesloe



mentioned, that debt could have been retired from any other area in which the government has outstanding debts, but the government chose in this case to take it off the Mandurah railway.

When members consider the budget, we always look at what is in it for our own electorate. I need to consider Albany in connection with the electorate of Stirling because Albany is a regional centre servicing a lot of the Stirling electorate. Some of my comments will relate to projects being supported by the government in the electorate of Albany, which has done very well out of this budget, as the member for Albany said yesterday. Stirling has not done quite so well, but I will work through some of the issues.

The one community, one college project in Mt Barker is one that I have put my full support behind. It is a unique project. The school community in Mt Barker has put a lot of time into thinking about how it wants education to be delivered in the town, which is a large regional centre. Pulling the schools together into a single kindergarten-to-TAFE campus is a significantly innovative approach to education in a bigger regional centre. In this financial year that project has been allocated \$4 million of the total cost of \$7.8 million, and that is only for stage 1. During stage 1, the primary school will be a split site, which will create some issues. I will be looking, in the ensuing years, at what follow-up allocations have been made to ensure that the remaining students on the original primary school site are able to move up to the new one community, one college site. It is extremely important and I will be raising this issue with the Director General of the Department of Education and Training if I get a chance. I know he has visited the area and I am quite sure he shares that concern. It is important that we give some priority in the out years to allocating funds to bring all the students onto the one site. There is a concern in the local community that the budget allocation for stage 1 may not cover what is necessary to put in it place. That has been a concern of the Plantagenet shire president, and it has been expressed to me by some members of the school community. It is important that we do not compromise the quality of the development in pulling these two schools together. I know that the community has a vision, and it wants that vision fulfilled. It is important that we take the time and, if necessary, spend the funds to bring their vision to reality.

The Denmark multipurpose health facility is another feature in the budget. I compliment the Minister for Health, who has been unwavering in his support for this project. As I have experienced over the past 10 years or so, the Denmark community can sometimes put pressure on the decision-making process. A number of things have happened in the town on which the local community has been split. I see that as an asset for a community, because when people are passionate about their town and what is important for it, and when those passions compete, they can create some pressures. This is one such episode, and I am sure that members are familiar with it. An allocation of \$4 million has been made in this financial year out of a total cost of \$18 million. The project is long overdue, particularly for the elderly people in the community. There is a big need for residential aged care services in the community, and it is important that this project is developed as soon as possible to meet those needs.

When I first looked at the budget I saw the words "Muir's Highway" and I was jumping over the moon. I thought the government had finally put some money into upgrading Muir's Highway, only to find that the amount of \$4.5 million referred to the Mt Barker northern bypass, which had already been announced by the government. This project was certainly in need of completion. A significant number of log trucks use that highway, and a bypass is needed to get from Muir's Highway on to Albany Highway and to the Mirambeena industrial site so that the trucks can detour around the more densely populated area of town. Likewise, another \$500 000 was allocated to the other end of the Muir's Highway, but not in my electorate. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure acknowledged last year that the priority of Muir's Highway needed to be lifted, but I have not seen any evidence of that being converted into dollars. That is something I will be taking up and pursuing as vigorously as I can. Some \$2 million has been allocated for stage 1 of the ring road, as the member for Albany mentioned. It was my view until recently that we needed to prioritise and get stages 2 and 3 in place. I will be attending a meeting in Albany on Friday to hear some community concerns that have been raised about the ring road development. I shall be listening intently to those views. My current view is that the next allocation of funds to roads should be for major regional arterial roads rather than to stages 2 and 3 of the Albany ring-road. Stage 1 will make a significant change to the transport efficiencies of log trucks. Stages 2 and 3 will no doubt come in time and make their contributions to those efficiencies, but I would argue that the highest priority now is to put funds into roads further out in the region and the hinterland of Albany.

Two allocations were made under the heading of sport and recreation. One allocation was to the Tingle Dale Tennis Club, which is very small but comprises a great group of people. I have played there a couple of times. It has received \$3 866 for a retaining wall. I am most pleased that it has received that allocation. The Walpole Country Club, which is situated in a picturesque part of Walpole, has a challenging golf course for those who play the game. The golf course has a wonderful vista looking over the Walpole inlet, but it is a very challenging course because of the karri forest next to the fairways. The club has received \$51 000 towards a synthetic surface for its bowling green.

The Water Corporation has also been allocated funding. The Albany bore field has received \$93 000 and the Albany waste water treatment plant and tree farm extension have received \$3 million. I recently toured the tree

farm and was most impressed with the way that people deal with waste water from the Albany waste water treatment plant. I think I have made reference to it in a previous address in this place when I talked about the trees there growing a bit too fast and not creating the necessary density. However, having inspected the tree farm and discussed it with people who use the trees, I have been told that they are some of the best trees around. There is obviously quite a synergy there between dealing with waste water and getting product from the chips created from the blue gum plantations. Albany waste water treatment plant will receive \$1.42 million, Porongurup waste water treatment plant will receive \$1 million and, of course, the Walpole waste water treatment plant will receive \$490 000 towards planning a new facility in the Walpole area. I support the consultative process that the Water Corporation is initiating in Walpole to get community support for whatever waste water treatment process it develops. It is important that strong links be maintained with the community on this matter. People, particularly those along the south coast, are very sensitive to environmental issues. It is important that they be fully aware of what happens in their towns. Hopefully, they will lend support to the direction the Water Corporation takes.

Infill sewerage is another issue that the National Party has raised on a number of occasions. The Little Grove community is to receive \$6.8 million during the coming financial year towards completing the infill sewerage program in that area. I have been raising the issue of infill sewerage for some time, to no avail, but it has been on the books now for a couple of years. I went to the budget breakfast in Albany. The Minister for Health, who was in attendance, gave a little handout about what the electorates of Stirling and Albany were receiving. It is interesting that the Little Grove sewerage works are actually in my electorate, but they show up in the electorate of Albany. I am sure that the member for Albany is doing a little bit of forward planning through this contribution to what well may be his new seat - or someone else's seat. Infill sewerage is also a significant issue for the communities of Denmark and Mt Barker. The member for Moore recently made reference to it and said that the lack of infill sewerage puts a hold on development and opportunities for subdivision. I am sure that in your electorate, Mr Acting Speaker (Dr S.C. Thomas), it is the same. Unless the infill sewerage program is in place, the growth of some of these areas will be stymied. We are certainly seeing this in some of the communities in my electorate.

Funds are going to some other great southern projects, including the Country High Schools Hostel Authority's Amity Hostel in Albany, which services the region. Having managed residential hostel facilities for a number of years, I understand the importance of good facilities and maintaining a home away from home for students who are geographically isolated. We see Albany as being a big drawcard for people from the outer regions. I ask for an extension.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Support for this facility is appropriate and necessary for people from the outer regions who are not able to access educational services to the level they require.

The waterfront development is supported, as is Albany Regional Hospital, which services the region. The Men's Resource Centre in Albany caters for men's mental health. I acknowledge Andrew Markovs and Chris Brampton, who are two people who have put a lot of their own time and energy into the centre. It has also got support from the government, which I find very pleasing.

What is missing in all this? Probably the number one issue in my electorate is roads. The issue is continually raised with me. I refer to Muirs Highway, Chester Pass Road and Hassell Highway, and support for some of the local governments' maintenance of regional roads. This morning the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure answered a Dorothy Dix question to do with roads. She mentioned the National Party's concern with what regions are receiving. She talked about the \$475 million of capital expenditure in this budget. She also talked about 60 or 67 per cent of road funding being allocated to the regions. If we go into that and expand the definition of regional areas - as I said at the beginning of my speech, some of the ground has moved a bit - we find an allocation to metropolitan roads of \$197 million, which includes what are loosely termed minor works. I am not sure, but some of that may well go into the regions in the form of black spot program funding and so on. In addition, \$277 million for regional roads has been committed for the next budget. I am assuming that the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure got the 67 per cent figure from those figures. However, on closer inspection we find that included in regional roads are those areas along the coastal strip that I talked about. For example, \$70 million is for the Perth-Bunbury highway. I would argue that it will not benefit many people in the regions. There is also mention of interstate highways, which I would argue are of more national than regional significance. Some \$18 million has been allocated for Great Eastern Highway and \$19 million for Caigna-Balladonia -

**Ms J.A. Radisich:** It is the wrong part of Great Eastern Highway.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** That is right.

If we take the 11 seats in the regions that I have talked about that are not in that coastal strip, that comes back to about \$137 million for roads in the region. That is \$137 million for roads for the agricultural community, and

that community is a significant contributor to the gross domestic product equivalent of the state, and for the resources industry in the mining and pastoral areas, which as we know is also a significant contributor to the GDP equivalent of the state. That is not a fair slice of the pie. We need to be very careful how we assess what is regional and what is not regional. The people in those areas, certainly the ones whom I represent, need extra funding for the roads in their area.

One matter that I have been raising for some time is the merits of building a Bunbury to Albany natural gas pipeline. Most of the other parts of the state have in place major natural gas pipeline infrastructure to service the various areas. I am talking in particular about the mid-west, the Pilbara, the goldfields and Bunbury. A Bunbury to Albany natural gas pipeline would be a natural extension of that infrastructure. I do not accept the argument that the economics of that pipeline infrastructure do not make it viable. If we were to apply the same argument to the Mandurah railway, that would not be viable either. Regional investment is all about putting funds into projects to attract investment. I raised this with the government prior to the budget: at the very least the government should put funds into securing the easement for such a pipeline. That would cost about \$5 million or \$6 million. I have found out since that that was actually a promise made by the Labor Party prior to the last election. Therefore, the Labor Party has breached one of its own promises. I understand that in the development of a natural gas pipeline, the securing of the easement generally takes the most time. Therefore, if the government secured the easement, at least that would be in place when the time came that that pipeline did become viable in the eyes of the Labor Party.

It may be only a small measure, but to me the regional investment fund is one measure of where the regions stand in this budget. Members may recall that that funding is \$80 million over four years. I think we are in the second year of that funding. It is interesting that this year, the regional investment fund has five components. One of those components is the regional infrastructure funding program. However, due to overcommitments last year, the government is not putting any funding into that program this year. That means local government have no access to funds from the regional infrastructure funding program. Local government authorities often use those funds to leverage federal funds for local infrastructure projects to assist in the development and growth of their towns. Likewise, there has been a cutback in the Western Australian regional initiatives scheme - known as WARIS - funding from \$1.25 million a year to \$800 000 a year. We asked a question on this matter in the other place. The funding for this scheme will probably be well and truly charged up just before the next election. However, this year the funding has been cut back. That means there is no opportunity in these boom times - as they have been described in this place - for smaller communities to access and leverage funds for projects that can contribute to the growth of their communities. Although it is also only a small measure, it is yet another measure of where the regions sit in this budget.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** Has your region benefited from the regional investment builders?

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** One of the biggest issues that the shires in my area are facing is the lack of land releases to enable them to deal with the growth of their communities. That was the reason for the matter of public interest that we moved today. Their capacity to deal with that issue depends largely on their ability to access these sorts of funds. I will use the example of Frankland. About \$180 million of private funds has been spent on vineyards and olive groves in Frankland. It is a wonderful growth area. I am really pleased the minister has gone to that area. I hope it was a bit of an eye-opener for her. I know the minister supports the things that are happening in that community. Indeed, the government is giving some support to housing development in that area. The Shire of Cranbrook is considering a housing development, with some planning support from the Great Southern Development Commission, and some indirect support from the government. So, yes, I acknowledge that there is some government support. However, there is a huge need in the community. The problem is that at this very time, when this state is in the thick of a boom, and when people want to take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves, the regional infrastructure funding has been cut right back, only to be boosted again in two years, just before the next election. We have been talking today about incentives for smaller communities. It is often very difficult for smaller communities to break the ice and get into these developments and into a position in which they can get some value from the growth that is occurring and the bush change that is taking place in these communities.

I will now refer to a couple of things in my portfolio area. I am the water resources spokesperson for the Nationals. I am concerned about the government's focus on the proposal to pump 45 gigalitres of water from the south west Yarragadee. I am concerned also about a Water Corporation report that has been produced by the very people who are putting up the proposal. I would have thought that would be quite damning from an environmental perspective. The National Party has taken the position that it does not support pumping 45 gigalitres from the Yarragadee to put onto Perth lawns. A greater focus could be directed towards waste water management. I used an example in a grievance last week in which a person in my electorate is being hit from all sides by regulation concerning what he is doing with water on his property. He has a Biomax system for effluent management that allows him to water his garden and save approximately 150 000 litres of water a year. Deep sewerage is being laid past his property and he has to connect to it. He has to pay for the connection

and start paying rates. He has to pay to decommission his Biomax system. He has already invested \$10 000 instead of \$4 000 towards putting that system in place. It will cost him an additional \$6 000 to \$8 000 and he is being hit by regulations that do not support a person who is trying to do the right thing in conserving water. Despite that, the government is looking to take 45 gigalitres of water from the Yarragadee to send to Perth to put on people's lawns. The National Party has some serious concerns about that.

I will speak very briefly on agriculture. The National Party will be raising some issues during the budget estimates. One key issue is a concern about the government not looking at the moratorium on genetically modified organisms. Indeed, the government should look at lifting the moratorium on non-food crops. I made a call recently to the government to consider lifting the moratorium on wheat. A very salt-tolerant GM wheat has been trialled in Corrigin; it was grown in highly saline soil. The wheat produced a 25 per cent increase in yield compared with other types of wheat grown in similar soils. There is a capacity to use that wheat to produce ethanol, which could go into the fuel tanks of our cars. That should not be of concern to someone who might have an issue with the perceived health and safety issues surrounding genetically modified products. Indeed, it is possible to put a gene into the wheat to make it red. That means that if it contaminates another grain it is very easy to detect. At the very least the government could come to the table and have a discussion to see whether there are real synergies between GM technology in the wheatbelt and saline soils and the revegetation of the soils. It could be another income source for farmers, who are suffering a cost-price squeeze at the moment. It could also be an opportunity to support our biofuels industry, which, at the moment, is fledgling but will hopefully soon be thriving.

I am also very pleased that the government supports the inquiry into natural disaster relief. I have already received a letter from the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, which has outlined to me its terms of reference and prompted me to advise anybody who would like to make a contribution to its inquiry.

The electorate of Stirling has some great communities. The Walpole community recently opened its community health facility. It was a huge effort from a very small community to get a state-of-the-art facility. The Denmark community is working towards a visitors centre, which will focus on tourism in the town. The Mt Barker community has opened a new set of shire offices. These offices have changed the face of Mt Barker. They are the jewel in the crown of the main street development. The Cranbrook-Frankland community is working towards opening a community centre very soon. Although the community is a small one, the centre will prove to be a great facility. There are some wonderful things happening in the regions, and the Nationals do not believe that this budget fully supports what people in the regions are trying to achieve.

