

Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Stephen Dawson; Deputy President; Hon Helen Morton; Hon Ken Travers; Hon Dr Sally Talbot; Hon Helen Morton.; Deputy Chair; Deputy Chair (hon Liz Behjat); Hon Darren West

SUPPLY BILL 2013

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the Opposition) [5.03 pm]: I was about to wrap up my speech, but the events of question time have caused it to be extended a little. I want to make some comments in relation to the answers we received to questions about fees and charges for goods and services provided under a range of portfolios. The fees and charges we asked about are scheduled to be increased from 1 July 2013. The question for a range of portfolios was framed like this —

I refer to fees and charges for goods and services provided within the X portfolio. Which fees and charges will increase from 1 July 2013 and by how much for each?

A number of the answers we received were in the following terms —

It is not possible to provide the information in the time available, and I request that the member place this question on notice.

I raise this matter to remind members of the government that they are responsible for the answers they give. Even when they give those answers in a representative capacity, it is the representative minister who is telling the house that it is not possible to provide that information. The information that is being sought is about increases to fees and charges. There will be a range of fees and charges within each of the respective portfolios and I suspect that, for many of them, there will be no increase; but for some there will be increases, taking effect from 1 July, which is in six days' time and three working days' time. The agencies that are about to have fee increases will have that information material easily available. In fact, by now they will have either set up their systems so that they can send out notices advising people of the fee increases if they have not already done so, or calibrated their systems such that they can give effect to the increases in a small number of business working days. One has to ask oneself—I ask members opposite to ask themselves, which is why I asked the Leader of the House—what do government members mean when they say it is not possible? That information is available; the agencies have it to hand because they have calibrated their systems or sent out letters to advise the people who will have to pay the extra money that the increases will come into effect within about three or four business days. When members say it is not possible, what is it that they mean? It is unacceptable to me—but entirely legitimate for government members—to say, “We choose not to provide that information and ask you to put it on notice.”

I say that that is unacceptable to me, politically, because I think it is unfair; but of course I would think that, because I am a member of the opposition. But it is entirely within the realm of what is reasonable, within the standing orders and respectful of the house for government members to say, “The government has decided we will not release that information and I ask you to put the question on notice.” The government can choose to say that, but that is not what most members opposite said. Most of them said that it is not possible. If, for all logistical purposes, the agencies' systems have been recalibrated to take effect from 1 July—material may well have been prepared for relevant stakeholders and affected groups and, indeed, there may well have been media releases prepared—when government members say that it is not possible, it is very likely that they are misleading the house, because it is entirely possible for members to provide that information; the agencies are set up and ready to go to implement the change. If members opposite have misled the house by using that particular form of words, they will need to think very seriously about it because the standing orders allow for a member to make a mistake and for that to be accommodated through a provision that allows members, at the next available opportunity, to correct what they might have inadvertently said, or what they might have said not realising that they are responsible for the answers they give, even when they give them in a representative capacity. I am asking the government to consider what it has just said to the house. If we were, for example, to find a letter that was sent to a stakeholder, or in any way to find material that demonstrates it was possible for the member to give the opposition that information and the member chose not to do so, then the house has been misled. If the government does not take the next available opportunity—which might be, for example, in members' statements tonight—to correct that, then the government is in serious trouble and really needs to think about the answers it has given. Politically it is one thing for the government to choose not to release the information; that is unfair, but it is a choice available to the government and I look forward to the day that it is available to me. But that is a choice the government makes; it is not what most government members have said. What most government members have said was that it was not possible when, in fact, it is known that the systems had been recalibrated to give effect to those increases in fees and charges. I ask the government to seriously think about that—because if no-one takes the opportunity to correct the answer, then there is a serious issue if we can demonstrate that, in fact, it was entirely possible for the government to provide that information.

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I want to go back to the question of why we are saying no to an additional \$620 million to WA schools. When the Prime Minister visited WA just a couple of weeks ago, she increased the offer available to WA schools under the national plan for schools funding system from \$300 million to \$920 million; therefore, some \$620 million of that money is federal government money. That would mean that, with indexation, WA would receive \$2.8 billion in education funding across the six years of that plan. What that means, for example, in the state seat of Riverton, where my electorate office is located, is that schools in Riverton or on the border of Riverton—Rossmoyne Primary School, Riverton Primary School, Lynwood Senior High School, Burrendah Primary School, Rossmoyne Senior High School, Rostrata Primary School, Shelley Primary School, Willetton Senior High School and Willetton Primary School—over that six-year period will have increases in excess of 19 per cent per student. I know those schools well. Although Willetton Senior High School did well out of the election, Lynwood Senior High School, for example, did not do so well. But I know that absolutely none of those schools would be in a position where they could afford to say no to increases in funding over the six years. For example, for Rossmoyne Primary School, the increase would be \$1.6 million; for Riverton Primary School, \$1.682 million; for Lynwood Senior High School, \$12.8 million; for Burrendah Primary School, \$1.58 million; for Rossmoyne Senior High School, \$19.5 million; for Rostrata Primary School, \$2.2 million; for Shelley Primary School, \$1.1 million; for Willetton Senior High School, \$21.5 million; and for Willetton Primary School, \$1.5 million. There is no way that those schools are in a position where they can afford to say, “No thanks very much, we don’t want you spending that money on us.” If that is what WA is saying and, it is, the Premier has said, “No thanks very much. We’re not going to sign up to that.” As reported in *WAtoday.com.au*, published 12 June, this is what he said on the day —

I’m pleased with that —

That is the higher offer of dollars —

... but there are still issues about governance and I made it very clear that WA is not going to have State Government schools governed or reporting to Canberra.

Therefore, the Premier said he will not be signing up to that agreement. Not only is it beholden on him to tell us and spell out exactly what those governance issues are, but also he should direct his officials to sit down at the table with the commonwealth officials to nut out those issues so that we can get hold of some of that money. All those schools in Riverton I listed can get the more than 19 per cent increase in funding per student that is promised under that funding. It is why I made the point. Why is the Premier saying no? What is the alternative he can offer that we just do not know about yet? I do not know if I can figure out what it is. However, I looked to the position of the federal coalition—that is, the opposition, and what it is reported to have said on 13 June in *The Australian Financial Review*. It states —

... an Abbott government would take on a hostile Senate to repeal the laws —

That is the Gonski reform laws, the national plan for education laws —

... before January next year.

The article goes on to state —

The Coalition has long suggested it will overturn the Gonski funding model if it is not taken up by an “overwhelming” majority of states and territories.

Therefore, once the Premier said he was saying no to that Gonski funding, opposition education spokesman, Christopher Pyne, told the *Australian Financial Review* —

... that the Coalition would move quickly to repeal the Gonski system before the start of a new funding year on January 1.

I looked for words from the person whom Mr Barnett hopes will be the next Prime Minister—that is, Tony Abbott. He wrote an article for *The Australian* on 4 June—or it appears under his name—stating what the coalition would do —

The Coalition believes in an education system built on choice.

... the Coalition, if elected, will work with states and territories to give local communities and parents much more say in the way schools are run.

The key to better schools, at least as much as more money, is better teachers, better teaching, higher academic standards, more parental involvement, and more principal autonomy.

Concerned about national test results, he states —

... national test results have shown stagnation in literacy and numeracy.

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The Coalition's Real Solutions Plan will put parents and principals, not unaccountable bureaucrats, in charge of determining how local schools will be run.

He further states —

We will continue existing levels of funding for schools, indexed to deal with real increases in costs and we will ensure that the targeting of funding is based on the social and economic status of the community.

What is on offer is the same level of funding as is available now—an indexation. That is it. That is a lot to be saying no to when the government is not prepared to sit down with officials from the commonwealth government to try to nut out some of those issues that the Premier has referred to as governance issues. We really do not know any more detail about that. We really do not know why he is not confident that he cannot reach the outcome he wants in those negotiations, particularly since several more states than initially just New South Wales have now signed on. We need to hear from the Barnett government. The schools in Riverton, for example, will want to hear from the Barnett government about why it is that Mr Barnett is saying no to these millions of dollars for their students when what is on offer from Mr Abbott is existing funding only. That is a legitimate question for those school communities to be asking. I will be talking to the schools, as I talk to lots of school communities in my new capacity, about what it is that they are missing out on, but I will also be seeking their views on whether they think that is a satisfactory answer.

I have canvassed the issues around why it is that WA can afford to say no to an additional \$620 million from the commonwealth. I have canvassed the issue surrounding when the government is giving an answer in this place; be it representative or otherwise, it is the government's answer and the government is responsible. If someone uses the words that he or she cannot give an answer because it is not possible, when they know that it is indeed possible, then they are potentially misleading the house and need to use the next available opportunity to correct it. I have canvassed the issues around homelessness and public housing getting worse and not better; that we need to spend more money and have much better coordination between the agencies that are responsible for people who find themselves in that situation. With those comments, I conclude my remarks on the Supply Bill 2013.

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral) [5.19 pm]: I rise tonight to speak on the Supply Bill 2013. I note that the second reading speech made by the Minister for Mental Health in this place on 22 May states —

This bill seeks supply and appropriation from the consolidated account for recurrent and capital purposes during the 2013–14 financial year of \$7.942 billion out of the consolidated account pending the passage of the consolidated account appropriation bills for the year ending 30 June 2014.

Supply is an integral element of the Westminster system of government and successive state governments and Parliaments in Western Australia have ... understood that the intent of supply is to give authority for expenditure from the commencement of a new financial year pending the passage of the consolidated account appropriation bills.

For the most part, members in this place act as parliamentarians, and rarely do we see the antics of those in the other place. We in this place are well aware of the Westminster system and we gladly uphold its traditions—or we certainly try to. That is why it is disappointing that some members in this place were denied a briefing on this bill. Hon Ken Travers, who represents Rita Saffioti, Labor's shadow Minister for Finance, requested a briefing on the bill for the Labor Party, but that request was denied. It makes life difficult for opposition members when the government refuses to provide briefings on matters that would only help us in our role as parliamentarians in this place.

I am pleased that this bill will release an amount of \$7.942 billion, with \$6.749 billion for recurrent services and \$1.193 billion for capital purposes. I am very hopeful that some of this money will be spent in my electorate. I hope that this money will be used by the government to deliver on the election promises that were made for the Mining and Pastoral Region. It is common practice for political parties to make promises in election periods; we all do it. But it is often on the basis of those promises that certain members of Parliament get elected. Voters choose particular candidates and parties based on those commitments. Labor, too, made promises at the recent election. I am pleased to say that Kelly Howlett, who was a fantastic candidate, made promises for the seat of Pilbara; Jennifer Shelton made promises for the seat of North West Central; Terrence Winner made promises for the seat of Kalgoorlie; and Greg Smith made promises for the seat of Eyre. Each of these hardworking candidates made promises but they did not get elected. Perhaps we are to surmise that voters preferred the election promises of the Liberal and National Parties. In some of these seats, Liberal and National Party MPs made different promises, so I will be very interested to see which of those promises are delivered in the Mining and Pastoral Region.