**MR G.M. CASTRILLI (Bunbury)** [6.58 pm]: There are two items in the budget about which I am particularly happy. One is the funding of the incontinence subsidy program and the other is the four-year recurrent funding for the child sexual abuse counselling service for Bunbury and the south west. They are two areas in which I have been working closely for the past 12 months since I was elected. I know of many people who have suffered unnecessarily due to a lack of service and funding. Last week the Disability Services Commission advised me that the incontinence program would be operational from 1 July 2006. However, I was advised yesterday that the program will not be operational until 1 January 2007. How the program is to be administered is still to be worked out. I hope that the department is able to learn from other states, such as Queensland, which has operated a successful and user-friendly program for many years, to ensure that the sufferers are not made to wait any longer.

**Ms M.M. Quirk:** The court government abolished it.

**Mr G.M. CASTRILLI:** I just said I was happy that it was brought in.

**Ms M.M. Quirk:** Thank you for those gracious comments. Do you want it done properly or quickly?

**Mr G.M. CASTRILLI:** The minister announced, with a big song and dance, that it would be brought in on 1 July. I was advised only yesterday by the department that it will not be brought in until 1 January. I hope the government takes advice from a state such as Queensland, which is doing it very well.

**Ms M.M. Quirk:** Excellent; thank you.

**Mr G.M. CASTRILLI:** I am pleased that \$340 000 has been allocated over four years to the counselling service for child abuse victims. I thank the Minister for Community Development for the allocation in the budget of funds to this service. I explained to the minister in a grievance that the counselling service was facing yet another year of uncertainty. It was established as a pilot program in August 2004. The funding for this program came from the fund established by the Criminal Property Confiscation Act. Recurrent funding is now in place and it gives the service stability and the service providers the ability to confidently accept referrals and assist traumatised children.

When the Minister for Peel and the South West came to Bunbury earlier this year I thought I had a fight on my hands. This new minister was telling the people of Bunbury how important they were to the government and that their interests would be looked after. However, the budget indicates that nothing much has changed. Some

Perth politicians cannot take their minds beyond their own backyard. The member for South Perth is an exception. The state's major service centre in the south west has been somewhat betrayed and abandoned. The Minister for Peel and the South West does have the interests of the south west at heart, but he will go prematurely grey trying to get the Perth-centric cabinet ministers to think beyond the metropolitan area.

How many times in the past few weeks has a minister regurgitated the message that Western Australia produces 30 per cent of Australia's export wealth, it is one-third the size of the country and it comprises 10 per cent of the Australian population yet it receives only 7.6 per cent of the federal government's distribution of road funding?

**Mr T.R. Sprigg:** It is 9.8 per cent now.

**Mr G.M. CASTRILLI:** It has gone up. The government often refers to the way that Canberra treats this state. However, this government treats regional Western Australia in exactly the same way. I understand that 80 per cent of the state's wealth comes from regional Western Australia. How much of that goes back to regional WA? I suspect that it is not much. The south west cannot compete with the export earners such as the North West Shelf and the Pilbara iron ore projects, but it has a \$6.8 billion economy.

According to the *Budget Overview* the south west receives \$133.5 million of the state's distribution funds. Almost 200 000 Western Australians reside in the south west and that number is growing rapidly. The government continues to view everything from a Perth perspective. It refuses to acknowledge the substantial growth that is occurring outside the metropolitan area and the need for funds to be directed to regional Western Australia. This government is sick of getting less from Canberra than it would like, but I pass on the message to this government that the voters of the south west are sick and tired of being ignored by it.

On Thursday afternoon, after I had been given my pack of budget documents, I was hoping that the local media had been leaked the wrong information and that surely the government would not yet again abandon Bunbury and the south west. I scanned the budget papers looking for the signs that the government had taken its responsibilities seriously and was running the state effectively and fairly. Again and again, the government failed. I kept thumbing through the budget papers hoping it would not be the case but, alas, not so.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** You had the wrong package!

**Mr G.M. CASTRILLI:** Yes, I was probably given the wrong package. I hope it was the wrong package so I can go back tomorrow and have another look. Maybe it was just a dream.

What government forces a single generation to pay off in one hit a piece of infrastructure that is expected to last 100 years? Most economists would tell us that it is far more efficient to debt-fund the program over the life of the project. The payoff was \$1.3 billion. What an amazing amount of money. All that money should be put into the health system and into programs to promote new industries in Western Australia.

What has the government done for Bunbury? It has insulted the city by ignoring the hundreds of millions of dollars required to be spent on infrastructure in the city so that it can reach its potential as the state's second capital city. We have been offered a paltry \$2 million and a few other scraps for new capital infrastructure. As a regional city of the south west, the infrastructure supports and is essential for the growth of the entire region. Did I expect the government to commit billions of dollars in one hit? Of course not. Did I expect strategies such as the outer harbour, the outer ring-road, the port access road and the infill sewerage program to be totally ignored? Once again, of course not. Where is the state government's strategic planning? The outer harbour development is laid down there. With the help of private enterprise, it could be a \$2 billion development with minimal cost to the government. Such a major project would bring wonderful benefits not just to Bunbury but to the south west and the state. The government made a big song and dance about it during the last election campaign, and rightly so. Where are the actions from the government to support its so-called intentions? In the *South Western Times* on 17 February 2005, the then Labor MP and member for Bunbury, Tony Dean, claimed that the project, which involved moving the industrial facilities at the outer harbour to the inner harbour in east Bunbury and releasing land for residential and tourism development, would not proceed under a coalition government. He promised that under Labor, the project would be completed. The newspaper stated -

“Labor is dead serious about this project and it will go ahead if we are re-elected,” Mr Dean said.

“You don't spend nearly \$1 million on a feasibility study if you are not serious.

As we know, the concept plans were drawn up. A total of \$750 000 was provided for a feasibility study. That feasibility study was supposed to occur in August 2005. Then it was delayed until Christmas 2005. Now it is May 2006 and we still do not have the findings of this study.

The government has learnt nothing from the disaster that plagued Mandurah. Anybody who has tried to travel along the southern extension of the metropolitan area in recent years would understand the frustration that the regular travellers have had to endure while the government vacillated over the upgrading of the highway to provide Mandurah with a working bypass. That is occurring. I think that is being repeated in a similar situation in Bunbury because the government does not have the vision to commit the funds to fix those bottlenecks, which

are a serious impediment to growth and safety. I challenge any minister to sit at the Eelup roundabout, the most dangerous roundabout in Western Australia. It is rated in the top three most dangerous roundabouts in Australia. Ministers should sit there for a few hours to recognise that there is a growing interaction of large trucks with urban traffic. It is a serious problem and it needs attention now. We need to construct the port access road and the Bunbury outer ring-road. To avoid the situation that has happened in Mandurah and to ensure that the region is an easily accessible destination, early construction of the port access road and the outer ring-road is vital.

There has been a demonstrated increase in the number of heavy haulage vehicles servicing the industrial needs of the south west. I have previously stated that there are about a thousand truck movements a day in the port alone, the bulk of which pass through urban areas and interact with urban traffic. The outer ring-road has been on the drawing board for 20 years. At this stage, I understand that the completion date is about 2031. All that has been allocated to the Bunbury Port Authority in the budget is \$4 million for dredging, and there are a few other bits and pieces. That activity occurs every few years to keep open the shipping channels. That is nothing new; that money comes from the port's own resources. What else did it get in the budget? I am not sure what it asked for, but I imagine that with all the talk of containerisation, increased woodchip exports and the proposed coal exports, a new berth would have to be constructed. That has been talked about for some time now, but nothing has happened, not even with the \$60 million that was promised by Premier Carpenter in his former role as Minister for Energy. That money was to form part of the rescue package for choosing gas over coal as the fuel for the base-load power station and to assist with the infrastructure for future coal exports. The ink was still wet on the letter we received from the Premier when he arrived to defend himself for why that money was not in the budget.

I made reference several weeks ago to the infill sewerage program and how the towns of the south west were fed up with the timetable for connecting to the main sewerage system being pushed out time and again. The latest timetable indicates that many towns will receive infill sewerage anything up to 15 years later than was originally promised. I noted in the 2005-06 budget papers that the budgeted amount for the infill sewerage program for the whole of the state was \$34.5 million. In 2006-07 the actual budget is \$30.6 million, which is \$4 million less than the amount allocated in the previous financial year. I was hoping that the amount in the budget would have at least increased because the infill sewerage program is of vital importance. We know the detrimental impacts that septic tank leaks have on ground water and aquifers. The activity on Bunbury's infill sewerage program is minimal at the moment, and there will be even less in the coming financial year. The program in Bunbury has been pushed out to 2018, and with this reduction in the budget, it could be pushed out even further. Towns have been experiencing environmental and town planning problems because of the lack of access to the main sewerage system. It is preventing the development of land. People now have to develop land of 2 000 square metres and above just so they can get some development in the town.

I turn now to education. I note that the education budget provides for a \$9.5 million upgrade to Newton Moore Senior High School. That has been promised. The budget papers indicate that last year's spend was to be \$4.1 million. This year's spend will be an additional \$4 million. I thought that was a bit strange, because I had not noticed any activity at the school and could not recall any construction taking place, so I rang the school. I was told that no work had been carried out and only the architects had been met. I wonder what has happened to the program and how this will affect the budget and the state's financial position. I looked at the completed works schedule and, according to the budget papers, the works on the library and administration centre at Bunbury Senior High School have been completed and there is no money in this year's budget. Again, not one sod of soil has been turned, not one brick has been laid and not one meeting has been held with the architects. According to the budget papers, the hydrotherapy pool at the College Row School has been completed, yet work has not even begun. These projects will cost \$1.5 million each. Where has the \$3 million gone? There is nothing in the 2006-07 budget for these projects. Will the Treasurer guarantee that these projects will continue to be funded this year, and where from, given that no money has been allocated in the budget? How many more budget items are in the same state? How many more programs and projects have not been completed or are behind schedule? How has this been accounted for in the budget papers, which show incorrect information? How will this affect the budget and the state's financial position? I hope the Treasurer has an explanation for this.

I estimate that more than 80 per cent of the revenues of Western Australia are generated in regional WA. The government must abandon its one-city policy and do more to create self-sustaining centres outside the metropolitan area. The Minister for Peel and the South West should send the message to Bunbury that it can become what Newcastle is to Sydney. I cannot agree more with that statement, but it will take a coalition government to achieve it. Since it came to power in 2001, this government has consistently shown that it has neither the vision nor the will to make that transformation.

While I am on the topic of lack of vision, I will consider the Yarragadee proposal. The south west is united in its opposition to the Yarragadee proposal. It is now getting outside support for its opposition, despite the best efforts of the Water Corporation to stifle and refute any discussions other than that conducted through its own

research. I expect that all members read the article in *The West Australian* on 15 May regarding the independent reports of the Yarragadee. A few points are worth restating. The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation water economist, Donna Brennan, has refuted the Water Corporation's economic claim that the 45 gegalitres of water taken from the Yarragadee would have a better economic benefit in the metropolitan area than in the south west.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr G.M. CASTRILLI:** The report found that the Water Corporation claimed a \$4.5 billion net public benefit to Western Australia if the water went to Perth compared with a \$1 billion net public benefit if it was used in the south west. Donna Brennan's independent research found that if the project began on the proposed start-up date of 2009, Perth would receive a \$39 million benefit. However, by 2013 the strong growth of the south west would have reversed the situation, with a slight net gain if the water stayed in the south west. By 2020 the state would be enjoying an \$18 million benefit if the water stayed in the south west rather than if it went to Perth to give the green lawns extra sparkle.

Aqwest's report on the Yarragadee found it to be an environmental disaster. The Water Corporation must take a step backwards and remove itself from the Yarragadee debate. It is appropriate for it to make a submission to the decision makers such as the Environmental Protection Authority, but it is far from appropriate for the Water Corporation to appoint itself as the spokesman and expert on all things Yarragadee when it has an obvious conflict of interest in the requirements of the Yarragadee.

The government's budget refers to capital expenditure. Members know that all the revenue and expenditure, including capital works expenditure from Aqwest, is derived from its own resources. All of its income and expenses are derived from the people of Bunbury only. I make this point very clear: when the Bunbury Water Board was split from the Bunbury city council in 1997 to become an independent water board called Aqwest, all the assets, cash reserves and staff were transferred to the new entity. I have raised some serious concerns during discussions about the Yarragadee and the possible implications that project might have on Bunbury's independent water board. What will happen if the drawing of water by Aqwest for the use of Bunbury people must cease because of the possibility that drawing 45 gegalitres of water to Perth causes saltwater intrusion into Bunbury and the water becomes too salty for use? What will happen if the government decides to cease the operations of Aqwest for any other reason and allows it to be incorporated into the Water Corporation? Will all the assets, including the cash reserves, be gobbled up by the government and put into the consolidated revenue fund? I certainly hope not. According to the water board's act, all the assets revert to the government. It would be criminal if that were to happen. All those assets have been accumulated with moneys derived from the people of Bunbury. I want an assurance from the government that if anything whatsoever happens, for any reason, all the assets, including the reserves, building land and infrastructure, will be handed back to the City of Bunbury for the benefit of the people of Bunbury. I ask the minister to give that guarantee. I assume that this would affect the Busselton Water Board, which is in a similar position.

I reiterate that the south west has a diversified \$6.8 billion economy. It utilises road, rail, sea and air for its transport needs. Where is the vision - the integrated strategy to combine all the transport elements to ensure the quickest path to economic development? I understand that the federal government has allocated \$15 million to work with the state to develop a better transport corridor from Perth to Bunbury. I hope that this government takes the opportunity to develop that integrated transport strategy for the south west and to develop the long-term strategy that is required. I can certainly assist with the start of this process by giving the government a copy of an integrated transport strategy that I launched in 1999.

Freight haulage is expected to increase significantly in the southern province. Road and rail freight is expected to nearly double from the 1995 figure of 27 million tonnes to 50 million tonnes in 2020. Two million tourists a year are expected to be attracted to the southern province. Population growth in the south west is expected to increase significantly. One does not have to be Einstein to work that out. We all know that. In the *Bunbury Herald* of Tuesday, 7 March 2006, the Minister for Peel and the South West was quoted as saying -

“It needs to have a vigorous approach by government, the government needs to provide vision and take with it local councils, people and businesses of the South West.”

The minister was talking about Bunbury. He went on to say that the surrounding towns were an important part of any structure, and the community would need to work closely with the government. I believe the minister also conceded then that the budget for the south west was not flash, and I think he said that it was not as rosy as it could be. There are no new major capital commitments from this government in this budget for Bunbury. The people know it, and they are extremely disappointed. Does the government care? It should. I do not think it does. It may during the election year. Maybe the government thinks like that because it has its one vote, one value policy locked away, and therefore it believes that it does not have to pay too much attention to regional Western Australia. However, I will give it another perspective. If the government truly believed in one vote, one value, and assessed the contribution to the state coffers that an investment in the south west would return, I

am sure that the government would triple the amount of investment it makes in the south west. Even if the government allocated the infrastructure expenditure in the budget of \$5.2 billion on a population basis, the south west would receive at least \$500 million. On any measure, I suggest that the allocation would be at least double what it is today.