Hon Dave Grills: All of them.

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Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I hope so, Hon Dave Grills. An article in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* of Monday, 13 May reported that the Minister for Regional Development, who is also the Leader of the National Party, tried to reassure goldfields residents by saying that they should not expect the government to break the WA Nationals' election promises to the region. Mr Grylls tried to assure the electors of the goldfields that those promises would be kept. The article states —

But Mr Grylls in an interview with the *Kalgoorlie Miner* said Goldfields residents should be “very confident” about his party’s election promises.

These included the Nationals’ \$150 million Goldfields Revitalisation Fund.

It also included numerous policies, including health policies. I am very pleased to say that that assurance was given, and I look forward to goldfields residents getting benefits from the election commitments.

An article in *The Sunday Times* of 7 April 2013 by Joe Spagnolo, the political editor at *The Sunday Times*, states —

“He (Mr Barnett) is looking at either scrapping or rebadging the Country Local Government Fund,” a source said.

I wonder whether that source was from this place; perhaps not —

The fund is part of the Royalties for Regions scheme.

“Instead of using that money to fund community groups, he’d use it to pay for sewerage and roads which normally would have come out of consolidated revenue. It would (then) free up a lot of money and solve some of his problems.”

I do not mind the government spending some royalties for regions money on roads, provided it is extra money and the government is not using sleight of hand to decrease spending on roads in the budget and replace it with royalties for regions funding. Surely all members in this place will agree that if we are to spend money from consolidated revenue on roads, we must make sure that that money is spent on the projects for which it was deemed, as is required under the royalties for regions legislation that passed through this place. Goodness knows that many roads in my electorate could do with funding. I drove to Port Hedland airport this morning after spending a couple of days at my electorate office. Thanks to the rain this morning, the water was very high and the roads were trashed. I hope that some of this appropriation will go towards fixing those roads.

Hon Alanna Clohesy: Good drains.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes, good drains. I thank Hon Alanna Clohesy for her interjection.

Hon Col Holt interjected.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Floods certainly do, but lots of roads in that electorate never get any money and they should. If Parliament is to give the government the authority to spend \$7.942 billion in the next few months, I hope that some of that money will be spent on the roads in my electorate. The Cape Leveque road is one example. It is often subject to closures after heavy rain, which in turn means that children from some of the communities on the Dampier Peninsula cannot go to school for days at a time. During the last flood a couple of months ago, the children from the communities along that road could not go to school for 14 days. I certainly hope that some of this funding can go towards fixing that road and perhaps sealing it. Some of the top has been sealed, but the bottom has not been sealed.

Hon Col Holt: Is that your top priority?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I have a number of priorities right around my electorate, but I certainly hope that the government makes this road a priority.

Hon Col Holt interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Adele Farina): Order, honourable members! Hon Stephen Dawson has the call.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: The road from Newman to Nullagine also could do with some extra funding. During the recent election campaign, Hon Mark McGowan drove along that road. I am very pleased to say that during the election campaign he made a commitment of \$50 million to seal the road.

Hon Ken Travers: In advance of the campaign.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Absolutely; it was in advance of the campaign.

Hon Ken Travers: It forced the National Party to realise that it was an issue, in fact.

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Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: We saw that it was an issue and we sought to fix it. Had we been elected, that money would have gone towards that road. As we have given this issue prominence, I hope that the government will put some money from this \$7.9-odd billion towards this road. When Mark McGowan made that statement, he also said that under the Barnett–Grylls government we had seen a steady decline in funding for capital works and regional state roads. So I hope that some of this money will be spent on this road.

Last week I had the privilege of spending a few days in Menzies and Leonora. The streetscape in Menzies looked great. It is a real credit to the local shire, which has put a lot of effort and resources into tidying up the town. Buildings are being refurbished. Some of the stately old buildings that have been around since the turn of the century or longer are shiny again. There is street art in the town. It was very good, so I congratulate the shire for that work.

Hon Dave Grills interjected.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I have said previously in this place that I am a supporter of royalties for regions; in fact, I said it in my first speech a couple of weeks ago. I certainly hope that the government does not start spending money from the consolidated fund elsewhere and using royalties for regions money, because that was not what Parliament voted for originally. Hon Col Holt would agree with me that the money from royalties for regions should be on top of whatever we do in the regions.

After Menzies we visited the town of Leonora, which is also looking good, but it is not as shiny as the town of Menzies. I was disappointed when I visited the Nambi Aboriginal community. Members would have heard me ask some questions last week about the state of that Aboriginal community, particularly the playground. The playground equipment was old and broken, there was glass on the ground and it was overgrown. Unlike playgrounds in the metropolitan area, it had not been looked after. It certainly did not go anywhere near to meeting Australian standards. It is a real concern. I was also concerned about the lack of community footpaths and street lighting. The community centre was dilapidated—it is the most unloved place. It is as though governments have just left it there and never looked after it. The answers I received to my questions certainly indicated that the government did not have any intention of looking after it. I will certainly make it a priority to make sure people listen and pay attention to that community. There are two playgrounds in the town of Leonora—the one I have spoken about already and the one in the main street right in the heart of town. The playground in town has been well looked after. It recently received federal money from either the Gillard or Rudd Labor government. The playground in Nambi is a disgrace. It has received neither love nor funding for many years. Maybe some royalties for regions money can go towards that playground or maybe money from the Supply Bill 2013 could be used to give the young Aboriginal children in Nambi a decent and safe place to play.

Hon Dave Grills interjected.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I visited a few things, Hon Dave Grills. I will get to those later.

In the past few weeks I have also spent plenty of time in Hedland. I feel very lucky to have my office in the South Hedland Shopping Centre, which is right in the heart of the community. Having spent a few days there, there have been quite a lot of walk-ins by constituents who have real problems. We have had to drop everything to deal with them, which is what we do. Since being sworn in four weeks ago, I have been approached by my constituents about a range of issues that need to be addressed in not only the Hedland community but also right around the state. One of those issues is young kids roaming the streets at night. I guess Hedland, like many communities in the metropolitan area and around the state, suffers from the problem of children as young as six out on the streets at night displaying antisocial behaviour. Houses have been ransacked and children have been fighting other children. These are children with nothing else to do who congregate late at night and cause social problems because they do not have a playground or a youth or sports facility.

Hon Dave Grills: Didn't you say that Port Hedland had too many facilities?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am not sure that was the case. What we have said is that some of the royalties for regions facilities in town do not get recurrent funding. The money is given in the first place, but it does not continue. Hon Dave Grills, I have said that that is a good policy. However, we did not think it through properly. We did not spend it on the right things and we consistently do not spend it on the right things.

A recent act of vandalism was the \$130 000 worth of damage to Wanangkura Stadium. If the government had spent money—perhaps some of the Supply Bill money—properly and appropriately to keep children off the streets and keep them engaged, local councils and government would not have to find an extra \$130 000 to fix the damage.

On Monday, 17 June there was an article on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation website by Ebony Springs. In that article she referred to some of the issues currently concerning the community, which have also been

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raised with me. She said that since January there have been 90 incidents of rock throwing at targets that have included cars and public buildings. South Hedland police have been returning home up to 20 children a night as late as 2.00 am and 3.00 am. The Port Hedland Youth Involvement Council runs a program called Mingle Mob, which is a fantastic program. It seeks to take children off the street to give them things to do and to play with other kids in a safe environment. It does a great job. However, the patrol operates from Thursday to Saturday from 6.00 pm to 10.00 pm. Really it should run until 2.00 am, seven days a week. We should be trying to stop kids from causing damage and being out on the streets at 2.00 am instead of ending the patrol after normal kids go to bed at 8.00 pm. The patrol should operate to ensure that kids are not committing petty crimes. Perhaps some of the Supply Bill money could be used to fund the Port Hedland Youth Involvement Council to ensure that Mingle Mob operates until 2.00 am every night of the week. That would certainly be a good use of that money. I hope the government considers that.

While I am on the issue of crime in Port Hedland and South Hedland, recently Labor's candidate for the federal seat of Durack, Daron Keogh—he is a lovely bloke who has worked with children and Aboriginal people on a range of issues, including foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, homelessness and housing—was driving through the town of Roebourne when a rock was thrown at his car. The rock totally smashed poor old Daron's front windscreen. He had to go to hospital to have stitches in his arm. Daron raised this issue in an article in the *North West Telegraph* that week. The article stated that the incident caused a cut to Mr Keogh's right shoulder and broke the skin. Daron is such a good bloke that he did not go after the kids to get them into trouble or have the police chase after them to seek justice. Rather, Daron sought to highlight the fact that these kids should not be on the street late at night and that if the government were serious it should fund services to take children off the streets and to lessen the incidence of crime.

Back to Port Hedland—but this could apply equally to Wyndham, Kalgoorlie, Leonora or Carnarvon—another issue that has been raised with me over the past few weeks is the issue of homelessness. Homelessness in Port Hedland is on the rise. Recently, we have had a lot of cold temperatures at night. I was shocked to learn of the number of homeless people in a town like Port Hedland, which is a mining boom community. I hate to think of people being on the street. In the last 24 hours Hedland has had 180 millimetres of rain and Karratha has had 210 millimetres of rain. There are people living on the street in that weather.

Hon Jacqui Boydell interjected.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Hon Jacqui Boydell, I am pleased you are here listening to me. I always appreciate the member's interjections. I always appreciate listening to the member. Tonight is not about my plan. Tonight is about the government's Supply Bill 2013. Hon Jacqui Boydell is a member of the Liberal–National government. Members opposite, particularly National Party members, are often very happy to say that they are not part of the government—but they are. What I am speaking about tonight is the Supply Bill 2013, which will release \$7.942 billion. I mentioned the breakdown earlier; it was \$6.5 billion for capital —

Hon Helen Morton: The other way—recurrent.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I thank Hon Helen Morton; I appreciate her interjection. It was \$6.5 billion for recurrent expenditure and one point something for capital expenditure. I lost my train of thought for a second. The total is \$7.5 billion. I am raising these issues this evening because I hope members opposite—indeed, those members sitting close to me—will listen to what I have to say and consider spending some of this money on these important projects in my electorate and the electorates of other members in this place. It can only make this state better and it can certainly solve some of the problems that we face.

Some of the other projects that I would love to see funded from this Supply Bill include the Tom Price Hospital and the Paraburdoo Hospital, places dear to me. I note that on 26 March 2013, the Shire of Ashburton wrote to Hon Kim Hames, the Minister for Health, about this issue. The letter states —

Dear Minister Hames

...

It was reported at the Ordinary Meeting of Council in October 2012 that the residents of both Tom Price and Paraburdoo are concerned regarding their respective hospitals.

The issues are the buildings are quite old and home to a lot of old medical equipment and the number of beds available for patient use has declined.

In this place only last week I asked a question about those hospitals, seeking some information from the government and hoping that it would put some funds into these hospitals. The author of this letter was Frank Ludovico, the acting chief executive officer. He went on to say —

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There have also been rumours circulating that the Paraburdoo hospital is expected to close and that the much needed upgrade of the Tom Price hospital is not planned for some time.

The residents of Tom Price and Paraburdoo have sought Council's assistance in bringing this matter to your attention.

Council seeks your advice on the future plans for these hospitals and how the services mentioned above can be delivered.

On 2 May the Minister for Health wrote back to the council, thanking it for the letter. I was pleased to say that he put in writing that there were no plans to close Paraburdoo Hospital and, despite the age of both hospitals, they continue to deliver quality services to the community. The minister went on to say that, essentially, he was not in a position to give funds to those hospitals for their upkeep and to ensure that they adequately service the community. I hope that some of the money from this Supply Bill can go towards those two hospitals in those two communities.

I mentioned the state election earlier and some of the policies that political parties spoke about or announced during the campaign. The Liberal Party's regional health document put out during the state election campaign was part of its regional development policy. It stated —

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

...

- Provide funding for an additional 45 school health nurses in regional Western Australia
- Fund a \$4.2million renal analysis service for the Wheatbelt region,

I think that is a great policy but it is remiss of the Liberals not to have done something for the Kimberley community. Members who know Broome and the Kimberley would know that the incidence of renal failure in that community —

Hon Helen Morton: Are you sure there's not one already in Broome?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: There is but I was going to say that it brings people into town. It takes families away from the community and it takes kids away from school. Sometimes we see families camping on the oval in Broome. I was going to say that I was hoping that perhaps the government would consider a mobile dialysis machine that could go out to those communities across the Kimberley and give people the health services they need right on the ground in their communities. Perhaps we could look at doing something similar with some of this \$7.942 million. It is a great amount of money. I do not think I am up to \$7.942 billion yet; I think I am only up to a couple of million. I say to Hon Helen Morton that I am not trying to spend all the money; I am simply saying that I hope some of this money is used for some of these services.

Hon Ken Travers: Try to get them to focus on the proper priorities of the electorate.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Absolutely. That is what I am trying to do.

One of the other things that was mentioned in the policy document was the pledge to provide \$474 000 over three years to fund research into foetal alcohol spectrum disorder in the Fitzroy Valley region of the Kimberley. I certainly support that. In fact, we could probably do with more money for a service like that. It is very important. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate June Oscar from the Fitzroy Valley. June is an Aboriginal woman—a Bunuba woman—and also the chief executive officer of the Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre. June was recently appointed an officer in the Order of Australia for leading the campaign to introduce alcohol restrictions in the community. She has also been a leader in dealing with foetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

I have a copy of the National Party's "North West Health Initiative". This document shows that the Nationals (WA), through royalties for regions, are planning to invest \$150 million in the north west health initiative, which will improve existing health and aged care facilities in key towns across the north west. Again, I support the investment of \$150 million.

Hon Jacqui Boyde: You support that?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I absolutely support spending this money for such a vital service in this community. I was going to say that Labor had a policy worth almost \$300 million—the northern health initiative policy—which trumped that of the Nationals. Imagine \$300 million for vital health services in the Kimberley and the north west.

Several members interjected.

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The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Adele Farina): Order, members! Hon Stephen Dawson has the call.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: My apologies, Madam Deputy President. I am getting quite boisterous. I am welcoming these interjections and probably causing this.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members! Hon Jacqui Boydell may take the call if she would like to address this motion rather than do so by way of interjection.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It is the role of the opposition to hold a government to account, not to say anything we want. Members on the far side who are feeling a little angry or concerned because we are raising these issues should not be.

Hon Alanna Clohesy: Embarrassed.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Perhaps they are embarrassed. It is our role as members in this place to hold the other side to account. I am raising these issues because they are very important to me and to the electors in my region right across the north west of this state. These issues affect people's lives. I am raising them because they could make people's lives better. I am raising them under this bill because this government will have an extra \$7.492 billion over the next few months and I am hoping that it will listen to me and fund some of these initiatives and make the north west a better place.

Under our \$300 million northern health initiative we were going to: fast-track the Karratha health campus; invest \$54 million to rebuild Newman Hospital and increase bed capacity; commit a significant amount of money to upgrade smaller regional hospitals, including Roebourne, Wickham, Tom Price and Paraburdoo, and the health clinic in Exmouth; and invest \$35 million in a north medical workforce program to train and employ more health professionals for the north of the state. This would have included doctors, nurses, Aboriginal health workers and other health professionals. The reality is that we invest lots of money in rebuilding these hospitals, but unless we have specialists, doctors, nurses and workers on the ground to deliver the services, we could be wasting money. We would have spent \$300 million on the northern health initiative. I certainly hope members on the far side will read and perhaps copy our policy. I would be only too happy for them to copy our policy. They should find an extra \$150 million, perhaps in this Supply Bill, and take up some of these projects because each of them is worthy.

We had good policies not only in health, but also across the board. However, unfortunately, we are on this side and you are on that. Not you, Madam Deputy President. You are neutral in that role. We are on this side. The government is on that side. I certainly hope that it will take up some of these issues.

Hon Ken Travers: One of the government members is on this side.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Hon Jacqui Boydell is a good person and Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich and I enjoy having her over here. She is a sensible person. She is good-natured. She contributes to the debate. I have no issue with having Hon Jacqui Boydell here. She is a sensational member of Parliament.

Hon Jacqui Boydell: Thank you.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: You are welcome.

One of the other issues I will raise tonight relates to the patient assisted travel scheme. In probably the first week after I was sworn in, I was approached by a constituent living in a regional town. I will not say which one because I think the issue is the same regardless of which north west town it is. She raised with me that it appeared that constituents living in regional Western Australia are not eligible to apply for travel to a major city under PATS when they need skin cancers removed that cannot be treated by a local health service provider. This shocked me. As someone with freckles and fair skin who is prone to sunburn—I get my mole scan done every year—it concerned me to hear that people in remote communities who cannot get their skin cancers treated in their local communities —

Hon Helen Morton: Are you talking about surgery?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am talking about surgery. I am not talking about the initial consultation or assessment. No, it is the surgery. In fairness, some surgery can be done —

Hon Col Holt interjected.

Hon Jacqui Boydell: Have you checked that out?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes, I have. I have written to the Minister for Health on this issue and I am yet to receive something back. I have looked at the PATS document. My PATS application form is in black and white, but if members were to see it in colour, they would see that it has the royalties for regions logo in the corner and

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it looks like a piece of National Party propaganda. I am very surprised that the government has allowed the National Party to have its logo and its colours on a document such as this.

Hon Jacqui Boydell: It is not our logo.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It is a logo that is synonymous with the National Party. It is no wonder that the National Party won more seats than us in the last state election. It is because it has propaganda on the PATS application form.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members!

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: In answer to Hon Col Holt's question, I pulled out the PATS documentation and it seems to me that constituents living in regional Western Australia cannot access PATS to have skin cancers removed that cannot be treated by a local health service provider. As I said, I have written a letter to the Minister for Health and I look forward to receiving that reply. If by some chance he comes back and says that I am wrong, I will happily stand up and say, "Great, I'm pleased". This is very important given the temperatures in regional Western Australia, particularly the north west of the state; it is a real concern that people with skin cancers cannot get government assistance to go to Perth to access —

Hon Jim Chown: Are you going to acknowledge this government's contribution to PATS by increasing —

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: As I have said, I am very happy to acknowledge the good things that governments do, whether it is more funding for PATS or royalties for regions. If governments are spending money in my electorate to make better the lives of people who live in those areas, I am very happy to stand up in this place and say it is good policy.

Hon Jim Chown: Do it.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am standing up and saying it is good policy, but it is few and far between. Look at the health policies. Yes, foetal alcohol syndrome got \$474 000. Yes, it got 45, or whatever it was, new nurses. Yes, the National Party had \$150 million for a north west health initiative, but it was not as good as Labor's \$300 million. I hope members on the other side take heed of that. When members opposite talk about spending this extra \$7.492 billion—I should know that figure now; I have said it often enough—I am certainly hopeful that they will consider spending it on some of these projects or services that I have raised tonight.

I was going to talk to members about the prevalence of skin cancers in the region and the research and funding spent on cancer in Western Australia over the past few years, but I will not now. This is an issue that is certainly dear to me.

Another issue that I am passionate about—I have mentioned it, but I will go back to it—is homelessness. Hon Sue Ellery mentioned earlier that I did the Vinnies CEO Sleepout last week and I was joined by Matt Taylor, the member for Bateman.

Hon Ken Travers: Did you need the afternoon off to prepare for it though?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I did not. I do not begrudge members getting ready for it. Matt Taylor spent the night out in the cold, raised funds and raised the issue in the community, and I have to congratulate him for doing it.

Hon Liz Behjat: I did it the two years before that.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I know. I realise that Hon Liz Behjat has done it and on the evening I spoke to people who mentioned that she had done it. Some people lamented that she was not there that evening.

Hon Liz Behjat: Tony Simpson has done it. Liza Harvey has done it. Margaret Quirk has done it —

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members! If you want to make a contribution, you need to take the call.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am aware of Hon Alyssa Hayden also doing it. She was mentioned last week at the CEO Sleepout and people said she has been a prolific fundraiser and supporter of the project. I note Hon Sue Ellery has also done it. I think Hon Kate Doust might have. Hon Margaret Quirk —

A government member: Is she honourable?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Margaret Quirk? Perhaps she is not. She is certainly honourable, but she does not have a title anymore. She did as minister.

Hon Liz Behjat: She is Hon Margaret Quirk.

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Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am not sure whether she kept the title. She is certainly honourable in my book! I am aware that Hon Margaret Quirk and Michelle Roberts have also done the sleepout. Last week 113 CEOs slept out and I have to congratulate Vinnies; it really was a good evening. It probably got down to four degrees that night, but it was not rainy or too cold. It put into perspective what people in the community, not only in Perth but right around the state—I have raised homelessness in Hedland—go through on a daily basis. Some people spoke about their experiences, including a mother of six children—Jo, perhaps her name was—whose lease ran out. It is funny; it is hard to explain, but when we think of someone being homeless, we think of someone sleeping under a bridge. It is not only that. It is people who have six kids and their lease expires; not many real estate agents or landlords want to take a family with six kids when they could take a cashed-up couple who work in the mining industry instead. This poor mother, Jo, spoke from the heart on this issue. It had an impact on me because it made me wake up to the fact that we need to do more on the issue of homelessness in this state. I hope that out of this money in the Supply Bill we do more for homelessness in the community. I congratulate the 113 CEOs who took part. Andrew Forrest and his foundation ended up donating more than \$200 000 towards the fundraising total and about \$1.2 million or so was raised on the night for homelessness in this state. It was about not only the money, but also raising the issue and giving it some prominence. I am just a member of Parliament, but there were CEOs of important companies there that night and I think they also found it was a very important thing to do. People who were there will, hopefully, pay more attention to the issue of homelessness. Members in this place will find that those people will come back to us and lobby us on the issue of homelessness, and I welcome that because it is a very important thing.