**MR A.D. McRAE (Riverton - Parliamentary Secretary)** [7.22 pm]: It is a pleasure to be able to make a contribution to the budget debate in the Parliament of Western Australia at a time when Western Australia is experiencing probably one of its greatest ever booms. I remember that only about eight or nine weeks ago I was on my feet, and a member opposite interjected. The subject of debate was in fact the economic conditions in the state at present. The interjector asked whether I thought this was Western Australia's greatest ever time. I responded by saying that I could not be sure, because the only time that I thought might match it or possibly exceed it in relative terms would be the gold rushes of the 1890s. I think it is fair to say, with the growth figures in Western Australia, an economy that has grown at a rate that was unthought-of just five years ago and a state budget that is investing in our state at a rate that is now one-third greater than it was five years ago, that the signals are now becoming clear that this is indeed Western Australia's time. This is indeed just short of 180 years -

**Mr M. McGowan:** One hundred and seventy-seven.

**Mr A.D. McRAE:** In the 177 years since the establishment of the Swan River Colony -

**Mr T.K. Waldron:** Don't forget Albany was three years earlier.

**Mr A.D. McRAE:** The member for Wagin is absolutely right. That is why I was wondering about the 180 years. However, for the formal occupation of this colony for the purposes of settlement and economic and social development, 177 years is in fact the marker. Clear signals are emerging that Western Australia is experiencing a time unprecedented in the history of its community. The opportunity is ours to build the base for a degree of prosperity, sustainability and social equity that will be remarked on in future, when we will be given some credit as parliamentarians on all sides of this chamber for having managed this boom time well. "Building on the boom" is how the Treasurer characterised his release of the budget papers last week. When an economy is growing as fast, as substantially and in such diverse ways as the Western Australian economy, we can be excited about our opportunities. We also must temper that excitement with an eye to the future and an eye to our responsibility for establishing a basis for ongoing prosperity and sustainability. That is why I totally agree with the suggestion that this is a budget for not just today but also tomorrow. When we make infrastructure investments on the scale on which the Carpenter government is now making them, we are making an investment not for what will happen next year, because those circumstances are essentially already in the pipeline; the forward orders are in and the work is under way. We need good rains for our crops, good productivity in our mines, clever science in our biotechnology industries and good services in our hospitality industries, and all that economic growth will continue to drive us for the next year or so. We can say that with a reasonable degree of confidence. What we cannot be sure about, and for which the responsibility is ultimately at our fingertips and within our imaginations to secure, is what will happen in five years, 10 years and beyond that. When we are experiencing circumstances such as those we are experiencing now, the challenge is not to be excited about only these good circumstances; the real challenge for maturity in government is to see the investment being made for that sort of time scale.

As a matter of interest I contrast what we are doing with what the federal Treasurer's budget seeks to do. Our budget is a budget for both today and tomorrow, not just today. It is about securing the future for Western Australia. Peter Costello's budget is not for Australia's future; it is for Peter Costello's future. He has ignored the investment obligations and the productivity decline we are seeing now.

Several members interjected.

**Mr A.D. McRAE:** Peter Costello?

**Dr E. Constable:** Absolutely.

**Mr A.D. McRAE:** Given that members opposite are on the old superannuation scheme - I think both the member for Avon and the member for Churchlands voted for the new superannuation scheme; is that right?

**Mr M.W. Trenorden:** Absolutely not. I am one of the people who tried to keep you in a reasonable scheme.

**Mr A.D. McRAE:** The member for Avon voted against it; he is entitled to stay where he is.

**Dr E. Constable:** I can't remember how I voted.

**Mr A.D. McRAE:** The member for Churchlands cannot remember. I can imagine that those who have been here for a while are looking tidily at the Treasurer's largesse on superannuation. I can understand why the member for Churchlands said that Mr Costello is looking after her future.



The real challenge was not what I think was an easy splurging of a \$17 billion surplus on a money throw; the real challenge for the federal government was to make investments in infrastructure, skills development, schools and hospitals. One of the single great pressures being applied in Western Australia right now is pressure on health services. Not only the Western Australian government but also the Australian Medical Association is saying that the additional 400 doctor training places the federal government has funded out of its \$17 billion budget surplus are nowhere near enough; it is a pathetic number. Even as recently as today in *The West Australian* and *The Australian*, leaders in the medical fields are saying that it is a failure of policy to think that those additional 400 places will deal with the health needs of tomorrow. We cannot drive that. We have tried to convince them. I know the Minister for Health has gone repeatedly to meetings of the Ministerial Council of Health Ministers and put those arguments; I know that the universities involved in training in medicine have put those arguments; I know that the Australian vice-chancellors' committee has put that submission directly to the federal minister and the Ministerial Council of Health Ministers as well; and all to no avail. The best that we have seen has been an insubstantial and inadequate investment - a failure. There has been a failure to invest in productivity, a failure to invest in services to the community and a failure to invest in infrastructure. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has repeatedly exposed the federal government's failure to properly invest in infrastructure in the state that is driving Australia's economic boom. If members opposite can say that Australia is enjoying good economic times, it is also absolutely true to say that it is happening on the back of the boom in Western Australia. There is absolutely no doubt that the bulk of that boom is being transported on rail, put through ports, carried down our roads, and produced out of factories, laboratories and all the workplaces in Western Australia where the Western Australian government is the overwhelming investor in the infrastructure necessary to deliver that economic good. The federal government continues to fail to make that investment at an appropriate level, and it will reap the damage from that politically because Western Australian people will not be duded.

This budget builds on five previous budgets of the Labor government of Western Australia. When we came to government in 2001, Western Australia was technically in recession. I accept that state governments are not by themselves the architects of external economic conditions. It is therefore not fair to say that the Court government drove us into recession. That would not be a sustainable economic argument. However, it is true to say that it failed to read the signals in the years leading up to that recession and failed to adjust its economic policy to avert it as much as possible. It continued on a program of privatisation. One agenda we brought to government in 2001 was the end of privatisation. The people of Western Australia were fed up with it; it was not Labor Party policy; we opposed it; and we refused to embark on any more of it. We refused to continue with the failed privatisation policies of the previous government. That was a clear policy that attracted the attention of Western Australian voters; it certainly attracted votes to us. We also said that we would shift budget priorities from areas of spending, which we believed were not priorities, back into health, education, community safety and the environment - those four key areas - and we delivered them.

Let us look at what this budget does as a cumulative effort and task of the Labor government in Western Australia. Across the state in 2006-07 we will spend \$3.9 billion on health services. Near to my region the proposed Fiona Stanley hospital is actively being planned and designed. It will be a 1 200-bed hospital that will be the single largest tertiary hospital in Western Australia that will finally deliver the sort of quality teaching, research and health services to the southern suburbs that have been missing forever. Fremantle Hospital can no longer be expected to be remodelled, revamped, upgraded or patched up to deliver the kind of health services that we need in the twenty-first century. It is just simply physically not capable of being done on the Fremantle site. The Murdoch site for the Fiona Stanley hospital is sensational. The people in my district, indeed right across the south metro region, love it. They are very excited about the prospect and absolutely concur with our plan that it is the right strategic allocation of resources across the health system. There was also local controversy about what the health reforms would mean for Bentley Hospital. This year the government has committed \$1.5 million to upgrade Bentley Hospital. Day surgery and the mental health care facilities at that hospital will be retained, partly as a result of that health reform package, but significantly as a result of the local campaign that identified that the hospital was important and that it needed to be sustained and maintained. I supported that campaign, and I am delighted that that plan was included in the state government's budget.

The government is spending \$1.2 million just on capital works in the education system over the next four years. That is a radical reform. The government's changes to the school-leaving age were overwhelmingly supported right across the community. People recognise that students cannot leave school before 16 years of age and expect to have the cognitive knowledge and skills necessary to survive in the world of work, where thinking, problem-solving and communicating are the critical skills by which a person is measured as a successful and productive worker.

**Mr T.K. Waldron:** I agree with you, except you must make sure that you resource financially and people-wise, otherwise there will be severe issues in the country. If it is resourced, it will do really well; if it's not, there will be a problem.

**Mr A.D. McRAE:** I absolutely agree. Members of the government are urging that on and it is the task of the opposition, the National Party and the Independents to continue to challenge the government to make sure that the program is right. I absolutely agree. We would be blind to suggest that we could raise the school-leaving age without there being an impact on resource demand and services into schools. Inevitably, that will create demand. Some of the additional time that students will spend at school will not create much additional demand, because the maximum school-leaving age also allows for students who do not want to do tertiary entrance examination subjects in year 12 because they are much more focused on vocational education and training. For the first time in Western Australia's history - this is also groundbreaking in Australian terms - they will have the capacity to complete a certificate level II or the first two years of an apprenticeship at school. I do not think that we have fully comprehended the effect of that reform. It will mean that more young people will feel as though school is meaningful, that the combination of school and training will deliver something to their lives and that the process of learning technical, cognitive, literacy and numeracy skills is relevant to their personal objectives, ambitions and visions. If we can get those things right - I think we are on the right track - we will change the way young people enter the world of work. They will be more confident, more prepared, more capable and, ultimately, more flexible. As we moved from the twentieth century to the twenty-first century, the world of work became much more flexible. Whereas people in my father's generation typically had one or maybe two careers in their life time, labour market research now suggests that young people leaving school today will have between five and nine significantly different careers during the course of their working lives. That exemplifies how those students, more than previous generations, will need to have the capacity to deal with change at a personal level. The changes that we are making are vital to that.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr A.D. McRAE:** I will touch on what is happening in the schools in my electorate. Without outlining the detail of some of the good work that is going on in the primary schools, I will briefly touch on the three major high schools that service my district; namely, Willetton Senior High School, Lynwood Senior High School and Rossmoyne Senior High School. The latter school is located in the electorate of Murdoch, although it is only about 100 metres from the boundary of my electorate and the electorate of Murdoch. Even though it is located in the electorate of Murdoch, between 55 per cent and 60 per cent of the students who attend that school come from my district. I regard it as one of my schools. Over the next four years the government will spend more than \$10 million on those high schools, and more than \$15 million on all the state schools in my electorate, on refurbishments and upgrades. A \$2.5 million performing arts centre has just been completed at Rossmoyne Senior High School. It is a fantastic centre, well resourced and thoroughly enjoyed by the community. At Willetton Senior High School we will be rebuilding the arts centre and building a new basketball stadium. It is a basketball scholarship school, so that is a very important aspect of its curriculum and the built infrastructure of the school. We will also be upgrading the hospitality areas so that training for students doing vocational education certificates will be first-class. Lynwood Senior High School was one of eight schools identified as part of the building science in schools program, and is now in the planning and development stage of a \$1 million upgrade of its chemistry and physics centre. That kind of change is recognised, by not just the students but all members of the community, as direct investment that is not just about today, but is a real investment in the future. That is why people have given this budget a tick.

In the 2001 election campaign we also said that community safety would be one of our priorities. This budget increases the budget of WA Police by more than seven per cent, taking it to just under \$800 million a year. There will be 90 more police officers on the beat, and 40 more support staff will be put into police stations to release even more officers from desk duties to enable their transfer into the community, where people want to see them. This is a bit like the discussion that the member for Wagin and I had about resources for extending the school leaving age. Putting police officers out onto the street also demands more resources, which is why we have had to buy more cars and build new police stations. This budget plans for the construction of 21 new police stations over the next four years. That is an extraordinary investment in putting police out into the community to ensure that people have secure communities where they feel like they are sharing in the benefits of this boom.

I am sure every member can talk about this, but the direct effects of the community safety and anti-graffiti programs done in conjunction with local government have been very positive. There was a spate of racist graffiti in Willetton about 18 months ago. I contacted the local government authority and, within the space of a day, that graffiti, painted on a limestone wall, which is quite difficult to clean, was gone. A couple of different work teams had removed it within a day. That story has been repeated over the past 18 months, and I am delighted that this year's budget continues to give that priority to community safety. There is another interesting aspect to our anti-graffiti efforts, in that research is now showing a very strong correlation between repeat graffiti artists and later criminal activity. I am making a distinction here between those who carry out large-scale, colourful graffiti with artistic merit, and those who daub racist slogans or tags. Research shows very strong links between the latter group and ongoing lives of criminal involvement; that is, the people who are involved at a young age in that type of antisocial graffiti have a greater likelihood of becoming involved in criminal activity in adult life. It does not mean that everybody involved in graffiti will necessarily become a criminal, but it is an indicator of

potential later criminal behaviour. If we can get in and remove some of the incentive, which is to gloat about the tag, slogan or slander on the wall, and remove them as fast as possible, and if we get people developing in their lives so that they do not see it as something that gives them gratification, I think we have a chance to move them out of that cycle of antisocial behaviour on the way to some form of criminal behaviour. I support those vitally important investments in our community. They are an absolute right as part of the dividend from the major boom that the state is undergoing.

My community, like many others, has great pressure on its roads. People in the southern suburbs, particularly those in my electorate, are very much looking forward to the opening of the southern rail line as the new link in New MetroRail. The combination of road and public transport rail infrastructure has caused a considerable amount of debate. When we came to government in 2001, we made a promise that we would get on and complete the Roe Highway connection to the Kwinana Freeway. We completed Roe Highway stages 4, 5 and 6, and this year opened Roe Highway stage 7, connecting it to Kwinana Freeway. We completed all those four stages in the space of five years, after the highway had been stalled for more than 10 years. People in William Street, Beckenham, endured the flow out from Roe Highway onto their street for 10 years while nobody took any action; indeed, the member for Bassendean, who was then the member for Roleystone - an electorate which now covers much of Serpentine-Jarrahdale - made it one of his election pledges: he said that if we did not move the highway out of William Street, Beckenham, in the space of a couple of years, he would resign from this place.

**Mr M.P. Whitely:** Just as Tom Price Road is the Speaker's route, Roe Highway is my route.

**Mr A.D. McRAE:** That is right. I think we made it by November of that year.

**Mr M.P. Whitely:** We made it with a month to spare.

**Mr A.D. McRAE:** That last month or so was a bit of a sweat, because a couple of heavy rainfalls in September and October had the member for Bassendean thinking that maybe he should have said April or May of the following year. Anyway, it was done, and it was a great achievement. The Liberal Party in particular is now saying that we must build Roe Highway stage 8 and the Fremantle eastern bypass. The Liberals have missed the point completely. The reform of freight movement in the southern suburbs will not occur by building more roads. We needed to connect Roe Highway to the Kwinana Freeway, because it would create a cross-city connection of Kwinana Freeway, Roe Highway, Tonkin Highway, Great Eastern Highway and Great Northern Highway. All those roads are now linked as a network. Prior to that achievement, they were not. It was the essential link identified under the Roads of National Importance funding program. This government completed that link when nobody else did. To change freight movement substantially, we must shift heavy freight onto rail. We must plan now, as this government is for the first time, for a new southern port that will prevent the load from continuing to build at Fremantle harbour. Those kinds of reforms will give real relief to the people in my electorate.

The rail stations at Bullcreek and Murdoch will also directly service my community. I have been very excited as I have watched those rail stations taking shape.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs J. Hughes):** Will members keep their deliberations down a tad?