In my last couple of minutes I want to talk about the Closing the Gap funding that was recently announced by Hon Helen Morton and Hon Kim Hames. On 19 June the minister issued a press release, which stated —

- \$31million Closing the Gap funds to continue critical services aimed at improving health and wellbeing of Aboriginal West Australians
- \$412,000 for Closing the Gap Mental Health services
- Cabinet subcommittee to oversee improved co-ordination of service delivery

I have to commend Hon Helen Morton and the government on this. The money was a bit slow in coming forward. I heard from some community groups that they were getting a bit scared that they would not receive the money or know about it before this financial year finished. I certainly congratulate the minister.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Mr Deputy President (Hon Simon O'Brien), as this is the first time that I have been on my feet and you have been in the chair, congratulations on your election to the position of Deputy President.

For the last three minutes, I will just recap the issues I have raised in the past little while. As I said, I am very pleased to be able to stand and speak on this bill tonight, and also very pleased to have been able to bring to the attention of the house a range of issues that are dear not only to me, but also to electors in my electorate of Mining and Pastoral Region. In the past little while, I was pleased to have been able to quote the Leader of the National Party when he said that goldfields residents could be very confident about his party's election promises. I was pleased to have spoken about the roads in my electorate, particularly the Newman to Nullagine road, and the Labor Party's election commitment of \$50 million for the sealing of that road. Indeed, I hope that the government may well take on that issue and put some money from this bill towards that road.

I was also able to raise the good work of the Youth Involvement Council in Port Hedland. That council, along with its manager, Vicki-Tree Stephens, does some very, very good work with children who wander the streets in Hedland. I hope that from this bill and from the extra money that the government gets from this bill, the government is able to extend the service that the Youth Involvement Council runs—that is, the Mingle Mob service—and that it may consider extending this service so that it does not go from just 6.00 to 10.00 pm on Thursday to Saturday nights, but it goes until 1.00 or 2.00 am, seven nights a week, because I really believe that that would make a big impact on some of the social problems in the community of South Hedland, in particular.

I also was able to raise the issues of vandalism in Roebourne and the fact that the Labor candidate for the federal seat of Durack, Daron Keogh, was injured and had his car smashed by a rock. That social problem does not exist in just Roebourne, so I hope that, through this bill, some funding is put towards that issue.

I also spoke about homelessness—not just in Port Hedland or in fact in any one community. This problem exists right throughout the state, be it the metropolitan area or the regional areas. I certainly hope that the government continues to put funding into this area. In this day and age, I find it amazing that people are homeless in this

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state—a state that is essentially flush with cash, particularly when we compare it with a range of places around the world. I certainly hope that issue is addressed.

HON HELEN MORTON (East Metropolitan — Minister for Mental Health) [7.34 pm] — in reply: I thank all members for their contributions to the second reading debate on the Supply Bill 2013. I note that most members have talked in some detail about areas of their electorate or portfolio areas. I think the word that I heard mostly was that they “hoped” this bill would cover this, that or the other in areas that they had raised. Of course, being a Supply Bill, it is not going to focus on the individual and specific areas that people sought some detailed information on. I think we need to get it clear from the start that I do not intend to cover all of the individual electorate-type issues of funding that people talked about.

Hon Ken Travers: Why not?

Hon Kate Doust: Weren’t you listening?

Hon HELEN MORTON: Because this is an aggregated level of funding, and I will talk about that in a short while.

Hon Ken Travers: We can still ask details about —

Hon HELEN MORTON: The member can ask details, but I am just telling him that that level of information will not be provided tonight.

The Supply Bill is aggregated funds that are non-specific. When the appropriation bills go through, which give the detailed level of information around the specific votes or the specific areas of funding that people are looking for, that is when members will get the level of information that they probably have been asking for.

Why do we need the Supply Bill? The Financial Management Act 2006 provides for automatic supply funding for two months after the end of the financial year—that is, until the end of August. That is meant to be at the same rate of spending that has occurred in the previous financial year. This is an extension of that. The Parliament must authorise funding from the consolidated account so that the agencies can incur obligations and pay for them—that is, agencies cannot operate unless they have authorisation from the Parliament to do so, and that authorisation is in the form of an appropriation.

Basically, without a Supply Bill, government would stop by the end of August, as things are at the moment with our current legislation. Normally, an appropriation bill would be brought down about early May—say, 8 May or something like that. It would take us through three months—from early May to June, July and August. What we have here is a bill that needs to take us through another two months—that is, September and October.

Both houses of Parliament need to consider the budget and the appropriation bills. Both houses recess for at least two weeks from 26 August to 5 September, so in that process we need a bill that will cover us for August, September and October. The estimates hearings are likely to occur in September. The agency budget appropriations are not confirmed until after the estimates hearings in both houses. That normally occurs, as I said before, after two months, in July and August.

Why is it 40 per cent of the 2012–13 appropriation? That amounts to about 40 per cent of the budget. The Financial Management Act provides for an automatic supply of 20 per cent for two months until the end of August, which is 16 per cent of the year. After August, there is no authorisation for agencies to incur obligations and to pay for expenditure. This bill allows for the parliamentary process, including estimates hearings and other parliamentary priorities, which will take us through September and October. This amounts to about 33 and one-third per cent of the budget, and that is why, to enable that to be comfortably achieved, we have settled on the amount of 40 per cent. The allowance for any major capital works also is included in the first quarter of the year.

Why is there no budget before 30 June? I heard quite a lot of comments about that. I think most people know the answers to that, but I am happy to go over them. First of all, as members know, there was the election in March. Prior to that, of course, we were in caretaker mode. There is a new government and there are new ministers, so the whole process starts again. As noted in the second reading speech, an August budget will allow time for a number of new ministers to critically look at each of their departments’ spending. In considering all existing policies, each minister can reprioritise if needed, with the aim of delivering programs more effectively and implementing new election commitments. That is part and parcel of it.

Very strong economic and population growth is driving demand for government services. Realising that over 1 000 people a week move to Western Australia, the reprioritisation of services comes into play. The government needs to review current policies to ensure funding is directed to where it is needed most. We also need this time to review commonwealth commitments, particularly in health and education. In my portfolio of mental health, we worked with the commonwealth on a particular area of funding that resulted in two letters of approval. The commonwealth government indicated that that money was there. It was written up in the budget and then,

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without any notice, the money was withdrawn from the state. Those sorts of things come into play. We needed to respond to those things appropriately after the federal budget was brought down and things happened after that.

We also need to review the status of the economy, particularly falling commodity prices, the price of iron ore, the exchange rate and our low share of GST. Of course subsequent machinery of government changes have taken place. In turn, that has resulted in some changes. Further efficiency measures had to be implemented. These make up the full raft of reasons why bringing the budget down at this stage is a better outcome.

Questions were asked about how the government is tracking with expenditure for this year and how agencies are progressing in meeting efficiency dividends. I think that was asked by Hon Ken Travers. As reported in the 2012–13 midyear review, the general government efficiency dividend is estimated to deliver savings of \$1.9 billion over the period 2012–13 to 2015–16. Following an evaluation of projected spending activities, general government agencies and the Public Transport Authority incorporated the savings in their operating budgets and have been delivering programs and services within revised parameters. In this context, agencies manage to their total expense limits rather than individual elements such as the efficiency dividend. General government expenditure for the first nine months of 2012–13 was \$18.7 billion, as reported in the March 2013 *Quarterly Financial Results Report*. This figure is consistent with the estimated out-turn figure of \$25.3 billion reported in the 2012–13 *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement*.

Another question was: what is the interest bill that the state government is paying? Based on the 2012–13 *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement*, the general government sector is projected to pay \$447 million on interest in 2013–14. Another question was: how much money will be needed from the Supply Bill to pay interest? The answer is that the Supply Bill provides the funding until the required appropriation bills are passed. The level of funding provided for interest payments is not specified in this. Another question Hon Ken Travers asked was whether the Public Transport Authority is classified as a general government agency or a public non-financial corporation. It is incorrect to assert that the PTA was recently reclassified from the general sector to the non-financial public sector. The PTA was created in July 2003 and has always been classified as a public non-financial corporation in line with the Australian Bureau of Statistics guidelines and under the government finance statistics framework. The public non-financial corporations sector is included, along with general government agencies, in the non-financial public sector; sometimes also referred to as the total non-financial public sector.

Another question was: do the estimates contained in the March 2013 *Quarterly Financial Results Report* have the same rigour as the budget papers? The answer to that is yes. The *Quarterly Financial Results Report* is prepared by the Department of Treasury from information provided by agencies, although neither the budget papers nor the quarterly reports are audited. They are prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards and other authoritative pronouncements from the Australian Accounting Standards Board and they are consistent with the Australian Bureau of Statistics' requirements.

Another question was: why are the estimated out-turn figures contained in the March 2013 *Quarterly Financial Results Report* identical to those reported in the 2012–13 *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement*? That is a concern Hon Ken Travers has. The quarterly report compares the latest actual information available with the most recent budget revision; in the case of March 2013, quarterly. The most recent revision was the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement* published in February 2013. The Department of Treasury ceased publication of monthly reports in June 2010, bringing Western Australia into line with all other jurisdictions.

Hon Ken Travers: Why was one not done for that quarterly report?

Hon HELEN MORTON: I will have to keep going; otherwise I will not get through this. It will be fine if Hon Ken Travers asks that question during committee, because I will have a break in between.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich asked about revenue projections for the iron ore price and whether government leaned on Treasury to artificially change the methodology to show a \$1.4 billion increase in revenue in the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement*. I again suggest that anyone who thinks Treasury would behave like that is actually unaware of the role of Treasury and the ability of Treasury to provide independent advice of that nature.

Hon Ken Travers: I guess the question is not whether it was Treasury; it is whether it was an instruction of government. I have great faith in Treasury, unless they are instructed by the Treasurer.

Hon HELEN MORTON: Do the estimates contained in the March 2013 *Quarterly Financial Results Report* have the same rigour as the budget papers? The answer is: absolutely, yes. The *Quarterly Financial Results Report* is prepared by the Department of Treasury from information provided by agencies, although neither the budget papers nor the quarterly reports are audited. They are prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards and other authoritative pronouncements from the Australian Accounting Standards Board and they are consistent with the Australian Bureau of Statistics' requirements.

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Hon Darren West asked questions about WA's credit rating status. The state government is committed to responsibly manage the state's finances. Independent assessment of this commitment is reflected in the retention of the state's AAA credit rating. WA is one of only three states, along with New South Wales and Victoria, that is rated AAA by both Standard and Poor's and Moody's Investors Service. Since 2008–09 the state government has faced significant revenue challenges, including lower-than-expected GST revenue and volatile royalty income and effects on stamp duty collections from a very subdued property market. At the same time economic expansion, along with strong population growth, has driven demand for public sector services and infrastructure. In response to these pressures, the state government announced a number of significant savings measures aimed at ensuring the state's finances remain sustainable and that the state's AAA credit rating is retained.

The issue of voluntary redundancies was also raised. One thousand voluntary redundancies are being sought. I re-emphasise that this is a temporary measure. There has been a significant increase in payment from 12 to 20 weeks for voluntary redundancy. People must not forget the fact that these are voluntary redundancies.

Another question that was asked was how many times has this government fallen under the 10 per cent growth rate in expenditure since it came into government. I think Hon Ken Travers suggested that it never happened once.

Hon Ken Travers: I said that it happened only once.

Hon HELEN MORTON: Is that what he said? I must have misheard him.

Hon Ken Travers: I said it never happened under the current Treasurer. I acknowledge that it happened under Christian Porter.

Hon HELEN MORTON: Is that so? Okay. I just wanted to clarify that in 2008–09, it was 13.5 per cent; in 2009–10, it was 10.9 per cent; in 2010–11, it was 5.2 per cent; and in 2011–12, it was 10.2 per cent. The source of that information is the *Annual Report on State Finances*.

Hon Ken Travers: So my claim that the current Treasurer has never been able to bring it in under 10 per cent is actually correct.

Hon HELEN MORTON: We actually want to talk about this government rather than individuals. So as long as the member is acknowledging that there has been a time when this government has brought that expenditure well and truly under 10 per cent —

Hon Sue Ellery: Are you a new government or are you not a new government?

Hon HELEN MORTON: It is about the government.

Hon Ken Travers: So not one single current member of your government has ever been able to be a Treasurer who has presided over expenditure growth of below 10 per cent?

Hon HELEN MORTON: Hon Ken Travers can keep playing on words, and we can keep on saying that this government has certainly had a time when growth in expenditure has been well below 10 per cent.

The new consumer price index-based public sector wages policy will have legislative backing to ensure that it will be taken into consideration in meetings and discussions by the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission and the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal. That will apply to all agreements that expire after 1 November. Hon Ken Travers asked why that date of 1 November applied. I want to make it clear that it will apply to all agreements that expire after 1 November 2013.

Hon Ken Travers: My question was: why was 1 November chosen?

Hon HELEN MORTON: Because of the time it would take to get that legislation in place.

A question was asked about the words "Sum to be available for services and purposes voted by Legislative Assembly", and the Leader of the House sought advice as to why there is no reference to the Legislative Council. I will not go into this in a lot of detail, but I have some interesting historic data about this. Clause 4 of the bill states —

The sums referred to in section 3(1) are to be available to satisfy the warrants under the hand of the Governor, given under the law now in force, for any services and purposes voted by the Legislative Assembly during the year beginning on 1 July 2013 and ending on 30 June 2014.

This form of words has been employed in respect of the consolidated account—previously titled the consolidated fund—from earlier Supply Bills and reflects the view that the Legislative Assembly is the primary chamber in financial business. For example, money bills can originate only in the Legislative Assembly; the estimates are not attached to the appropriation bills when passed from the Legislative Assembly to the Legislative Council;

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and under section 46(2) of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act 1899, the Legislative Council may not amend Loan Bills, or bills imposing taxation, or bills appropriating revenue or moneys for the ordinary annual services of the government. So it is noteworthy that in earlier Supply Acts, the reference to “voted by Legislative Assembly” applied only to the consolidated fund, or recurrent expenditure, and no similar limitation applied to the general loan fund, or capital works. This would reinforce the Legislative Assembly’s pre-eminence in relation to bills appropriating ordinary annual services.

Some questions were asked about the South Australian Supply Act 2012. In essence, the South Australian legislation does no more than what our current legislation does, which is allow for the first two months of the financial year to be a carry-over. That is what was agreed to in the South Australian Supply Act.

A question was also asked about the methodology for pricing iron ore. The methodology for preparing iron ore assumptions to inform the state’s revenue estimates has had to be revised to better reflect the way in which iron ore is currently priced. The previous approach based price assumptions on lagged spot prices. The new approach to iron ore assumptions has a significant impact on iron ore royalty estimates. It is not surprising that the method had to be changed, because the way in which iron ore is priced is continually evolving. For instance, just five years ago, iron ore prices were negotiated annually. Now, iron ore prices are either negotiated for individual sales, known as the spot price, or, more often, based on average spot prices of recent sales.

With those few comments, I will conclude my remarks, because I know that members want to go into the committee stage and be given some more detailed information when my advisers are with me. I commend the bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Committee

The Deputy Chair of Committees (Hon Simon O’Brien) in the chair; Hon Helen Morton (Minister for Mental Health) in charge of the bill.

Clause 1: Short title —

Hon KEN TRAVERS: The minister tried to answer this question but did not give a sufficient enough answer. I am yet to understand why a re-elected government was not able to have its budget brought in in May and passed in the usual way so as not to require supply. The minister may recall that this issue came up when we were discussing fixed-term elections and the March date was chosen. I got the clear impression during that debate that the government was of the view that the March date would allow sufficient time for particularly a returning government to bring in a budget by the end of the financial year. I expressed concern that a new government would have difficulty in getting a budget in order. I seek the minister’s explanation as to why the government was not able to bring forward its budget in the normal time frame; that is, before the end of the financial year.

Hon HELEN MORTON: I think I have covered that, but I am happy to go over the comments that I made. Apart from the election and the caretaker time that was involved, what I have heard the Premier say over and over again is that this is a new government, with new ministers and new priorities, that had to take a number of things into account. The things that had to be taken into account are the election commitments, the reprioritising of some of the programs to be delivered and the new efficiency dividends being sought.

Hon Ken Travers: What new efficiency dividends?

Hon HELEN MORTON: Areas like the reduction in marketing costs. Quite a number of new things have come into play. Ministers had to critically look at the spending of each of their departments and changes have been made to the machinery of government. All those things have occurred since this government has been in office; it is nothing to do with the previous government. They are the reasons that we have had to start afresh and look at the issues of budgeting, and that process is continuing right now. There were also changes to the federal government’s finances. So many things have been in play and, as I said, the Premier has been quite adamant that this is a new government and a new start. Consequently, there had to be a new budget.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I thought the minister was better than coming in here and repeating the government’s spin that somehow this is not a continuing government. This is the same government that was there on 7 March. It is the government that went to the people saying it had a fully funded, fully costed plan. Why was the government not able to transfer the fully funded, fully costed plan into the work it had previously done on the budget?

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Hon HELEN MORTON: I have already answered that but the member does not want the answer that I have given him. He wants something else but I do not have anything else to give to him. The information that I have already provided is the reason that we have a new budget.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Was the Premier correct when he said repeatedly during the election campaign that the Liberal Party had a fully funded, fully costed plan?

Hon HELEN MORTON: That is a question the member needs to put to the Premier. I believe so and I am assured so by the Treasurer, so I do not have a problem with those comments.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: If the government had a fully funded, fully costed plan, why is this budget so complex? To me it is a fairly simple matter. I would imagine the government was still doing budget bilaterals last year in preparation for the budget. The government then went to the election with all the benefits of having access to Treasury prior to formally calling the election. The Treasurer commented many times on the benefits of incumbency. I find it absolutely extraordinary that the government is now coming into this place and saying that it cannot get the budget done by 30 June because it must do all this work. I think the government's words were to "include" the election costings into the budget planning. These are not my words; they are the Liberal Party's words that it used during the election campaign. It said it had a fully funded, fully costed plan. I find it extraordinary, but I will move on for a minute. The minister also said that the new efficiency dividends were another reason that the government could not get the budget done by 30 June. What does the minister mean by "new efficiency dividends"?

Hon HELEN MORTON: The reduction in advertising was the main one that took place. I do not know whether the member was aware, but for a time the government was unable to advertise any information that it wanted to. There was a significant reduction in the public relations and advertising work. That is one example. In my own portfolio, for example, I could not advertise for people to participate in a range of things in the drug and alcohol sector that we had previously been looking for. That advertising was held over until the end of the financial year. There also was a requirement to slow down procurement in a number of areas. They are all areas that we have had to progress to ensure that we could bring in the budget on time and on budget this year.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: This is why the minister confuses me. They were not efficiency dividends.

Hon Helen Morton: What were they?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: They were emergency measures the government had to take because prior to the election the government had failed to implement its efficiency dividends. One of the things we will work through tonight is how agencies are progressing their efficiency dividends. Referring us back to the midyear review is simply unacceptable, in my view. If the minister wants to go down that path, I am more than happy to read out what was contained in the midyear review regarding efficiency dividends. That was the same technique that the government used when the previous Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations conducted its thirty-ninth report on efficiency dividends. Many of the agencies said that all that information would be detailed in the midyear review. Of course, we know that the midyear review did not give us details of how the efficiency dividends would be met; they simply identified the quantity of the efficiency dividends. Is the minister able to confirm today that every agency has met its two per cent efficiency dividend this year; and, prior to the announcement of the emergency measures, were they on track at that point to deliver their efficiency dividends?

Hon HELEN MORTON: The financial year has not finished, as the member knows. The member is asking whether they are on track. Until we get the audited accounts, we will not know for certain.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Is the minister saying that neither the government, the minister in her own portfolio, the Treasurer nor the Premier is receiving regular updates from Treasury and their government agencies on how they are tracking this financial year?

Hon HELEN MORTON: The expectation from Treasury is that the agencies will be managing within the amount that has been given to them. If there is a requirement to vary any of those, that will be a separate requirement to go before the Economic and Expenditure Reform Committee for approval. That has happened from time to time. That is also an authorised level of funding that they can make use of. In the absence of that, the expectation is they will work within their level of appropriation.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I want to pursue a couple of the minister's answers. The first is that I think we need to debunk the notion that we are dealing with a brand-new government and the reason that the Supply Bill 2013 is before us is that the brand-new government had to completely reset its priorities. It is the same Premier and Treasurer —

Hon Ken Travers: The same Minister for Mental Health.