**Mr A.D. McRAE:** Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker.

Those stations are now taking shape. The major earthworks for establishing the rail lines along the freeway were completed towards the end of last year and early this year, and all the imposing construction on the freeway moved inside that rail path on the railway line. Those train stations have been erected all of a sudden, almost like magic. They have come off the ground in the space of a month or so, and they are now looming four and five storeys high and reaching as far as the overpasses on Leach Highway and South Street. That will mean that people will be able to feed straight into these train stations and make the nine or 11-minute trip into the city on what will be one of the most modern and efficient public rail transport systems in the world. The investment that we are making now in that rail system will service the metropolitan region, and, indeed, people who come from regional Western Australia and move around the metropolitan region, for more than the next 100 years. The Western Australian government is very proud that it is making this kind of investment in the future of this state.

Another debate that has emerged in my electorate is with regard to the large truck deviation. We got the timing slightly wrong, because we said the deviation would be completed and the truck ban implemented by the end of this year; however, that was always based on the completion of both the train line and the Roe 7 connection to the freeway. We have completed the second leg. The first leg is to get the train and the stations in operation. That is now due for the middle of next year. We will not be able to put the heavy freight truck deviation into place until that has been done. It is important to note that we are going ahead with the expenditure of more than \$10 million on the Orrong Road-Leach Highway interchange. We are fixing the feeders onto Roe Highway so that that truck deviation away from the southern suburbs, onto Roe Highway and through to the freeway can be implemented as soon as those two major projects have been completed. That was the precondition, and that is what we will deliver.

I want to mention also the South Street pedestrian overpass - which I notice the member for Murdoch graciously raised in this Parliament the other week. I was very happy that he would think that he needed to check on how the people in my electorate are doing. I will write to him and let him know that the pedestrian overpass plans will be going to the respective local councils next week. For the past four or five months we have been doing the survey work and the planning for that overpass. That will be under construction this year. The \$1.5 million eco-education centre that will service schools throughout my district will also begin construction this year.

I will finish by contrasting our investment in the future and in communities with what the federal government has done. According to reports in today's paper, the federal government has again failed to satisfy the demand for university places in Western Australia. Western Australia is again short by thousands of places on a per capita basis. On the basis of our entitlement per head of population, the federal government is short-changing us. It is time the federal government was held responsible for its actions on this matter. I again contrast our investment in the future of the people of Western Australia with the investment that Peter Costello has made in his own future. He will not get the ultimate prize, because the people of Australia will reject him. The people of Western Australia will certainly see through him.

**MR T.K. WALDRON (Wagin)** [7.53 pm]: I begin by congratulating the member for Greenough on his magnificent spoken rendition and adaptation of *American Pie*. It was really good. It was uplifting and very clever. It certainly made his point very well.

The first thing I do when I look at the budget is turn to the middle page of the *Budget Overview*. The first thing I noticed on that middle page was the headline "A Budget for All Western Australians". Although that is a nice claim, and I guess we could say that the overall expenditure has been increased, it is not a true comment. I believe the truth of that statement will come out when I speak tonight. For each of the past three budgets I have picked up this document and looked at what the great southern has been given in the budget. I cannot remember the exact amount, but about three years ago Albany got about six out of seven. Last year it got five out of six. This year it has got five out of eight. I want to make a point about that. The member for Albany is not present but I must say that I do not mind Albany getting the funds it is getting because Albany is a very important port that services my region. It is a very important town and it should be looked after; it should get the facilities it requires. However, the problem we see is, once again, the concentration of funds in the metropolitan area and large coastal centres. Inland country WA once again misses out. I want to be positive tonight but I have to make some points of fact. Perth is the capital city of this great state. It is important that Perth has the great facilities it has, such as hospitals etc. Although I am a country member of Parliament I recognise that Perth is the capital. I like Perth, and people want services in Perth. People now refer to the "surplus train"; therein lies the big inequity. The member for Merredin, the Leader of the National Party, said in his speech last night that he does not want to create a city-country divide. I do not want to do that either because we are all one state. The problem is that, over the past few years -

**Mr M. McGowan:** You do not want to, but you will.

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** A person cannot help it. I wish I did not have to. I am not saying that this government does not give things to country WA. However, when we hear the government refer to country WA, most of the time it is referring to Albany, Bunbury or Geraldton. Those are important towns and they should receive resources but it should not be at the expense of what is happening inland. Inland country WA is just as important. The country ports would not exist if it were not for the produce from inland country WA. That is an important point, particularly when we see the amount of money being spent on the railway. An amount of \$1.3 billion is being spent, which represents 65 per cent of the surplus. That is inequitable and unfair. It is an insult to people in country WA. We know that not all wealth production comes from Perth, and no-one expects that. The great bulk of the surplus has been generated mainly from regional Western Australia. Had the government said that it was going to pay 15 per cent, rather than 65 per cent, of the surplus towards the railway, that would have been acceptable. The rest of the surplus could have been spent on other things in Perth and the large coastal towns, as well as essential things for inland country WA. The member for Riverton talked about the federal government and the fact that voters would not forget. I do not think that they will forget this either. However, I want to remain positive.

I will now speak about the Wagin electorate and acknowledge the good things going on. First of all, the Wagin and Bridgetown Fire Stations will receive some funding. An amount of \$11.7 million has been allocated for the Bridgetown bypass. The budget refers to the family car registration rebate, which is \$35 for each car. In addition, there is a 10 per cent rebate on third party car insurance, which is a small respite. That is about it for the electorate. I know that there will be some other little bits that we will find and there may be some overall benefits. However, it is a pretty poor result if a person happens to live in the Wagin electorate. That is a plain fact.

We notice that there is increased spending on health and education as well as other areas. Over the estimates period I want to see exactly where it all goes because that is the issue for country WA. When that is related to one vote, one value and the electoral redistribution, it makes one fear for what will happen in the future.

On a positive note I will mention BushChange. It is a movement that is gaining momentum in country towns, particularly in my region westwards from Great Southern Highway. There is an influx of new people to the region. There is population growth and housing problems in Katanning, Wagin, Bridgetown and Narrogin. There is population growth from people of different backgrounds and ages; more families are moving in. That is fantastic. However, governments must make sure that they recognise that and provide appropriate facilities.

I will outline the needs in my electorate and I will kick off with education. Education is getting a strong run in budget reply speeches and that is a good thing. Several members have spoken about education in this Parliament today. After the last election, the then Premier, Geoff Gallop, said that education was important and would be a focus for this government. I acknowledge that the education budget has increased this financial year from \$2.92 billion to \$3.26 billion and comprises 26 per cent of the budget. Although that is excellent, the problem arises with where that money is applied.

Last financial year \$1 million was allocated to the design and technology area at the Narrogin school. It is still a work in progress and the funds from last financial year have been carried forward to this financial year. I acknowledge that, because it is excellent. The maintenance of schools in my electorate has been poor over the past few years. Maintenance budgets in the Narrogin electorate and the member for Avon's electorate have been slashed over the past couple of years and the condition of those schools is deteriorating. A large allocation of funding is required to ensure that these schools do not fall into a state of disrepair. It is like the farmer who does no work to his fences: in 15 or 20 years he has a huge problem. That is what is happening in my electorate with schools. I warn the government that the maintenance of those schools needs urgent attention.

Earlier this year I put a proposal to the Minister for Education and Training that would utilise district high schools. The attendance rate at those schools has decreased. The local district high school in Pingelly, in the member for Avon's electorate, is no longer operating. However, those schools have fine facilities. The increase in the school leaving age provides an opportunity to utilise those schools for special projects for years 11 and 12; for example, vocational education, special traineeships and apprenticeships. I am pleased that the minister has taken my suggestion on board and I will be meeting someone from the education department shortly to progress that further. It is a positive way to go.

I refer now to the Narrogin Agricultural College in the context of the increase in the school leaving age from 16 to 17 years. The agricultural colleges are doing a fantastic job. Students who graduate from agricultural colleges are going into employment. We talk about vocational education and what can be done to provide education to get people ready to take up employment. The agricultural colleges have taken on that role and are doing it brilliantly. As a result, those colleges are full and with the rise in the school leaving age, more students will want to attend them. The boarding areas at Narrogin Agricultural College desperately need an upgrade. A large number of females are now attending the college and have been moved into what were the male boarding facilities to ensure that they have reasonable amenity. The facilities for the guys are not up to scratch. Actually, there are occupational health problems at Narrogin Agricultural College. An allocation to upgrade the boarding facilities was not forthcoming in this budget and I implore the government to give this consideration next year; otherwise, it will be confronted with a huge problem. I understand that Minister Chance was visiting the college today and I hope he brings back a similar message.

The federal government is promoting technical education schools, which is a good move. It would be fantastic if the federal and state governments were to spend more money on expanding agricultural colleges. Consideration should also be given to promoting a link between agricultural colleges and TAFE. The battle over who does what continues. It is ridiculous when agricultural colleges, such as those in Denmark, Narrogin, Corrigin, Cunderdin, Morawa and Harvey, are doing such a great job, but do not work closely with TAFE colleges. Groups are looking into that aspect, and I support some boundaries and guidance being given towards achieving a closer relationship between agricultural and TAFE colleges.

Teacher shortages are evident in country WA, particularly at the start of the year and during the year when teachers leave and are not replaced. At Narrogin Senior High School, which has about 800 students, it is important to have the correct number of teachers to deliver the programs. Incentives to keep teachers in country schools are extremely important. The issue of teacher permanency rules is an old chestnut. Some teachers receive their permanency if they teach in schools that are hard to staff for two years. Teachers who teach in country WA for two years should be given their permanency. It would be an incentive to encourage teachers to teach at country schools. We also need an incentive to attract high school teachers. One incentive is better pay and special job opportunities.

Government Employees Housing Authority rentals are a problem for teachers. The rentals keep going up. People living in rural communities such as Wandering or Kukerin are paying rentals similar to those paid in Narrogin or Northam, which is completely inappropriate. GEHA and the Department of Education have to address that issue. The staffing formulas in our district high schools also need to be looked at. There are reasons for staffing formulas. Those formulas need to be broadened. We also need to make sure that we have the appropriate teachers in our senior high schools, particularly the big inland senior high schools such as those in

Merredin, Northam and Narrogin. The other point I want to raise concerns professional development for teachers. We need to have more of that in country WA. There is a move towards it but it is costly for the schools to send teachers to Perth. There are people in country WA who can carry out that professional development and do it extremely well. The member for Greenough touched on the issue of year 7 classes in a middle school. That proposal will have a drastic effect on many country schools. He covered that issue well.

I will move on to health, which is also very important. Twenty-four per cent of the budget has been allocated to health. A concentration of funds has been directed to the major Perth hospitals. I do not mind that so much because we need those major hospitals, but we must ensure that we provide services to country WA. I was in Halls Creek recently, and I went through the new hospital last year. It is fantastic. Moora is getting a new hospital, which is great, but a lot more hospitals need attention. With the downgrading of a lot of our smaller hospitals, the Narrogin hospital has become more and more important. It is a magnificent hospital. It was upgraded under the former government but the final stage was never completed. While the hospital still runs well and delivers a fantastic service, it would run a heck of a lot better if the final stage were completed. We have been talking about this. I got some encouragement from the Minister for Health that it may be forthcoming but it has not happened at this stage. It was designed for the nurses so that their stations were central, enabling them to service the whole hospital. Without that last section, it does not quite work as it should. It has become a very, very important country hospital. I welcome the specialist services plan, but it mainly applies to the major coastal centres. It is good to see some extra specialists going to Merredin.

While on health, I want to mention government dental clinics. We do not have government dental clinics in inland country WA. The benefits of dental clinics to people with health cards are fantastic. People in my area cannot access these clinics. They are paying more but they are not getting the service that they should get. They have to go to private dentists. Rebates apply but there are some treatments that cannot be done under the rebate program, and the cost is higher to them. I do not think that is fair. I implore the health minister to look at blood collection in inland country WA. Last week I saw the Red Cross appealing for blood donations, but people in my region cannot donate blood because there is no mobile service or collection centre. Surely this is wrong in the twenty-first century.

**Mr M.W. Trenorden:** We're all blue bloods!

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** Yes. I also want to mention the mental health drug teams. They should be operating in our areas. The health ministers met the other day. They discussed many different things, including the decriminalisation of cannabis. The longer I am in this role and the longer I work with the mental health workers in my region, there is less doubt in my mind that there is a linkage between drug use and mental health issues. That is a big factor. I notice that the other health ministers called on WA and South Australia to rethink their policies on cannabis. I ask the government to rethink its policy on that issue. I know that the government thought its motives were good. However, I do not think its policy has worked out and it is certainly not working out in my area. Just this week I had to deal with a very unpleasant matter as a result of drugs, and I think that the government needs to rethink that policy. There is nothing wrong with people saying that they did this in good faith and they thought they were right but it has not worked out that way, so they will knock it on the head and go the other way. I think the government would get a lot of credit for that.

I pay tribute to Tim Shackleton, who has been the head of the health service in the wheatbelt. Tim has resigned and will move to the Royal Flying Doctor Service, which is great. He has done a wonderful job. He has certainly made a difference in the delivery of health services in my electorate and the wheatbelt region. He has taken people in our region with him in what he has tried to do. He has involved his staff, and we will certainly miss him.

I will not go into road funding in detail because of the time.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** I welcome the funding of \$11.7 million for the construction of the Bridgetown bypass. That is great; the bypass is needed. Someone will get hurt in the main street of Bridgetown if the bypass is not constructed. A couple of issues have arisen in my area in the past four years. They are not big-ticket items, but they keep getting ignored. That is what I was talking about at the beginning of my speech. There is a link-road project in Narrogin that ensures that big trucks go around Narrogin. The middle bit was completed by the previous government, but nothing more has been done. We have a road to nowhere. It is ridiculous, particularly now that new industries have been attracted to the region. I can recall saying early in my time in Parliament that we needed to attract new industries. We now have done that; we have a big hay industry, a piggery and a cattle lot feeding industry. We have the oil mallee plant, which is a bit shaky at the moment, but I will talk about that if I get time. The need for that road to be completed has increased dramatically. There are real safety issues. For the sake of \$2 million, that road should have been completed. The road from Wickepin to Jitarning and overtaking lanes on the road north of Kojonup and Williams are very important. Road safety includes the need for safe roads. I know that overtaking lanes are expensive and cannot all be built at once, but the overtaking lanes north of Kojonup and Williams are vital. I often travel along that road and it is impatience that causes a lot

of problems. If people know that there are overtaking lanes, they will show patience and not take risks that have dire results. The Jitarning to Wickepin road is used by school buses and mums and dads travelling between Kulin and Wickepin. There is an extremely narrow strip of bitumen, so that when hay trucks, which travel that road all the time, come along, people have to pull up and stop; that is all they can do. Those road projects do not require a lot of funding and I urge the government to ensure that they are completed.