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Hon SUE ELLERY: Indeed. They made a series of promises before the election but they were aware, to a certain extent, to be generous—although I think they were completely aware—of the constraints on their spending. The government announced a series of efficiency dividends in the budget in May last year. On 26 September last year, the Premier and the Treasurer—the same Premier and Treasurer—announced a series of savings initiatives that included an immediate lowering of the ceiling of the number of full-time equivalent employees in the general government sector, which would apply effective from that date until further notice; limiting the growth in public sector leave liabilities by capping them at 30 June 2012 levels; and a 1.5 per cent reduction in agencies' 2012–13 budgets for purchasing non-essential goods and services, including consumables such as stationery, communication, administration and consultants. The media release on that date goes on to say —

These measures are expected to generate savings of \$328million in 2012–13, and are in addition to the measures previously announced in the 2012–13 Budget, including the two per cent general Government efficiency dividend.

Prior to the election the government announced the efficiency dividend of \$328 million in additional savings. The election was then held and we all saw the material that was published, much of it in the name of the Premier—the same Premier we have now—with a little stamp on it like the old-fashioned wax stamp in that round shape that said “fully funded, fully costed”. They are all the promises that were made. The government knew prior to the election that it had a budget with some constraints that it should be worried about. The Liberal Party then made a series of promises and told the people of Western Australia they were fully funded and fully costed. The Liberal Party got elected and the Premier stood up that night and said, “It’s a new government” and then proceeded to break a series of promises. I am not sure what in that sequence of events should lead us to believe the Premier when he says that it is a brand-new government. It is not a brand-new government.

If the government, the Premier and the Treasurer knew prior to the election that they did not have the money to fund all the promises they were about to make, they should not have put that little gold stamp on it that said “fully funded, fully costed”. They got themselves elected, and they came back and said, “Now we have to break a series of promises.” The Premier broke the first one within, I think, a matter of 10 days or so. We had the farce of the notion that what is said on FM radio does not count and then the farce of the notion that, “If you take literally what I say, I guess I have broken my promise”—aghast that someone should take literally a person in the senior position of Premier of Western Australia. We also know that last year the estimates and financial operations committee inquired into how agencies were progressing with the efficiency dividend and that many of those agencies reported—as reflected in a report the committee tabled in this place—that, in fact, they could not tell us just yet how they were travelling with the efficiency dividend, but that it would be published in the midyear review. The details were not published in the midyear review. The minister stood and said, “You’ll just have to trust us. I can’t give you any details about how agencies are travelling; you’ll just have to trust that you’ll see it in the budget.” Why would we believe the minister when she says, “Just wait until the midyear review and we will tell you then”? She did not tell us then, and the Premier told us at the election that all his promises were fully funded and fully costed, and they clearly were not. Liberal members went to the election saying, “Please elect this government and you’ll have this person as the Premier if you do.” We got the same Premier. How is that a new government? I think we need to debunk the notion that we are dealing with a new government; we are not. We are dealing with a government that made a set of promises it did not have the capacity to deliver, and that is why there is a Supply Bill before us and that is why we have a budget that will not be before us until August. The government has to scramble now to find the money and because of the bungle in the other place last week around the Insurance Commission of Western Australia Amendment Bill, it will have \$30 million less to play with. That is why we are dealing with the Supply Bill; it is not because we have a new government that has set new priorities. It has the same priorities it went to the election with, unless the Premier is going to break more promises. There are 12 or 15 so far, but maybe there are more to come. This is about the government scrambling to find ways to raise the money it knew it did not have when it made a series of promises to the WA electorate.

Hon HELEN MORTON: It is a new government. I do not know what has happened to other people when they have experienced government. A few on that side have experienced government. We went down to Government House and were sworn in as a new government. It is a new government.

Hon Sue Ellery: For heaven’s sake.

Hon Kate Doust: You’re not starting from scratch.

Hon HELEN MORTON: There is nothing the member can say.

Hon Sue Ellery: You haven’t changed your priorities. You knew the state of the books before the election and you know them afterwards.

Hon HELEN MORTON: There is no doubt about it whatsoever.

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The DEPUTY CHAIR (Hon Simon O'Brien): Order! I will not have multiple members talking over the member who has the call. At the moment, it is the minister and I invite her to continue to address the question.

Hon HELEN MORTON: Thanks very much, Mr Deputy Chair. As much as members opposite do not like being reminded of it, the fact is that it is a new government. There are new priorities and there are new ministers. We were all sworn in anew and the Premier made it absolutely clear that from his point of view we were starting from scratch. That is why none of the bills that were previously on the notice paper were able to be rolled straight into this Parliament; every one of those bills had to be reconsidered by cabinet and go through various other processes before being introduced. It is a brand-new government—a brand-new start. That is precisely what we are doing.

Apart from that, I have already indicated a number of things that need to be taken into account: iron ore prices, commonwealth funding, the GST rate and the machinery of government. All those things make a difference to the budget. That is why it is being renegotiated right now.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I am fascinated by why the budget is being “renegotiated”. The “budget is being renegotiated” as we speak; negotiated between whom?

Hon HELEN MORTON: I understand Hon Ken Travers has never been a minister. It requires each minister to take a budget to cabinet and to the Economic and Expenditure Reform Committee for those negotiations. I may or may not get more of some of the things that I thought I would be funded for in mental health, child protection, family services, drug and alcohol services or disability services. Those things are happening right now.

Hon Sue Ellery: That is negotiation, not renegotiation.

Hon HELEN MORTON: I am sorry I put the “re” word in front.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Is the minister seeking things over and above what were in here as election commitments or is she talking about things that were in her election commitments?

Hon HELEN MORTON: Both.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Does the minister accept that she has to negotiate or renegotiate to get her election commitments honoured? Is that what she is saying to us?

Hon HELEN MORTON: Election commitments are commitments given but a process needs to be gone through to get them budgeted for. That is a process. There is no opportunity to say through the election commitment that because we are committing this level of funding to this new initiative, it is therefore done and dusted. There needs to be a process by which that is formally agreed to through the Treasury and the EERC processes. Those things are happening.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I come back to the question: what was meant by having a “fully funded, fully costed” plan at the election?

Hon HELEN MORTON: It was funded and costed.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: If the plan was funded and costed, why is that plan not able to become the budget?

Hon HELEN MORTON: I will probably make this comment once more and I shall not make it again; it is to formalise it.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: It is strange for a minister to be representing a minister in another place and to have carriage of a bill that is not hers but for that minister to draw upon her own portfolios, for which she is responsible, to illustrate the points she is trying to make on the bill. I ask the minister a question, recognising that she is new to the portfolio of child protection and family support, about the areas for which she did have responsibility, and I relate it directly to clause 1, because Hon Ken Travers is trying to establish the parameters in which we are operating and the kind of assumptions that have been brought to the development of the Supply Bill 2013. In relation to the portfolios the minister was responsible for, were the commitments she took to the election budgeted?

Hon HELEN MORTON: At the outset, I just want to make a really clear statement about the difference between a Supply Bill and the appropriation bills that will come. The Supply Bill is about a continuation of funding equivalent to the level of spending that has already been agreed to for a period of time into the coming financial year. The appropriation bills will give appropriation to all the line items by individual agency levels of expenditure. Election commitments that are identified and the amount of funding required are taken into that process through a process we are now undergoing, through the Economic and Expenditure Reform Committee and through the process of cabinet sign-off to that. That is the process; that is formalising the process by which election commitments get fully funded. They are already funded and budgeted for, but there is a process by which that needs to be formalised.

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Hon SALLY TALBOT: I am sorry, but has that left me even less sure of what we are actually talking about here. Is the minister attempting to clarify her own understanding of what is going on? In that case, is she retracting her previous statement that the budget was being renegotiated, or is she talking about something quite different, which is the appropriation process? I cannot understand the points she is making about drawing the distinction between the two. After all, we are using the minister's own words here; is she saying that up to now in this clause 1 debate, she has actually used the two processes interchangeably and that we now need to extract one from the other?

Hon HELEN MORTON: Not at all, Hon Sally Talbot. I made it absolutely clear that the Supply Bill will enable government to continue to operate using levels of funding that are already known. The appropriation bill, quite separately, will be around individual agency line items, which the member is also going to be interested in when they come through. I do not think that the member should be concerned about appropriation at the moment, but I needed to be able to explain to the member why we are not going into levels of line items agency by agency, and that is because that is applicable in appropriation bills. What is applicable right here is agreement for the level of funding to continue at the level that expenditure has been occurring in the 2012-13 year, and that will continue for a number of months. The discussion we got into around what we are going back to Treasury for right now in terms of formalising our election commitments was because some members on that side are asking why we need a Supply Bill and why we have not brought a budget down right now. The discussion then was about the process by which the appropriation bills will be brought down, because that is the process that gives the line items by agency, and that is what we are going through right now. In the meantime, we need to allow the government to continue to operate, and that is what the Supply Bill is about. There is no interchangeable discussion between these two issues.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: With all due respect, minister, I accept the minister's point that with an appropriation bill we get an agency by agency break-up, and by agency it is a single line appropriation. What the government is asking for with the Supply Bill is a single line appropriation for the totality.

Hon Helen Morton: That is correct.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I think that means we are entitled to ask the minister about how that money is going to be spent. It becomes even more complex, because the minister, by her own admission, has said that the Supply Bill is about the continuing expenditure into the first part of this year, based on what the government was spending last year. But the questions that a lot of members on this side are going to ask—I will start to go into them—will be to try to understand what that means. Of course, we had the farce at the last budget whereby—this is what the government actually did—on a service level, the total cost of services of the government was more than was being appropriated. So, with the passage of the budget, the agencies needed to achieve what was referred to in the budget papers as an efficiency dividend, to bring their expenditure down from where the line-by-line expenditure within the agency was to a level that matched the appropriation given. I think the chamber is entitled to an explanation this late in the financial year of how the government is tracking, whether or not agencies have been successful in achieving their efficiency dividends, and what the actual figure is when we appropriate this money to allow agencies to continue their expenditure in accordance with what they were expending in the 2012-13 financial year. I find it appalling, and I think we are going to be here a very long time as we go through each agency if we are not going to get at least a broad explanation about how about the government is on track to meet its efficiency dividends.

I am quite convinced that the reason the government brought in its emergency measures after the election is that agencies had not been meeting their efficiency dividends. I will give the minister an example, and one that she should be in a position to know because it does not go to her representative capacity; it goes to her day-to-day role as a minister. Last year, Child Protection was given an appropriation of \$483.475 million, and its efficiency dividend was calculated for this year to be \$7.6 million. So, to actually come in at that appropriation, the minister's agency of Child Protection was going to need to save \$7.6 million. The minister kindly referred us to the *Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement* of December 2012, page 140 of which outlines the explanation of the implementation of the general government efficiency dividend and reads —

The Department for Child Protection will streamline processes (particularly in the areas of ICT and the current Secure Care facility's bed usage and requirements), and reduce expenditure on corporate and policy support functions (non-front line services), communications, training, administration, stationery and printing.