I often talk about road safety. I have spoken to the Road Safety Council; in fact, I will run a road safety forum in my electorate shortly. One of the issues that concerns me - I have said this to Grant Dorrington - is that the Road Safety Council, although its intentions are great and I support a heck of a lot of things it does, is in real danger of losing community support for some of its proposals, but not all of them. It does a lot of good things and there are a lot of good people at the Road Safety Council. It seems to me that there is a great deal of emphasis on enforcement, penalties and punitive measures. I do not think there are enough positive proposals. I know that the Road Safety Council does not rate highly advanced driver training. I know it is only one part of road safety. I have done two driver training courses. The Rotary club and the police in Kojonup are working together on conducting advanced driver courses for every kid who gets his licence and wants to do the course. The cost of the course is subsidised. However, the Road Safety Council has said that it does not support these training courses because it does not think they are worthwhile. People in the community are trying to assist in training and they are getting shoved off. I will speak with Grant Dorrington about that issue, but there is a real concern with where the Road Safety Council may be going. That is why I will hold the road safety forum. I want to hear what the Road Safety Council has to say, but it also needs to hear what the people in the electorate of Wagin have to say.

I turn now to sport and recreation, which is pretty dear to my heart. I welcome the continuance of the community sporting and recreation facilities fund program. It is one area in which country WA does well. The allocation of community sport and recreation facilities funding is done very well. It is a very important matter because sport and recreation is a very important part of country living and country communities, as it is in the city. The benefits of sport and recreation are underestimated. We see how much money is spent on health and we talk about obesity, leadership and children with low self-esteem. Sport and recreation and team sports provide many positive benefits, and I support them. The Minister for Sport and Recreation is in the chamber.

We need to do more to provide support for the maintenance of pools. A program that was active a few years ago has dropped off. There are two or three public pools in my electorate, and they need major refurbishment, which is very costly. It is very important for country towns to have a pool. A committee I am involved with has looked at the pools in the north of the state. They are wonderful. The former minister who was responsible for them just walked in the chamber. They are wonderful things. Pools are important to country towns. The maintenance of pools puts a big yoke around the necks of local governments. Although the Shire of Boyup Brook could not get extra funding, it has upgraded its pool, and I congratulate it for doing that. An ongoing maintenance program is needed. I realise that the state government cannot fix all the pools, but it must assist local government and local communities because pools are an important part of those communities.

I welcome the allocation of funds in the budget for the club officers' program. It is a very good program and it is a positive initiative to come out of the budget.

Halls Creek has been prominent in Parliament lately. The member for Merredin and I visited Halls Creek recently. Part of my sporting background involved managing country football. At that time, the north west of the state was not affiliated with country football and I had to campaign to get it involved. Through the Aboriginal sport and recreation development group called the Garnduwa Sports Association, we were able to do that. Garnduwa has a fantastic network. There were issues between Garnduwa and the Department of Sport and Recreation in the early days, but they now work closely together. I was asked to go to Halls Creek because of the association I had with country football and the network of people I knew there. Some positive things will happen in Halls Creek regarding the provision of sport and recreation opportunities for young people. That is only part of the solution to the overall problem that Halls Creek is experiencing. However, I believe it is an important part and that it is a great start. I was greatly encouraged by the principal of the Halls Creek High School and the federal government's after-school program, which is about to start. The key has been getting the shire, the Department of Sport and Recreation and Garnduwa to work together. I congratulate the government and the department for providing funding for a full-time position to employ a lady called Leslie Wolfe, who will work with Garnduwa and the local council in not only Halls Creek, but also other Aboriginal communities. I believe that program will be of great benefit to those communities. I will watch that with great interest. I congratulate Alan Bishop and Jeff Davis from Garnduwa and also Peter McConnell, the CEO of the council. The time is right to make sure that we take advantage of the magnificent new pool and the new recreation centre. The state government must ensure that those facilities are resourced so that the communities can take advantage of it. It is a 15-year project. It will not happen overnight, no matter what we try to do. However, if we make a start on sport and recreation with the current generation, we will have a much better chance in the future. That is a very important initiative.

I will congratulate our Western Australian Commonwealth Games athletes because I have not had a chance to do that yet. They did a wonderful job representing the state. When I was up north last week, members from the Western Australian Commonwealth Games team were also there. They are great role models and give children something to aim for. I want to congratulate Bevan George from the men's hockey team for his ongoing success in that sport. He is a local Narrogin boy. I congratulate also young Chris Troode, who is originally from Willetton. Many members would remember his father Peter, who was an outstanding footballer for the South Fremantle Football Club. I worked with Peter for many years at the Western Australian Football Commission. I knew young Chris. He attended athletics as a 16 year-year-old, and as a 20-year-old he won a medal at the Commonwealth Games. It is a great story, and I congratulate them.

This week is National Volunteer Week. Today I heard the federal Treasurer, Peter Costello, talk about volunteers. He said that a government cannot deliver without volunteers. That is really true. In National Volunteer Week, I want to acknowledge the volunteers throughout Western Australia, both in the metropolitan area and in the country. The government must make sure that it continues to support and resource volunteers. It does not want to cut off its nose to spite its face. I believe National Volunteer Week is a good idea, because it puts emphasis on volunteers. I believe that more than 40 per cent of Australians are volunteers - in fact, I thought the figure was higher than that - and their worth to Australia is considered to be about \$42 billion. Therefore, it is a pretty important area.

I have about four minutes left in which to speak. I will touch briefly on the infill sewerage program, which is an issue I harp on about. We are still waiting for Kukerin and Boyup Brook to get infill sewerage. I will deal with Boyup Brook in particular. I know that someone from the Water Corporation will go there soon to look at the problems that the people are having with material from the septic systems leaching into the Blackwood River. It is really good that someone will visit there soon. I understand that I will be asked to go there on that day. I will keep the minister informed about that, because I worry about Boyup Brook in particular. When the people of Boyup Brook thought that they would get infill sewerage in 2001-02, the standards for septic systems in new and renovated houses were lowered. There is now leaching in that area. I will be interested in finding out the severity of it in the next few weeks, hopefully, and I will certainly let the minister know about that. Bearing in mind the budget surplus, infill sewerage should be installed in Boyup Brook in particular. I believe that the plan is to install infill sewerage in Kukerin fairly soon. I congratulate the minister for proceeding with the infill sewerage program in Tambellup, because that was also very important.

On the question of power and the disaggregation of Western Power, we will watch what happens with the four new networks. I know that the Treasurer was heavily involved in the pole replacement program. It is a good program, but we must make sure that we keep up with it, with the new insulators etc, if for no other reason than the risk of fire. We did not do too badly this year, but the fire situation continues to worry me.

Today I had the CEO of the oil mallee association in Narrogin meet me at Parliament House. We have managed to keep the plant going. Today we met with the minister, Hon Fran Logan. I thank him for meeting with the oil mallee people again today. I know that there will be support under the national action plan and from the South West Catchments Council. Although the government is saying that it has done enough, it is only a pilot plant and it has proved what it can and cannot do, and it now needs to be evaluated. However, to make it a commercial operation, it needs to run for a little longer. I draw this analogy: if the government got almost to the end of the Mandurah railway, and it had half a kilometre to go and needed something extra, it would not stop it. I believe that is the situation with the oil mallee plant.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** How much?

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** I do not think it needs a lot - probably only a few hundred thousand dollars. I think if the Treasurer talked to Hon Fran Logan, he would find that Western Power and the minister are starting to realise that that plant could be well worthwhile. All we need is a couple of months. I put that to the Treasurer.

I have one minute left. It is amazing how time flies when one is having fun, is it not?

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** It was very long for those of us listening.

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** I am sorry about that. I have been sitting here for a while listening to a few speeches myself, member for Cottesloe.

I conclude by saying that budgets are about priorities. It is obvious where the government's priorities are. The metropolitan area and the coastal strip are the priority. Although I understand that to a certain degree, I say to the government that it should not forget the inland areas, because they are very important to this state. I go back to what I said at the start: it should be a budget for all Western Australians. As time goes on over the next year and issues are raised, on behalf of my region I will call on ministers. I always get a good hearing from the ministers. I always try to raise projects that are reasonable and fair, and I will continue to do that.

**DR E. CONSTABLE (Churchlands)** [8.23 pm]: This is the sixteenth budget in which I have been involved. I have been in this place for a while. I must say that my reaction to this budget was, "Well, ho-hum; same song,



next verse.” There was not anything particularly sparkling or exciting about it, certainly from my point of view. However, one of the things that struck me when I started to glance through some of the dot points in some of the areas in which I am particularly interested was that quite often we see very poor strategic thinking and strategic planning in various portfolio areas. I will draw attention to one example tonight in education to show what I mean. Too often I believe we see short-term thinking and not good, long-term thinking. A front-page article in *The West Australian* last Wednesday covered a question asked by Hon Peter Collier in the upper house the day before. I will talk about that and develop it back through the budget papers of a few years ago. Hon Peter Collier asked the Minister for Education and Training the following question -

Will the minister confirm that the Western Australian Department of Education and Training is planning for all year 7 students to be part of secondary education in 2009?

The answer was -

The Department of Education and Training is investigating -

That is a very important word -

the feasibility of the possible relocation of year 7 students to secondary schooling rather than planning for any such change.

This issue has a long history and, as it turns out, it has a long history of discussion in this Parliament. The decision to change the school entry age was made in 1997, nearly 10 years ago, by the then minister, the member for Cottesloe. That decision was made before the first cohort of children was born. There was plenty of notice to enable planning for the future of those kids.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Some may have been conceived.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Some may have been conceived but they certainly had not been born. The change was implemented in 2001 when those children entered kindergarten. It was a change in school entry age by six months, so that, on average, they were six months older when entering school. Therefore, on average, they were six months older at school entry age than they were in previous years. At about the time that this decision was made, other very significant changes were made that impinged on early education. It amounted to more or less a package of changes. A full-time preprimary year was introduced, followed by every child being guaranteed four half-days or the equivalent, which means two full days, in kindergarten if their parents wished it. At about the same time, government kindergartens were established on government primary school sites where it was feasible, and if there was not enough land, they stayed off site. Generally speaking, they came on site. That package of change to early childhood education was hotly debated in the community, and we have reaped the benefits of those changes since.

Although there was a change in school entry age and children entering school now are older, they are actually receiving more schooling than they used to. The state has made an enormous investment in early childhood learning. The first cohort of children in that new age group is now in year 4, although it is a half-cohort because they were six months older when they entered primary school. Therefore, there are about 10 000 children in that first year and about 20 000 children will be in the cohort in subsequent years.

A number of consequences arise from this age change. Previously, the vast majority of children entering year 7 were 12 years of age. However, with this change, at least half the children will turn 13 in year 7. It is a major change from younger children to children well into their adolescence. Currently, almost all students turn 17 in year 12, but under the new regime, at least half will turn 18 when this cohort moves through. That means that those students will be able to go to hotels and drink alcohol. They will also be able to vote. It is quite possible that students in year 12 will have a beer at the pub with their teachers because they will be able to do that. Enormous social change is attached to these changes, as well as educational change. The change in school entry age has far-reaching consequences for schools. They are yet to be dealt with by the government and the Department of Education and Training. I find that incredible because it will be only about two and a half years before the first cohort will be in year 7. Consequences for the curriculum are being worked through, for which I give the department credit. There are consequences also for how children are taught, and that is also being considered. There are also consequences for how schools are organised, and I do not think enough is being done to deal with that issue. The central question is: will year 7 students remain in primary school or will year 7 become the first year of high school? That first cohort, as I said, is now in year 4. Therefore, at the beginning of 2009, less than three years away, those students will be entering year 7, and the decision still has not been made about where they will be best located for their own wellbeing and education.

I will go back to the 2002 estimates committees. This issue has been raised many times through questions in Parliament and certainly in the estimates committees. In 2002 a dot point in the budget papers highlighted a change to the school entry age. I raised a question about this and asked the minister, who is now the Premier -

What policy decisions have been made concerning the structure of schooling and schools for those children, half of whom will be 13 years of age when they reach year 7? Does the minister envisage that

those students will be part of the high school structure, or will they remain in the primary school structure? If they are to remain in the primary school structure, what modifications will need to be made to accommodate those children who are in early adolescence? What funding does the minister anticipate will be required to make the changes?

The main response from the minister was -

There is not yet a firm policy about how this matter will be dealt with. I have asked the department to provide some information about the anticipated effect in preparation for sensible, long-term planning.

In reply to that I said that it was not so much long-term planning but short-term, and at best medium-term, planning to be thinking about it in 2002. At that time the former minister enlightened the estimates committee with this statement -

At the time the decision to change the school starting age was made, -

That is about 1997 -

the intention was that the year 7 class would move into a high school-middle school environment. It was too early to make a firm decision about that, but that was the intention.

Therefore, early on there was the intention to move these students into high schools.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** Is that right?

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** He said it; it is in *Hansard*.

We then continued with quite a lot of across-chamber discussion about it, and I was fairly strong in my comments that I thought it was very poor planning to have not at that time made a decision, because -

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Can I interrupt for a second?

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Yes, of course.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** I just make the point that Ballajura and Kinross already do that.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Yes, I know.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** So in some of the new schools it had started to happen on a small scale.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Yes, but currently 38 schools are being built over a four-year period and this has not been taken into account; certainly not in the building of primary schools.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** That is right.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** My firm view is that it should have been more on the way in 2002. Finally, the minister said -

The member is correct - planning must be done to accommodate this group of students and all students thereafter in both a physical and pedagogical sense.

The minister, therefore, was well aware of the issues in 2002.

I now turn to the 2003 estimates committee - same song, next verse. Again a dot point covered this area, so it was regarded as a major issue to be dealt with. The dot point referred to a plan for management of the half-cohort. I asked -

What is involved in that plan? What aspects of children's education, planning, finance, capital works, teacher development and so on will be involved in that plan?

The minister answered -

I, like the member, think this is a significant issue.

We were therefore in agreement there. He then discussed Kinross, Ballajura and other issues, and said -

The plan is an initiative for the forthcoming year, not something that we have developed hitherto.

There was, therefore, a promise that in 2004 we might really get some news on this. Mr Albert, the Director General of Education, commented -

We are looking at what implications this will have for the curriculum and school structures, the staffing implications, where will it have the most impact and on what schools, and so on. That project has just started and we have a target date for completion of October-November this year.

Therefore, some heavy work was being done to get some strong information by October-November 2003. I made a comment about the issue and the minister said -

I agree, and I also agree with the corollary that we need to have leadership and direction in this area; it is not something we should leave to the market as an ad hoc arrangement.

The former Minister for Education and Training then went on to say -

We must make a decision about how we will manage this thing as a cohort, because there are important flow-ons for teacher-training, preparation and resourcing.

All the issues are recognised. He continued -

Those sorts of decisions have to be made, and the decision must ultimately come from the top,

That is good to know -

with advice obviously prepared and sought from the department and the community.

When I read that, I thought that the decision must come from the government because it has major implications, particularly budgetary implications. That was in 2003.

In 2004, there was no dot point; however, I tied it into the output and asked the same question again. The then Minister for Education and Training - it was the same minister - who is now the Premier, said -

... the issue that needs a lot of attention is what will happen when they get to years 6 and 7.

I said -

The crunch issue is that there will be many 13-year-olds in primary school. What is the plan for those kids? Will they stay in primary school?