Did the minister's agency succeed in doing that to find that \$7 million that it had to?

Hon HELEN MORTON: I have indicated that I am not going to start debating or discussing individual agency budgets. This is not a bill that considers individual agencies, line items et cetera. If I start discussing agencies

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that are within my own responsibility, I will get into broader stuff that these gentlemen who are in the chamber do not have information on. I am not going to get into individual agency information.

Hon Ken Travers: They can take notes and come back tomorrow with the answers.

Hon HELEN MORTON: What I can say, Hon Ken Travers, which is within the area the member is discussing, is that all the information around the performance of the Department for Child Protection and Family Support is clear. Where the department has had to get additional funding, that has been achieved, so its budget will be achieved this year. I do not want to get into any more detail on that. The areas the member referred to have been addressed. I can say that because I am obviously across that information. When Hon Ken Travers starts asking me about other agencies, I will draw the line. This is a Supply Bill; it is not around individual agencies and individual appropriations. The bill purely enables the government to continue to operate until those appropriations are brought in in August.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: It allows the government to operate based on the expenditure in this year. We are trying to find out what has been the expenditure this year. I might stand corrected, but I could not quite understand the minister's answer—I could not work out whether the minister's agency has come in on budget or whether it has had to go back and get additional money. The minister said that it will be reported on later that it is getting additional money. Is it going to come in on budget? Will its expenditure be less than the \$483 million and, therefore, can we rightly assume that the agency will get 40 per cent of that \$483 million? That is what I am trying to get to. How will this money be allocated and divvied up between the different agencies? We are now within minutes to midnight in terms of the financial year. I refuse to accept that Treasury and the government are not aware of where we are tracking. The grand total appropriation last year was \$16 872 940 000; Child Protection got \$483 million of that. Is Child Protection still going to get \$483.040 million of the \$16 billion, or does it need more money out of this Supply Bill?

Hon HELEN MORTON: Spending across agencies, and not just by the agencies that I represent, is undertaken on a fortnightly basis. That information is provided by the agencies to Treasury to enable that funding to continue. Once again I assure Hon Ken Travers that any issues around Child Protection that needed to be sorted out have been sorted out, and the agency will come in on budget.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: When the minister says “come in on budget”, will expenditure be at or below \$483 040 000?

The DEPUTY CHAIR (Hon Simon O'Brien): I do not know whether the minister wishes to respond, but just before I give the call I will make some comments. I have been listening with great interest to the debate on clause 1, because part of my role is to facilitate the working of the Committee of the Whole House. I do not have any concerns in that respect; I think we are achieving that. I am just looking at the detail of what is being inquired into and I am of the view that, to make progress, perhaps some of the current line of questioning needs to be undertaken under clause 3, which is where the Committee of the Whole House will consider the quantum proposed to be supplied. Members might just want to consider that. It is a bit of a technical point, but it does help us to make progress if we can proceed with putting the question on the short title and then perhaps returning to these other matters in later clauses, plus, of course, there may be members who may wish to discuss other points in relation to clause 1. I make that observation. The question we are considering is that clause 1 do stand as printed. Does the minister want to seek the call?

Hon HELEN MORTON: I will just make a final comment; that is, I am not going to discuss the individual budgets of individual agencies in this process. This is a supply bill, not an appropriation bill.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Order!

Hon KEN TRAVERS: The government may be embarrassed about its financial mismanagement and may not want to answer the questions, but we have an obligation to ask the questions.

Hon Helen Morton: You are confused about what we are talking about. This is a supply bill, not an appropriation bill. Try to stay on track.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: No, this Supply Bill grants the government money to spend—40 per cent of what it had last year—and, by the minister's own admission, some time to allow it to continue to expend through to October. It is no different from an appropriation bill in this sense; it is a bill of the Parliament that authorises the government to expend money. If we did not pass this bill before 30 June because of a lack of cooperation from the government—I am hoping that the government will be a bit more cooperative so that we can move on with the legislation at some point—it would not change the world; I accept that. What would happen is that the money

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would continue to run out. In the minister's response to the second reading debate she indicated that we would start to run out of money sometime around late August.

Hon Helen Morton: The end of August if we do not pass this bill.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: The end of August. Beyond then, without the passage of this bill, the government would not be able to spend any more money. In that sense, this bill is no different from an appropriation bill.

Hon Helen Morton: It is a problem that you think that.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: No, it is a problem that the minister does not realise it. This is a bill that allows the government to expend money. What the minister is saying is that because the bill has been titled a Supply Bill rather than an appropriation bill, we do not have a right as a Parliament to know how the government is going to spend public money. That is the logic of what she is saying. Well, I disagree with that. I am not going to block supply and I am not going to block a budget bill in this place, because that is where I come from as a member of the Labor Party, but I will affirm the rights of this house to expect a government to outline how it is going to spend money that is appropriated. The wording of the preamble to the bill is —

An Act to apply out of the Consolidated Account the sum of \$7 942 million for the services and purposes of the year ending 30 June 2014.

That is asking the Parliament to give the executive the right to spend money. Why is it not appropriate for us to then ask: how is the government going to apply and spend that money? In normal circumstances the minister's answer that the government is just going to spend it in accordance with the way in which it spent money in the previous financial year might be sufficient to answer that question, but the thing that makes today's debate different from probably any debate on any other supply bill in the history of the Parliament is that this government has made a complete mess of the way in which it has managed its budgets. This is the only government that I can recall that has set about to not detail how it will keep expenditure below the appropriation. Before it even started, each agency was required to find a two per cent efficiency dividend so that they would be able to bring expenditure back to what was being appropriated. That was the starting point. On top of that, a range of global financial savings measures were included in the budget over and above the appropriation. Then, as Hon Sue Ellery pointed out, in September last year the government announced a further range of saving measures for leave liability, full-time equivalent caps and non-essential purchases. Since the election, the government has outlined what it calls its new efficiency dividends for advertising, procurement and other measures. So, unlike in past Parliaments, when members would have a reasonable understanding of what the line-by-line expenditure of agencies was, the government's explanation now is that it is going to continue to spend money in the same way it spent it last year. That is not an acceptable answer because this house does not know, and has no way of knowing, unless the minister answers tonight the question of how this total amount will be allocated.

The appropriation bill can be broken down agency by agency and the whole estimates process drills down into the detail. The opposition is not asking for that level of detail here, but it is asking for the minister to at least give an idea of the breakdown on an agency-by-agency budget and to explain whether agencies are on track, which agencies will be on track for further efficiency dividends and will therefore get as a proportion of this total amount the proportion that was allocated to them last year, and which agencies will have to get a greater share of this money because they have simply been unable to contain their expenditure to the point that the government has been required to implement these emergency measures.

The matter is made even more complex because much of the emergency procurement appears to be things such as telling police officers that they cannot buy pens and paper. I would have thought that would be the same as the efficiency dividend the government applied in child protection, where it cut back on the expenditure on stationery.

Hon Kate Doust: They should just buy iPads.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: It is the old J-curve effect: you have to spend a bit of money before you get the savings.

Hon Kate Doust: I always tell my husband that.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I have still not worked out how buying a new outfit every week eventually saves money. I look forward to that explanation. Members are distracting me.

It is the right of this Parliament to expect, at the very least, an explanation from the minister about how the money that is going to be granted to the government will allow it to use money as a result of the passage of this bill in a level of detail not dissimilar to the appropriation bills. That is very different from the appropriation

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process under which the house goes into even greater detail on the minutiae of expenditure through the estimates process of each agency.

I make that point, and I do expect answers. I would be happy if the minister were prepared to have the opposition put questions to her, go away and come back tomorrow with the answers. In fact, if we were to make progress on this bill tonight, I would be happy to defer consideration so that the minister can get information on how we are travelling and give the answers tomorrow, so that in the meantime the house could get on with the Duties Legislation Amendment Bill. I am more than happy to do that. But if the minister is not prepared to do that, so be it.

I will try another way of getting the minister to give more information to this house. Does the government expect to deliver a surplus or a deficit on the operating surplus as at 30 June this year?

Hon HELEN MORTON: The member spoke for over 10 minutes and then asked the simplest of questions at the end.

Hon Kate Doust: What is wrong with that?

Hon HELEN MORTON: Nothing is wrong with it, but I would say again that this is a responsible government staying within budget. That is what the number of efficiency dividends relate to. I am concerned that the member thinks there is no difference between a Supply Bill and an appropriations bill. Perhaps it underlines why the opposition would seek to hold up this bill, because the member is seeking the same level of information that would be applicable in the appropriations bill. The estimated actual expenditure figures the member is looking for will be published in the budget papers, and that will present the opportunity for the member to question or understand each of the agencies' levels of expenditure, the efficiencies they have been able to achieve and the issues around their budget processes. But this is not an appropriations bill this time. I am not prepared to go into that level of detail on anything. The answer is no. We will not be providing that level of information. It will be provided at the right time when the appropriation bills are brought in, which is August.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I would like to see if some agreement can be reached on what a Supply Bill does. Does the minister agree with the opposition that Supply Bills allow the government to spend money out of the consolidated fund?

Hon HELEN MORTON: Yes.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: What does the appropriation bill do? Does it allow the government to spend money out of the consolidated account?

Hon HELEN MORTON: I am really sorry I have to go over this with the honourable member again, and I appreciate the difficulty he has understanding this. Appropriation bills provide information, line by line, agency by agency. Supply Bills enable the government to continue to spend money whilst the appropriation legislation is brought into the house. The level of information the member seeks is the appropriation bill level of information, and that is when the member will get it. He will get that information at that time. This bill is about allowing a continuation of expenditure for government to put in place until the appropriation bills are brought in on 8 August.

Hon Ken Travers: Is the minister going to answer my question about an appropriation bill?

The DEPUTY CHAIR (Hon Liz Behjat): Does Hon Ken Travers want the call?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: So the minister agrees that a Supply Bill and an appropriation bill allow the government to spend money out of the consolidated account. The difference is that an appropriation bill appropriates money line by line by agency, and a whole range of detail comes with it. This is the first Supply Bill since 2001, when a new system of introducing budgets before the end of the financial year was introduced. On that occasion in 2001 there was a new government, with a new Premier, and a new political party, with a new range of commitments and promises, not a government returned. As I say, the general concept of traditional Supply Bills was that expenditure would continue to occur on those matters appropriated in previous years. The difficulty—the minister wants to give me lectures and become patronising —

Hon Helen Morton: I don't want to give you lectures.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I think she tried to just then. She tried to give me a lecture and to be patronising. The difference between this Supply Bill and previous Supply Bills is that never before have we had a government that has had to make so many adjustments throughout the year because of its mismanagement. That is why we are demanding more detail than may have been asked for previously under a Supply Bill. Nonetheless, if the house of review cannot ask the government questions about how it is going to spend money that it is asking us to authorise, it is a very, very sad day for the Parliament.