We still do not have an answer because the same question was asked of the Minister for Education and Training last week by Hon Peter Collier. This is the worst possible strategic planning. There are two and a half years to go, and a decision has not been made. I suspect that no decision will be made. Rather, it will be a little bit of this and a little bit of that. There has been no real thinking about what is required for these students. Given that we have had a decade to get it right and that the intention was expressed earlier, the Department of Education and Training has not got its act together to advise the government. It has been putzing around with committees and little investigations for years and years. This is looming large. If the decision is that these students would receive the best education in high school, the cost will be huge. It is certainly not reflected in the forward estimates of the budget.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** I was going to ask you about that. What do you think about the cost-benefit analysis, or what the cost-benefit trade-off is?

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** My personal assessment is that those students would be better off in high school. Given that the Treasurer was involved with schools in the past, he would know that those students are young adolescents who are way beyond the culture of a primary school. They are ready to move onto high school. With the changes in years 11 and 12, we would do well to look at years 7, 8 and 9 as a package, and then years 10, 11 and 12. A lot of the year 11 and 12 work will have to start in year 10 if students are to be prepared at the beginning of the fourth term of year 12. A number of non-government schools that cater for K-12 have already decided that their year 7s will be placed into the secondary school.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** Even if there are benefits, they must be sufficient to justify the cost. I do not know what the cost will be.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** A policy decision about what is best should have been made years ago. As the Treasurer knows, I have my own views about this. However, if it is decided that, yes, those students should stay in primary schools, adjustments will need to be made to that area also. That would not be as expensive as moving the year 7 students into high schools, because if that happened, we would need more classrooms, more science labs and more cooking facilities for whatever that subject is called now.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** More duties other than teaching time.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Yes.

More teachers would be needed at both the secondary and primary levels. The shifts and changes must be thoroughly thought through. That is my whole point. This issue needed a lot of early strategic thinking and planning. However, that did not happen. It is time someone got on with the job. Maybe it is time that someone looked to see whether there are any key performance indicators for the senior executives of the Department of Education and Training and, if so, whether they are living up to them, because they have performed extremely badly on this issue.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Member for Churchlands, will you tell Parliament what is happening in the private school sector?

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I did. I said that a number of established non-government schools have already placed their year 7 students into high school.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Most of the private schools are in my electorate. I did a little survey of them about three months ago, and all except one will have year 7 in high school within two years.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** They will be well prepared for it. They have done their thinking. In a way, the policy decision is not all that hard to make. The hard part, and the expensive part, is the implementation of the decision. If that decision is made, there will not be enough time to implement it well, which is a pity. Maybe the decision will be made to move year 7 students to the high schools, and it will not be in 2009; it may have to be later. It is an issue that we have to look at, and that should be done in the context of all the other changes that are happening, particularly in years 11 and 12. I repeat what I said before. High schools would be better configured if we had years 7 to 9 and years 10 to 12. It is not necessarily middle schooling, but separate packages in the delivery of schooling.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** That was the logic behind the previous government's move to middle schooling in certain circumstances.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** That is right. I will give the former minister, now the Premier, his due. He saw the issue and he asked the Department of Education and Training to look into it. However, somewhere along the line that has not been delivered. It is still hanging around as a major issue that is not being dealt with.

I have covered most of the points I wanted to deal with, but I want to mention just one other issue that is of very great interest in my electorate. I asked the Minister for Tourism a question about this issue; that is, the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships to be held in Scarborough next year and for the following two years. For three years the championships will be held in Western Australia. I want to highlight two matters. I asked a question about the investment of \$1.8 million a year for three years from the tourism portfolio towards this event. So far, \$25 000 of the first \$1.8 million has been spent, which is not very much, given that the first event will be occurring on Scarborough Beach within 10 months. Interestingly, the money has been allocated to marketing, specifically a sales initiative to directly target competitor registrations and bookings for the inaugural Western Australian event. I was at the dinner at the Scarboro Surf Life Saving Club on Saturday night, and I asked about this amount. This should be an event that basically sells itself. We should not have to spend \$1.8 million to encourage people to come, because this is an event that has been held for a long time. In fact, next year is the centenary of surf-lifesaving in Australia. Every time the event is held it attracts 13 000 or 14 000 competitors, which is more than the Commonwealth Games attract. It is sold through the state organisations and the local clubs, so the \$1.8 million allocated by the state seemed a huge amount of money to be spending to market this event. I would like some further explanation at some point from the minister about why we need that.

At the dinner I mentioned, several people spoke very angrily about a brief ministerial statement made in this house on 4 April. I want to add to what the minister said. She informed the house that she had been over to the 2006 Australian Surf Life Saving Championships on the Gold Coast to participate in the official handover to Western Australia. That is fine; tourism ministers should do that sort of thing. However, she then went to great pains to acknowledge the member for Mindarie, formerly the member for Innaloo, for securing this event for Western Australia. I know that the member for Mindarie was involved in the process, but it is a bit of an exaggeration to say that he secured the event for Western Australia. The minister then went on to acknowledge Surf Life Saving Western Australia. Of course that organisation was the prime mover in the process. However, the other person who was a prime mover but was not mentioned - I will mention him tonight to correct the record - was the former mayor of the City of Stirling, Tony Vallelonga. Without Tony Vallelonga's enthusiasm and the money that the City of Stirling invested in this, I do not think we would have got these championships in Western Australia. It is really important to note that the minister, for whatever reason - maybe she was ill-informed - left out one of the most important people who spent an enormous amount of time and energy to make sure the event came to Scarborough. It will be a great event for Scarborough, the metropolitan area and Western Australia. However, a number of things must be done to enhance Scarborough for it to be a really great event. I hope that the Minister for Tourism is looking at things like making Scarborough a tourism precinct for the two weeks of the championships so that shops can stay open later and Scarborough can buzz during that period. I hope that she will at some time correct her record and note the great contribution of Tony Vallelonga to securing this event for Western Australia.

**MR J.H.D. DAY (Darling Range)** [8.46 pm]: The 2006-07 budget is notable for a number of reasons, probably none more so than the fact that there has been very substantial growth in the amount of revenue available to the government over the past two years and very substantial growth in the amount of expenditure by the government as a result of that revenue. In 2004-05 the revenue to the government was \$14.2 billion and in 2006-07 it is predicted to be \$16.5 billion, which is an increase of 16 per cent in two years. Expenditure in 2004-05 was \$13 billion and in 2006-07 it is expected to be \$15.2 billion, which is an increase of 17 per cent over those two years. I guess that can be looked at in a number of ways, but one interpretation is that the government is in office at a very fortunate time when the economy is strong and it is able to be in the rather luxurious position of

not having to scratch around for money for a whole range of programs, to the extent that governments need to when money is much tighter.

Many people would question whether good value for money is being achieved as a result of this very large growth in expenditure. The government's flagship project is, of course, the construction of the Perth-Mandurah rail line, which has increased in cost from the \$1.2 billion that the government initially estimated when it announced the change of route so that it would go over the Narrows Bridge and down the middle of the Kwinana Freeway through Como, Melville, Murdoch and so on. By the government's own admission, the increase is from at least \$400 million to an estimated current cost of about \$1.6 billion. I do not think that too many people in this state would seriously expect it to be maintained at \$1.6 billion. Certainly, most people would expect another \$100 million or \$200 million to be incurred in completing that project. Many people would question whether it is a good use of taxpayers' money; certainly, many people in my electorate would question whether it is when compared with the government's rather miserly decision to remove obstetrics from Kalamunda District Community Hospital. I will come back to that subject in a short time. As an aside, I make the observation that if the government really wanted to do something productive and worthwhile with the new rail project, it would extend the passenger rail network out past Midland station in the eastern suburbs to the Swan View-Stratton-Jane Brook area; that would benefit a large number of people in a rapidly growing area where I am sure there is a great need for good public transport services.

Of course, the rail line already extends into that area, with the standard gauge line to the eastern states. It seems to me that an extension of the passenger rail network towards the area that I have mentioned could be done for not a particularly large investment. Certainly, from a value for money point of view, there would be a better return than from the construction of a railway to Mandurah.

The government has made a big deal of the fact that it has decided, as a result of the surplus that it has achieved in 2005-06, to pay off all the debt associated with the Perth-Mandurah rail project. That is understandable to some extent. However, what is happening in reality is that the government is trying to make a good story out of one that is rather sour. As I have said, the government gave a strong commitment that the cost of the railway would be \$1.2 billion. That has blown out by at least \$400 million, and probably a lot more. The government is clearly rather embarrassed by that fact; therefore, it is trying to put a positive spin on it by arguing that it is paying off all the debt associated with that project so that the cost of constructing that railway will be lower than would otherwise be the case. Is that a good use of funds? Many people in this state would very much doubt that it is. The government cannot deny that a big opportunity cost is involved in constructing the railway to Mandurah in the way that it is. As we have debated on many occasions in this Parliament over the past four or five years, the previous government had proposed another route that would have benefited a greater number of people and would have been better value for money.

The government is in office at a very fortunate time, because it has available to it a large growth in revenue as a result of a number of factors. One of those factors is the greater than expected payments as a result of the introduction of the goods and services tax. The goods and services tax applies nationally, of course, but it is ironic that the introduction of that tax was resisted very strongly by the Labor Party. The Treasurer has a broad smile on his face at the moment. He is smiling at the irony of the fact that although Labor strongly opposed the introduction of a goods and services tax, it is now in office and is benefiting very much from that tax. The Treasurer is smiling. He probably will not want to admit that on the record in *Hansard*, but I will mention for the record that he is smiling. He clearly agrees with me. It would be difficult not to.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** I am wondering whether you think the introduction of the GST helped cost you the 2001 election.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I do not think it was the introduction of the GST itself. I think the business activity statements - the so called BAS statements - was one of the factors that produced a hostile environment for us in the 2001 election. Although that was associated with the GST, it was not the GST itself. I will accept that that was one of the factors. A range of other factors were also involved in the 2001 election, of course, and helped bring the Labor Party to government.

The second reason the government is doing so well from a revenue point of view is the large increase in revenue from conveyancing duty in this state. That is partly the result of the fact that the Labor Government has increased stamp duty, and partly the result of the significant increase in property values that has occurred over the past two years. The third reason is the substantial growth in royalties from our natural resources in this state, both mineral and petroleum, which has also occurred over the past two or three years. A further substantial increase in royalty income in Western Australia is predicted in 2006-07 to bring the amount to \$2.225 billion. The government clearly has available to it the benefit of all those large increases in revenue.

I made the comment in a speech in this chamber in March of this year that one important issue is that some of the funds that are being acquired in ever increasing amounts from royalties from our natural resources should be put aside in a perpetual investment fund so that some of the benefits that are available to us now from these non-

renewable resources in our large state will be available for people in this state in the long-term - indeed, in perpetuity. All of those who will follow us - our children, grandchildren and future generations - have the right to benefit from the substantial resources that we have available to us at the moment. Those resources will certainly not be there forever. All the resources are non-renewable; once they are dug up and exported they cannot be replaced. One day they will run out. That will obviously happen at different times. There are various amounts left of the different commodities that are mined in this state. Some will last a very long time and others will last a much shorter period. The important point is that they are not infinite; they will deplete and run out at certain times. We need to do more than is being done at the moment to ensure that some of the benefits are available in the long term. To that extent it is my strong view, as I mentioned in my comments in March, that we should be setting up an investment fund, a portfolio, for Western Australia so that there will be an income stream earned in perpetuity that will maintain and indeed grow the capital value of the fund. That will provide benefits for the long term. As I pointed out back in March, such a fund has been established in a number of jurisdictions around the world. There are three that I am particularly aware of. One is Alberta, which has a fund worth about \$13.5 billion in Canadian terms. An additional \$1 billion for the fund was provided in the province's budget, which was handed down only a few months ago. I have become aware of that since I made my previous comments. Alaska has a fund worth about \$45 billion in Australian dollar terms. Norway has a fund worth about \$280 billion in Australian dollar terms. Those are three examples of jurisdictions that have had, at various times, the foresight to put in place an arrangement that I believe needs to be put in place for Western Australia. This is an issue that should be pursued. To me, this is an important moral issue. We cannot simply continue to spend at the rate that we are without making some provision for the future, by which I mean perpetuity. We should not just build infrastructure that is available for the next 30 or 40 years, whether it is school buildings or police stations that will ultimately need replacing. It is a matter of ensuring that we have a strong income stream available from a strongly growing capital fund that we are in a good position to establish now. If I had my way, the government would have allocated at least \$500 million from its \$2 billion surplus from 2005-06 to start such a fund. There would also be a minimum of 10 per cent of royalties going into that fund on an annual basis. That would not have a dramatic impact on the state's finances now. Obviously, it would take some adjustment. It would ensure that we started a fund and that it would grow in the long term. If we continued to add funds at the rate of 10 per cent or more of royalties each year, we would find within a few years that we had a significant fund that would continue to grow and start providing an income stream of its own for the state. We need to establish a much stronger culture and mentality of putting something aside for the future, which is not being adequately done in Western Australia at the moment.

I will make some other comments based on one or two other observations I have made of the budget. They are particularly in connection with the water resources portfolio, for which I now have opposition responsibility. In particular, I refer to the infill sewerage program. The program was established in about 1994; certainly in the first term of the Court government. It was put in place to try to improve the environmental and social conditions of a lot of the older suburbs, particularly in the Perth metropolitan area, but also in rural towns in Western Australia. In many cases, the deep sewerage systems were not installed when the suburbs were originally established. The original value of the program was approximately \$900 million. Certainly in the time of the previous government, approximately \$80 million to \$90 million was spent on an annual basis on extending the sewerage system to a significant number of homes. The maximum expenditure that I am aware of was in 1998-99 when \$96 million was expended, and it enabled the sewerage system to be connected to an additional 10 181 homes. Unfortunately, since the Labor government came into office in 2001, there has been a continual decline in the amount of funds allocated to this very important project. In the current financial year there has been a reduction to \$34.4 million of expenditure on the infill sewerage program. That will enable 2 320 homes to be connected to deep sewerage as opposed to about 10 000 homes that were connected in 1998-99. Unfortunately, the story gets worse. In 2006-07 the government shows in its budget papers that there is a further reduction to \$30.6 million available for the infill sewerage program. It is a retrograde step, and there is no question about that.

I certainly do not consider my comments to be in conflict with my previous comments about the need to establish an investment fund for Western Australia. It is all about the government's priorities and where it chooses to spend the funds. It chooses big, flashy, expensive projects such as the railway line to Mandurah and the particular route it is following. In the meantime, it is ignoring the needs of people in older homes in this state, many in Labor electorates, who are putting up with substandard conditions. At the moment they have to deal with old septic tanks, and in many cases the leach drains are collapsing or the soil is no longer adequate to absorb the effluent that is leaching out of the leach drains. A prime example of that is in the Premier's electorate in Spearwood, to which I referred in question time two or three weeks ago. I visited that area with Hon Barbara Scott, member for the South Metropolitan Region, about four weeks ago, and the enormous problems experienced in that neighbourhood were very clear. The people there expected to have been connected to the infill sewerage program by now, but, unfortunately, that time frame has been substantially extended by the current Labor government. Therefore, people in the Premier's electorate, for example, have to put up with very substandard sewerage conditions.

The reduction in the funds allocated to the infill sewerage program by the Labor government is in dramatic contrast with the ever-increasing amount of revenue that the government is obtaining from the Water Corporation through the fees paid by residents of Western Australia for the provision of water, sewerage and drainage. Most people would be surprised to learn that the amount of payments by the Water Corporation to the government is expected in 2006-07 to be a massive \$547.7 million. The Water Corporation is expected to pay the government almost \$550 million in the next financial year. That will go into general revenue and represents an annual increase of about \$100 million over the past two years. It is in excess of \$10 million a week - an enormous amount of money. It is a miserly attitude by the government when it continues to reduce the amount of funds allocated for the infill sewerage program, so that people in electorates such as Willagee and others will continue to suffer and will have to wait much longer than they would have had to wait if the coalition government were still in office.

I mentioned earlier the Kalamunda District Community Hospital, which is in my electorate. It is a subject that I have raised in this Parliament on numerous occasions over the past five years. I do not need to re-cover all the issues that have been raised in those previous debates, except to make the observation that the \$5.5 million redevelopment of the hospital has been completed. Obviously, that is a positive thing and is the result of funding being allocated by the previous government in 2000. Finally, this government was dragged into completing its version of the design work for the redevelopment of that hospital, putting it out to tender and going ahead with construction. It was on hold for about three years during the first term of this current Labor government. It is extremely sad that the government has now removed obstetric services from the Kalamunda hospital.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** That will certainly result in the loss of expertise from both a medical and midwifery point of view in the hills area. It means that experienced obstetricians and midwives who have been providing services at Kalamunda will no longer be able to do so, certainly at that location, and they are quite likely to move away from the area. A very reasonable compromise was put to the government; that is, to maintain the provision of obstetrics at Kalamunda until the new hospital is built in Midland in 2011. That would have resulted in services continuing in Kalamunda for the next five years or so. It is important to note that the government has admitted that it will save only about \$500 000 a year as a result of this change, a very small saving indeed for the amount of pain and disappointment that has been caused in the hills area as a result of the unfortunate decision that it made. If that compromise had been accepted by the government, it would have meant that obstetrics would have transferred when a brand-new hospital was built in Midland in 2011, which, importantly, would have been a substantial degree closer to most of the residents of the Shire of Kalamunda than is currently the case with the Swan District Hospital. That very unfortunate decision of the government has now been put into effect, but it has certainly been to the great disappointment of just about everybody in my electorate. I make the observation that the priorities of residents of my electorate are very much down the list of priorities of the Labor government. If Darling Range was a marginal Labor seat, the Labor government would have taken our concerns a lot more seriously.

The other subject I will comment on briefly relates to the education portfolio. There was debate in this chamber earlier today about the outcomes-based approach to education. I heard comments from the members for Cottesloe and Churchlands on this aspect, and it was the subject of a question in question time from me to the Premier yesterday. I will not go over all the ground that has been previously covered, except to make two observations. Firstly, not all the changes that are being put in place are bad or ill-founded. There is some good theory behind what is being put in place. Equally, major concerns have been expressed by experienced, serious and responsible teachers in many parts of Western Australia who are not being adequately taken into account by the government. Those concerns include the fact that there is a lack of adequate syllabus material being provided or a lack of adequate content within whatever syllabus may exist within the OBE arrangement that is being put in place. Vague and confusing forms of assessment are being proposed, and there is a whole range of other concerns, not the least of which is the enormous workload being imposed on teachers as a result of the changes. The reality is that many teachers in Western Australia are very angry about what is being put in place, and in particular the way in which the OBE system is being implemented. If there had been a change of government at the last election in 2005, as a result of the concerns coming through me as shadow education minister in 2004, we would have had a major review of the curriculum framework, the overarching theory under which OBE is being implemented, to ascertain both the benefits and the disadvantages of its implementation up to the year 10 level, and to make whatever changes were necessary to get a much wider degree of acceptance of OBE and higher educational standards in years 11 and 12 than we are seeing at the moment.

I received a copy of a letter from a friend of mine who is a head of department at a government high school in a large country town in Western Australia. He asked me not to give his name because of the edict from the Director General of the Department of Education and Training late last week that any teachers who comment publicly about or, in particular, criticise outcomes-based education would suffer consequences. I think that is a very unfortunate directive that was given by the director general, because there should be some open and free

debate about the issue. It is unfortunate that it has had the effect of causing some teachers to be silent. He has asked me not to give his name, but I make the observation that he is known to both me and the Premier, as we all attended the University of Western Australia at the same time. He is also known to the Minister for Education and Training, as he taught at the same school as she did early in his career. In fact, he has written directly to her, so I trust that he will get a considered response. To help outline and put on the record some of the concerns of a teacher at the coalface, I will read some of his letter. Among other things, he says -

I write to you -

As I have said, the letter was written to the Minister for Education and Training -

today because of my concerns, specific and general, about the roll out of the New Courses of Study (NCoS) and the adoption of Outcomes Based Education in Western Australia.

Yesterday (April 13), I attended Day Two of NCoS for History. The experience was disappointing, if not sad. It left me more concerned than ever about the future for our students and our system . . .

The materials presented revealed a multi layered bureaucratic approach to the teaching of children that is almost incomprehensible to teachers, let alone children and their parents. What was offered up as the future of History could well be its death knell. I fear for Geography and Economics as well.

The lack of a clear syllabus of what is to be taught and learnt in the process of education will have far reaching consequences. Students will not gain the knowledge and skills that they will need as a basis for their tertiary education and Western Australian students will be placed at a considerable disadvantage nationally. (An examination of the clarity of the NSW Economics and History syllabus documents will reveal this immediately).

I am not opposed to the changing or updating of syllabus documents from time to time. This has to be done as new knowledge develops or as new skills are required. However, the changes to our Upper School syllabi as proposed in the NCoS are fundamentally flawed and our system . . . will be even further challenged because of them.

The problem that DET has created for itself is that the measures of success revolve around students attaining, and moving through the Levels until they reach the point of exit, the conclusion of Year 12. This places Levelling at the centre of the process of teaching whether the student is Year One or Year Twelve. The process is highly subjective, unwieldy and bureaucratic. After almost 7 to 10 years of operation in Primary and Lower Secondary, depending on where you are, there is still very little consensus about Level 'Fourness', 'Fiveness' and so on.

As an example, at the History NCoS yesterday twelve very experienced teachers of History could not agree on a level for a work sample. Levels Three to Seven for a piece of work were offered, all with valid reasons.

That letter was from somebody who has had at least 20 years of teaching experience and who, I have no doubt, is very well intentioned. He is not interested in making political points about this issue, but he certainly wants to see a better outcome to ensure higher standards of education for the benefit of children in Western Australia. From those comments, it is clear that there needs to be at least a deferral of the implementation of many of the courses that are expected to be put into effect in 2007. There needs to be a reconsideration of this, and experienced educators and others in the community need to be listened to a lot more to ensure that what is put in place will produce higher standards rather than lower standards in the school education system in this state. I very much encourage and urge the Minister for Education and Training and the government to listen seriously to those types of comments. Unfortunately, we have heard very little from the minister on this issue. She has been very reluctant to debate the issues on radio or in the wider public arena. She has adopted a very obstinate attitude to many of the concerns that have been expressed. That is simply not good enough, in my view. Any minister who deals with these issues must be in the public arena and must listen. If a minister believes that the government has a good case or that the government is implementing good policies appropriately, the minister must explain that to the community and try to persuade the community of its merits. However, we have seen very little of that from the current Minister for Education and Training. I hope that the minister and the government will undertake to listen more closely and that some of the concerns that have been expressed will be effectively responded to by the government.

**MR M.W. TRENORDEN (Avon)** [9.15 pm]: The Deputy Speaker must be the luckiest person in the state. I will spend my time on the budget address on the Sandakan death marches. Of all the issues that confront the state, I feel a great passion about the Sandakan death marches and the terrible stories thereof. Also, there is a substantial lack of knowledge of those events among Western Australians. I am curious to know how many Western Australians know about the Sandakan death marches and the terrible ordeal that 137 Western Australians, 2 000 other Australians and 500 British soldiers went through. Over the years I have taken the time



to walk the battlefields of Gettysburg, Cold Harbour, Richmond, Bull Run, the Wilderness and several others because it is a passion of mine. The passion is not about battle; it is man's endeavours that amaze me. However, I do not want to have that debate. I have been to places that Americans revere, such as Gettysburg, and I have been to Sandakan, where my heart went out to those Australian soldiers aged between 18 and 22 years who suffered through those terrible events. They were just lads who were captured in Singapore and were taken to Sandakan, which is where I spent Anzac Day this year.

I went on the Ben Hart memorial tour, which left Western Australia on 18 April, and I joined the tour on 21 April. I did not go to the initial events but I wish I had because I did not fully comprehend some aspects of the tour until I arrived in Borneo. I went as part of the Bakers Hill Primary School contingent. A Bakers Hill resident called Ben Hart was a commando in the landings in 1945, although he was not a part of the Sandakan experience. I will provide members with my summary of the events and I will then perhaps read from a book to provide more details. I will outline the three death marches. My father-in-law, Jim Horsley, who is the best man I have ever known, was in Borneo at the time of the landings. It is important to keep in mind that the forces that landed in west Borneo were all Australian. It involved the Australian Navy and Army; no British or Americans were involved. Another very outstanding Western Australian who has received significant recognition - although not enough - is Jack Sue. Jack Sue spends much of his time in his diving shop in Midland. He has written one book which I have but which I have not read yet. In fact, I bought seven books on the Sandakan and Borneo experiences. Jack is currently attempting to write another book. However, he is not in the best of health, and I really wish him well. I do not think very many Western Australians understand the enormous risks that Jack Sue took in Borneo. Perhaps I will have time to talk about that as I go through.

The story started in Singapore with the fall of Singapore. Some of the soldiers actually volunteered to go to Borneo. The reasoning was that Borneo was closer to Australia, and, if they were in Borneo, they would be more likely to be relieved in a successful campaign than they would be in some of the other places to which prisoners were being sent. Two lots went - some in 1942 and some in 1943. Perhaps to put this more accurately, I will read from a publication that I have with me. It is just a page, which will take me a little time to read, but at least it will provide more accuracy. It is headed "The Sandakan Death March" and is from a book titled *Horror in the East* by Laurence Rees, published by BBC Books in 2001. I will not read all of it, but I will start at the place at which I want to get the message across. Two thousand Australians and 500 English went to the Sandakan area. They were actually put on Berhala Island, which was a leper colony for many decades before the Second World War. When they got to Sandakan, the treatment was not all that bad in the early years, but it went down significantly. However, I will read from the book and get back to some of that. This is what happened towards the end of the process. To provide the picture, there were two and a half thousand soldiers. This is a direct quotation from the book -

By the beginning of 1945, only 1,900 prisoners were left alive at Sandakan. Allied bombing had rendered the airstrip unusable, -

The purpose of moving the soldiers to Sandakan was to build a Japanese airstrip. The reason for the Japanese taking Borneo was to get the high-quality crude oil in Borneo, as we all know, and the airstrip was there to protect the oilfields and also to be a link in the bombing raids by Japanese bombers. It continues -

and the prisoners were of no further use to the Japanese as forced labour. With Allied landings on Borneo anticipated at any moment, the Japanese decided to prevent the prisoners being liberated by working them to death, starving them, or murdering them in cold blood. Knowledge that they were losing the war caused the Japanese prison guards to intensify their brutality towards the prisoners.

In fact, many of the guards were Taiwanese, and many of the prisoners said that the Taiwanese guards were even more savage than the Japanese guards. It continues -

In late January 1945, the Japanese paraded the Australian prisoners to select porters for two of their battalions being relocated from Sandakan to the western coast of northern Borneo. Only 470 prisoners could be found who were thought to be fit enough to carry baggage and supplies.

Basically, what they carried from east Borneo to west Borneo was rice and munitions for the Japanese war effort. It continues -

This was to be the first of the Sandakan Death Marches, and would require a 120 mile (192 kilometre) trek by the Japanese troops and their forced prisoner of war labour through marshland, dense jungle, and then up the eastern slope of Mount Kimabula.

That is about 4 000 metres above sea level -

The journey would have tried severely the endurance of fit soldiers let alone weak, sick, and starving prisoners burdened with heavy loads. The Japanese guards were under instructions to kill any prisoners who collapsed or were too weak to continue the march, and they did so.

The trek was so arduous that even the Japanese found it exhausting, and they called a halt at the town of Ranau which is 100 miles . . . from Sandakan.

The full march did not take place. I will talk about Ranau later. The march was about 160 kilometres from Sandakan. It continues -

Only 190 of the Australian prisoners had survived the first death march.

That is 190 out of 470. It continues -

The bodies of the rest lay scattered along the track where they had collapsed and been murdered by their Japanese guards. Although the surviving prisoners were all sick, weak, and exhausted from the trek, the Japanese immediately set them to work building huts for the Japanese and a temporary camp for themselves on the outskirts of Ranau. Some of the exhausted prisoners were forced to carry heavy loads from the centre of Ranau to the camp. Some were forced to carry heavy barrels of water up a hill to the makeshift camp from a nearby stream. The prisoner's food ration was cut to only four ounces (100 grams) of rice a day.

The Japanese undertook a second death march on 29 May 1945 with 536 prisoners who could still stand on their feet. The Sandakan camp commander, Captain Takakura, assembled these prisoners outside the gate and then they set off towards Ranau in groups of about fifty with Japanese guards at the front, rear and sides of each group. The Japanese guards had been ordered to kill instantly any prisoner who collapsed from exhaustion or tried to escape. The main camp was set on fire behind them to destroy any evidence of its existence.

The second Sandakan Death March lasted for twenty-six days. Only 183 prisoners reached Ranau. The remaining 353 prisoners had either died on the march from a combination of starvation, sickness and exhaustion, or were killed by the Japanese guards because they were too weak to continue the trek. On their arrival at Ranau on 24 June 1945, the participants in the second death march found that only six prisoners from the 470 who had left Sandakan in January were still alive. Although weak and exhausted, the survivors of the second death march were then put to hard labour and the death toll soared.

About two hundred and fifty prisoners were left behind at Sandakan after the departure of the participants in the second death march. These prisoners were so ill that the Japanese initially intended to leave them at Sandakan to die of starvation. However, they decided to send another group of seventy-five on a third death march on 9 June 1945. This group was so weak and sick that none survived beyond 30 miles (50 kilometres). When each man collapsed, he was instantly killed by a Japanese guard. Of those seriously ill prisoners who were left at Sandakan, all were either murdered by the Japanese guards or died from starvation and sickness before the Japanese surrender on 15 August 1945.

Those dates are important because these terrible marches were in the last days of the Second World War, but I will talk about that later. It continues -

As a result of brutal treatment and a starvation diet, there were only thirty-eight prisoners left alive at Ranau on 1 August.

We should bear in mind that 15 August was the date on which the war ended. It continues -

They were too sick and feeble to work, and the senior Japanese officer at Ranau ordered that these survivors of the death marches be shot.

They were summarily shot. It continues -

At the time of the Japanese surrender on 15 August 1945, only six prisoners had survived the horrors of the Sandakan prisoner of war camp and the Sandakan Death Marches.

One of those prisoners died within a few days of escaping, so, in reality, only five soldiers survived. They were all Australians; no English survived. Two prisoners escaped into the jungle during the march and four escaped at the end of the march. Interestingly, at the end of the march one of the very brutal Taiwanese guards approached the soldiers and said, "Tomorrow morning you will be executed." Only four prisoners could muster the strength to escape, and they escaped during a tropical downpour that night. One died. None of those six people would have survived without the assistance of the locals; that is one of the sad stories I will talk about later. However, four had the strength to escape on that night, and they survived. They were found on a road by a local who took them to a farmer's hut and looked after them until the Allied troops arrived. That person is still alive today and still has not been recognised for doing that for those four Australians. Everyone knows what he did, but unlike the fuzzy wuzzies in Papua New Guinea and other places where people have been officially recognised for such help, the only recognition that person ever received was one thank-you letter. Why the Sandakan process is not better known is beyond me.

A total of 2 390 prisoners at the Sandakan camp were either murdered by the Japanese in cold blood or died because of starvation, sickness or overwork. When it became certain that Japan would have to surrender, extraordinary efforts were made to protect those responsible for Japan's atrocities, including the Emperor, by destroying all incriminating evidence. On 20 August - five days after the war finished - the senior Japanese officer in charge of prisoner of war and civilian internment camps ordered camp guards to destroy all incriminating evidence of atrocities and of brutal treatment of prisoners of war and civilians and advised guilty camp guards to transfer or flee. It took some weeks for the Allies to get to the Sandakan area. During the marches Jack Sue saw one marcher bringing in the soldiers at Ranau at the end of the march. He did not know why all that was happening, but one thing he has to live with is actually watching that terrible ordeal of fellow Australians. I cannot say enough for Jack Sue. As I said before, 137 Western Australians were involved. I intend to do some work and read about those people to find out where they came from. I understand that several brothers from Toodyay were lost, and I am told that of all the Western Australian towns that those 137 Western Australians came from, Toodyay was over-represented. There are a lot of stories that turn me cold, such as the story about the officer in charge, Matthews, who led the underground movement in the area, which included the locals. He was found out and taken further into Borneo and executed. In 1943 all the officers were taken away from the Sandakan camp.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr M.W. TRENORDEN:** All the officers were taken away because the Japanese thought that if they took out the leadership group, it might be easier to deal with the prisoners. There are many stories, as you would expect, Madam Deputy Speaker, of heroism. There was a radio built in the camp. There is an interesting story about a steamer that people can see when they visit the memorial now. At night the steamer used to drive a motor that drove an alternator that knocked out 110 volts of power to drive the lighting in the camp. However, the radio had to be kicked up to 118 volts to get it to work. At night the power was kicked up, but that was never discovered. The guards never noticed that the lights got brighter at a certain time at night. That was because the Australian soldiers had built themselves a radio and were listening in to the progress of the war. They could not successfully transmit but they were in touch with what was happening outside their own domain. Only recently a memorial park has been established. I have a brochure on it with me. The brochure has three flowers on the cover: one to represent the Australian and English soldiers who died there; one to represent the Malays who died there; and one to represent the Japanese who died there. However, I have to tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that there is still a lot of bitterness in and around Malaysia - or Malaya as it was then. Many families suffered horribly during the occupation. There were 1 000 people executed in the capital in an uprising; the Japanese just brutally put them down. The difference was that when a soldier put his neck on the line by escaping under the wire, as some of them did to gather food and so forth, they put their lives at risk. However, every time a local Malay did that, he put his whole extended family at risk. If a local was caught, the Japanese would wipe out his whole family. During my visit, I met several people whose parents had been executed by the Japanese. They had survived only because others took them to the hills and hid them from the Japanese.

One of the things that caught my attention at Ranau was a stone monument, which comprises some 370-odd stones, a stone for each of the soldiers. Some British soldiers also died at Ranau at the end of the marches. A Victorian soldier who attempted to escape - unfortunately, I could not find his name - was caught, brought back, chained to the ground in the sun for 11 days and beaten every day until he died. That monument is in a church and school area. It is very basic, but visiting it was an overwhelming moment. I think that poor soldier was 21 or 22 years of age. I cannot begin to imagine what he had to endure until the end of his life to defend what we take for granted.

I mentioned a story in the house last week, but it is worth retelling. I refer to the eight soldiers and their dixies. A dixie is what the soldiers used to gather food from the locals to take back to the other soldiers before they were executed. On the last day, the locals found the soldiers' wedding rings in the dixies. One of the locals at Ranau claims - when I was at Ranau I read an article about this - that she still has one of those wedding rings. I guess that the soldiers had only their wedding rings to give the locals to thank them for the food that they brought and for their kindness, even though they knew full well - because they had been told - that they were to be executed the next day. There is a strong affiliation with and affection for Australians in Borneo. When I was on the streets doing what tourists do, quite a few people approached me and told me that they remembered the Australians. That is something we should not forget.

One of the things that worries me is that although we send our students - I am arguing against this; indeed, it is the right thing to do - to Kokoda, the Somme, Thailand and Gallipoli, we do not send them to Sandakan. It is in no way a contest. However, people should consider that despite all the terrible atrocities that happened on the Burma-Thai railway, 60 per cent of Australians at that camp survived that ordeal. At Sandakan, only six per cent of Australians survived. Along the Thai railway, I think there was something like 22 000 deaths, which is a significantly higher number of soldiers than there were in Ranau. I am in no way suggesting that it is a contest; however, we must remember the terrible conditions in which young Australians died at Ranau. Again, it is not a

contest. Only a few days ago I saw the movie *Kokoda*. I had to go and see it. The Sandakan death track was every bit as hard as the Kokoda Track. For those who have not been there, the terrain on the Sandakan track is the same as the terrain on the Kokoda Track. It was the same race of people as the locals. In the hills of Papua and the hills of Malaysia, these sick and dying soldiers, with enormous weights on their backs, really did not have a chance.

At a dinner I met the President of Sabah, who could be equated with our Premier. I had a half-hour conversation with him. It is very clear that he would like to have a stronger association with Western Australia. That is the reason I am using tonight's debate to put this message out to all 57 members of this chamber and to ask them to give it some consideration. I raised this with our Premier - I do not want to put words in his mouth, because that would not be fair - and he said that he had heard a few remarks I had made last week. He also signed off my application for imprest to go on this trip, so he knew where I was going. He said that he had a relative over there and would have liked to be there himself. I would like to make sure that some of us take the time and effort to look at this process, and do it for two reasons: firstly, to remember the Western Australian, Australian and British soldiers who died under such terrible conditions in Borneo and, secondly, to celebrate and remember the fantastic locals who had such passion for our soldiers and such empathy for the cause, and fought the Japanese so hard. Let us see whether we cannot get some economic activity going between us. It is a tropical country, and palm oil is one of its main exports. Fish is another. Most members would know that we put a fair bit of time and effort into tropical agriculture in Kununurra. In fact, in the past couple of weeks some forums have been held to which I have been invited, although I am not sure why. I love to go to Kununurra, because it is a wonderful place. We spend a lot of time on tropical agriculture in this state, and perhaps there are some issues on which we can assist Malaysia.

Even though we talk about China every day in this place, as we should, let us not forget the obligations to countries other than China. We talk a fair bit about Indonesia. Standing in the town of Sandakan, the Philippines can be seen on the horizon. Part of Borneo is actually Indonesia. It is important that, when we cast our eyes towards Malaysia, we think not only of Kuala Lumpur, but also of the two provinces of Borneo, with which we have such a strong association, even though many Western Australians do not know this history. I have been aware of this history for some time, because I read this kind of information. I cannot say when I first became aware of it, but it would not have been more than 15 years ago.

It is a terrible story, but my interest is not motivated by revenge or bitterness. I met a brother and sister on the trip. This story explains some of the bitterness that exists. Their aunt died in the 1970s believing that her son had died at Changi prison. Her husband died seven years later. He knew that his son had died at Sandakan, but did not know about the death marches. How could it be that, in the 1970s, the war having ended in 1945, a mother did not know where her son had died? A few years after that a father died believing that his son died in a prisoner of war camp in Sandakan, whereas in fact he died nearly at the end of the death march. Many people there feel bitterness, not just with the Japanese; they argue that MacArthur wanted to save the Australian soldiers but Blamey did not. I will not promote that argument, although I heard it quite a few times during the course of the trip. There is a lot of feeling there. The only way to change those attitudes is to look to the future. The wonderful Malayan people in Borneo have a fantastic attitude towards us. They would like to seek some common bonds with us, as has clearly been said to me on many occasions. I ask members to give it some thought. I will attempt to get the Speaker to arrange for some of us to go there. The appropriate time may be Anzac Day next year, or it may be some other time, but we need to remember those 137 Western Australians and 2 000 Australians. Let us also remember the people who are now there where those Australian lads died. Let us remember what those lads died for. If we can make things a little better by having a strong association with those two provinces in Borneo, we should.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr J.C. Kobelke (Leader of the House)**.

*House adjourned at 9.45 pm*

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### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

#### GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS - DETAILS

707. Mr M.J. Birney to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure
- (1) Have any agencies or departments under the Minister's control entered into any contractual arrangements with any of the following companies since February 2001 -
- (a) Strategic Computer Solutions (SCS);
  - (b) Strategic & IT Consulting Services;
  - (c) Strategic Knowledge Solutions; or
  - (d) Nexus Strategic Solutions?
- (2) If yes to (1) can the Minister please advise -
- (a) what was the contract for;
  - (b) what was the value of the contract; and
  - (c) when was the contract signed?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN replied:

#### DPI

1. (a) Yes  
(b) No  
(c)-(d) Yes
2. Strategic Computer Solutions (SCS)
- (a) Technical and Project Management Services associated with implementation of a new email and calendaring solution.
  - (b) \$370,255.
  - (c) 19 June 2002
- Strategic Knowledge Solutions
- (a) Consultancy charges in relation to Complaints Handling System.
  - (b) \$989.00
  - (c) 19 December 2005
- Nexus Strategic Solutions
- (a) Professional Recruitment and Human Resource Services.
  - (b) \$2,397.00
  - (c) 11 April 2006.

Western Australian Planning Commission:

1. (a) Yes  
(b)-(d) No
2. (a) IT Maintenance  
(b) \$5,775.00, \$478.50 and \$2,348.50.  
(c) 28 May 2001, 30 June 2001 and 17 April 2002.

#### MRWA

- 1 (a)-(c) No  
(d) Yes
- 2 In regards to (1) (d) above - Nexus Strategic Solutions
- (a) Training services to Main Roads staff
  - (b) \$5 053.33 inc GST
  - (c) 20 June 2005

#### PTA

- (1) (a)-(c) None  
(d) Two

- (2) (a) (i) Provide Classification Service.  
(ii) Provide Job Design and Classification/Reclassification Service.
- (b) (i) \$1145.37  
(ii) \$5328.13
- (c) (i) As the service provided by for Nexus Strategic Solutions was low value, it was obtained by Manual Purchase Order only - the invoice for the work was dated 12 February 2006.  
(ii) As in (i)(c) above - the invoice for the work was dated 1 August 2003.

## LandCorp &amp; ARA

- 1 (a)-(c) No  
(d) Yes

- 2 (a)-(c) Please refer to table below

Classification Review	\$654.50	26 May 2004
Classification Review	\$502.15	7 December 2004
Auditing and Reporting	\$6,989.12	9 February 2005

## MRA

- 1 No  
2 N/A

## EPRA/SRA

- 1 No  
2 N/A

## APA

- 1 No  
2 N/A

## BrPA

- 1 No  
2 N/A

## ByPA

- 1 No  
2 N/A

## DPA

- 1 No  
2 N/A

## EPA

- 1 No  
2 N/A

## FPA

- 1 No  
2 N/A

## GPA

- 1 No  
2 N/A

## PHPA

- 1 No  
2 N/A

## GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES - STAFF

909. Ms K. Hodson-Thomas to the Minister for Water Resources; Sport and Recreation

I refer to concerns raised with me about the employment of some individuals within the public sector and on Parliamentary boards, reviews, committee, enquiries and taskforces. Can the Minister please advise in connection with all the Government agencies currently under the Minister's responsibility -

- (1) Have any of the following individuals currently or in the last ten years been on any government payroll -
  - (a) Corrini Macrae;
  - (b) Graham Burkett;
  - (c) Alan Langer;
  - (d) Hilary Pinerua;
  - (e) Pauline O'Connor;
  - (f) Ken McAullay;
  - (g) Ross Willcock; and
  - (h) David Berry?
- (2) If yes to (1) for what -
  - (a) body were they engaged?
  - (b) duration were they engaged?
  - (c) function were they engaged?
- (3) How much were they paid either in direct salary, sitting fees or any other kind of payment?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE replied:

Busselton Water Board

- (1) (a)-(h) No.
- (2)-(3) Not applicable.

Water Corporation

- (1) (a)-(h) No.
- (2)-(3) Not applicable.

Department of Water

- (1) (a)-(h) No.
- (2)-(3) Not applicable.

Aqwest

- (1) (a)-(h) No.
- (2)-(3) Not applicable.

Department of Sport and Recreation

- (1) (a)-(h) No.
- (2)-(3) Not applicable.

WA Institute of Sport (WAIS)

- (1) (a)-(h) No.
- (2)-(3) Not applicable.

WA Sports Centre Trust

- (1) (a)-(h) No.
- (2)-(3) Not applicable.

## MAIN ROADS' PERMITS - USAGE BY FARMERS OF ROAD TRAINS

1138. Mr M.W. Trenorden to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure

I refer the Minister to a recent article regarding Main Roads permits for usage, by farmers, of road-trains on rural roads, this being an integral part of their business operations relating directly to their commercial viability and I ask the following:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the enormous contribution to our State's economy made by Western Australian farmers?
  - (a) if not, why not?
- (2) Is the recent article is a true and accurate reflection of what is occurring regarding the timely and adequate release of permits to Western Australian farmers?
  - (a) if not, why not?
- (3) Does the Minister concede that any backlog of the release of permits is her responsibility within her portfolio?
  - (a) if not, why not?
- (4) Does the Minister concede that such a backlog would place an unfair and inequitable financial burden on farmers considering the massive volume of grain, other bio-mass and/or other materials they must transport as part of the core business of "Broadacre Farming"?
  - (a) if not, why not?
- (5) With the International Oil Price at around US \$70, does the Minister concede that the use of smaller vehicles for the same purposes would lead to a massive, unnecessary increase in fuel costs to farmers:
  - (a) if not, why not?
- (6) Is the Minister's failure to release these permits due to the fact the current condition of many rural roads will not allow the safe passage of road-trains?
- (7) Is the Minister's failure to release these permits due to the fact she has no intention of maintaining, or improving the rural road network on behalf of Western Australian farmers and to community standard expectations?
- (8) Is the Minister's failure to release these permits due to a funding shortage?
- (9) In the Minister's radio interview of 20 April 2006 did the Minister state there was "no backlog with regard to inspecting local roads for farmers' road train permits"? If so, is this statement still correct?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN replied:

Could the member please specify the 'article' to which he is referring so we can address his concerns.

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