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I might move on, and we can come back to that issue a little later and see whether we can have another go at it. The minister, on reflection, might want to start to answer some of the questions.

Hon Michael Mischin: Now who is being patronising?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I did say that if people want to be patronising to me, I will make the points —

Hon Michael Mischin: No, you just said you would take a lot of time; that's all you said.

Hon Sue Ellery interjected.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: No. If the Attorney General wants to interject, I always welcome his interjections.

Hon Michael Mischin: You might learn something.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Yes; feel free to go. I will sit down and let the Attorney General get the call for a second.

The DEPUTY CHAIR (Hon Liz Behjat): Order, members!

Hon Michael Mischin: Don't waste time. Come on; get on with it. Don't play games.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Minister, would you like the call?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Sorry, Madam Deputy Chair. I seek the call.

Hon Michael Mischin: Grow up.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: If the Attorney General has a contribution to make to this debate, he should feel free to take the call and I will defer to him at any time.

One of the things that the minister talked about in her response—I do not think it was her intent—may have left members with the impression that the Supply Bill somehow concludes at a time and that the automatic supply contained within the Financial Administration Act would end in August, when in fact it is a percentage. That is when it is likely to run out rather than it being a fixed date when it runs out. It is about the percentage of money, and it is just a case of when that money runs out—that is the key. I do not think it was the minister's intention, but her answer almost gave the impression that it is appropriated until the end of August, as opposed to the fact that that is when the 20 per cent is likely to run out. Again, that is one of the issues that we have concerns about.

I have another issue with this bill. The thing that makes this Supply Bill quite different from previous Supply Bills is a number of the emergency measures that have been taken by this government in recent weeks. The minister outlined a number of measures in her own portfolio with respect to advertising and things that she had wanted to advertise but had not been able to do. I think the minister suggested that she had wanted to advertise a range of areas in her portfolio, but because of the most recent emergency measures that were put in place to try to bring the budget expenditure in on target, she had not been able to do so. One of the concerns I have is: because we are allowing the government to apply out of the consolidated account, to use the correct terminology in the bill, an amount of money, what measures are in place to stop agencies on 1 July suddenly catching up on all the things they wanted to do over the past six weeks?

Hon HELEN MORTON: As I have already indicated to the member, those expenditures are undertaken on a fortnightly basis, and the information is provided by the agency to Treasury about what its expenditure requirements will be on that fortnightly basis.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: But that is a retrospective expenditure; that is not a proactive expenditure, is it?

Hon Helen Morton: No; you are wrong. It is proactive.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: It is proactive.

Hon Helen Morton: Yes.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: But they have to present to Treasury what they want to spend over the next fortnight.

Hon Helen Morton: That's correct.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Okay. That is the control. Treasury will just not allow them to spend. That is what I am trying to get to—I do not want to get into the specifics of agencies at this point. What will be the amounts that agencies will be allowed to expend out of the Supply Bill in that first period of the new financial year? How will the amount that agencies are allowed to spend—I do not even expect the minister to get into the detailed amounts on an agency-by-agency basis—in those first couple of months of the new year be determined?

Hon HELEN MORTON: It is based on their payment obligations as they present those to Treasury on a fortnightly basis.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: I almost thought we were going to put the question. Hon Ken Travers.

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Hon KEN TRAVERS: I am sure if the Deputy Chair stays in the chair long enough, she will get to put the question.

Again, I am not asking the minister to get into the details of the tourism budget, but, as an example, there was a major issue recently about tourism. One of the things is that it had a cap on its expenditure. It does not automatically have an obligation for a new round of advertising, but because of the cap that was put on expenditure, it was not able to engage in a round of advertising that it wanted to do as part of its normal, everyday operations. In fact, I think that the tourism minister even said that he regretted the fact that it had been stopped from doing an advertising campaign.

Hon Helen Morton: Yes, you are right.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: What I am trying to understand is: as of 1 July, is tourism back to its expenditure as of 1 July last year or is it now doing its expenditure according to the expenditure obligations that it had in the last six weeks of 2012–13?

Hon HELEN MORTON: The first comment I make is that, as the member knows, the efficiency dividends around marketing were time limited. The other comment I make is that the expenditure that an agency incurs on a fortnightly-by-fortnightly basis is never nice and even throughout the whole year, as the member knows. The agency will provide to Treasury the information that is required around that level of expenditure that is required for that fortnight, and it is not going to be a nice, even amount that is the same as it was last fortnight; it goes up and down, as the member knows. That is the level of information provided by the agency to Treasury. Treasury considers that in light of information that it has, and then appropriates the funding through that process.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I accept the minister's argument that it was time limited. Will agencies be able to go back and ask for that money? If they have completely run down stocks of pens and papers and everything else, and deferred a range of expenditure as a result of those time-limited caps —

Hon Helen Morton interjected.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Please go on.

Hon Helen Morton: I am speaking to my advisers; I am sorry.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: If those caps were time limited, I am trying to get an understanding of how that will operate immediately after 1 July in terms of how agencies are allowed to expend money.

Hon HELEN MORTON: I am really sorry, but I was concentrating on a conversation that was occurring at the table. Hon Ken Travers might need to repeat that.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: The last round of emergency measures were time limited—things like the restriction on Tourism WA advertising. If it has, as part of its ongoing plans, expenditure for campaigns in July and August, will it be allowed to expend money on those sorts of programs? Will there be any continuation of those caps into the new financial year?

Hon HELEN MORTON: I cannot speak for individual agencies. I just know that the efficiency dividend was time limited until 30 June. If there was a concern around any one particular agency or another, that would be negotiated directly between that agency and Treasury. I know that overall efficiency measures taken, especially around marketing et cetera, were time limited until 30 June.

Hon DARREN WEST: Thank you, Madam Deputy President. I presume I still use that nomenclature for you?

The DEPUTY CHAIR (Hon Liz Behjat): Deputy Chair.

Hon DARREN WEST: Thank you. Such is my newness at this committee phase of proceedings, I may need to be referred to the correct terminology from time to time during my questions and concerns about the fact we are debating clause 1 of the first Supply Bill since 2001.

I have made several points that the Minister for Mental Health acknowledged in her reply to the second reading debate. As we established at afternoon tea time, God helps those who help themselves. As an elected member of a very large region, I have some concerns on behalf of those people who elected me. I would like to pose a few questions and put some concerns forward. The very first concern is that we are indeed debating this Supply Bill. I do not accept, and I do not think my electorate will accept, that this is a new government. Using that logic, the 1999 Toyota Hilux sitting in my shed is brand new—it is not; I am the only one who has owned it! It has not had a change of owner. Although the minister might argue this is a new government because its ministers have been sworn in at Government House, the important point to make is there has not been a change of government. We did not have a change of government in March, unfortunately for those of us over here on this side of the chamber. Not only have we not had a change of government, we also have not had a change of Premier or Treasurer, and we have not had a change in several cabinet members. I still grapple with the reason why we are

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even debating this bill and why the budget could not have been brought down in May when it traditionally is brought down. If the Treasurer is as competent as I have been told he is and is fully focused on the job at hand, the budget would have been brought down. There has been a lot of talk about why it has not; I still wish I really knew. After all this debate, I really do not know why we do not have a budget before us in the normal time frame. Would the minister concede, setting aside semantics, for the clarity of the people I represent that there has not been a change of government and that there has been some continuity in the term of the Barnett government between pre and post 9 March?

Hon HELEN MORTON: I would really like to talk to Hon Darren West along the lines that he is a new member of this Parliament. He was not here in the last Parliament—there is one new thing. There are a whole lot of new things here.

Hon Ken Travers: So it's his fault!

Hon HELEN MORTON: I take it that the member has moved into new electorate offices that he was not in before—there is another new thing. There are a whole lot of new things. Does Hon Darren West understand this is the thirty-ninth Parliament and that the Parliament before this was the thirty-eighth? I think I have that right. My comment is that this is a new Parliament, this is a new beginning and this is a new government. I can absolutely assure the member, if he is under any doubt whatsoever, that the Treasurer is an incredibly competent Treasurer. I am not going to go over all of the reasons I have already explained about why we are bringing in a Supply Bill, but let me say once again: be assured that this is a new Parliament.

Hon DARREN WEST: Given that I cannot get a concession that the government has not changed, which I find a bit disappointing even though all of the electors believe that, I had some concerns during my speech about the state's AAA credit rating. The Minister for Mental Health touched on that in her comments. I am a businessperson; I am looking at this matter from a business perspective. I know that government is not a business organisation. If someone wanted to be in business, they would be in business and not in government. I accept all of that. At some point we are responsible to the taxpayers of the state and the nation who supply the money for these bills. At the time this government took office in September 2008, my figures show that state government debt was in the order of \$3.8 billion. At the moment we are venturing into the area of \$18 billion. That is a massive increase in debt. It was pointed out earlier that the interest on that debt is around \$477 million. Extrapolating those figures back, had there not been such an increase in state debt, we would have paid in the vicinity of only \$85 million at the same interest rate. We are paying in the order of \$390 million a year more in interest because we have this higher level of state debt.

Interest rates are now very low. They are at about a 54-year low. In the last three months I have rolled over some of my loans. I can tell members that the rates are very sharp. Heaven help us, minister, if the rates get back up to 12 per cent. If that happens, I have grave concerns about Western Australia's AAA credit rating. As the minister quite rightly pointed out, Moody's and Standard and Poor's have rated the state's credit rating, along with a couple of other states, at AAA. I think that is great and needs to be maintained. It is very important to everyone who does business in the state of Western Australia and everyone who is a taxpayer and ultimately uses government services that we maintain that rating. The implications of that are dire—the cost of our funds will rise even more and investment will diminish. Given that we had a AAA credit rating at \$3.8 billion in debt, and a AAA credit rating in these economic times of \$18 billion in debt, there must be a point at which that rating comes under serious threat. I suggest that point is not that far away. Can the minister give us any advice as to what that figure may be at which our AAA credit rating becomes extremely wobbly for the taxpayers of Western Australia?

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Minister, before I give you the call, I understand that the member on his feet asking a question is relatively new to this chamber. I reiterate the comments made by the previous Chair, that whilst we allow some latitude when considering the short title of the bill, perhaps the member is stretching it a little and straying into areas that might better be dealt with in clause 3. I point that out to Hon Darren West at this stage.

Hon HELEN MORTON: I will just go over some of the comments I previously made in this area, especially around the AAA credit rating. I agree with Hon Darren West that the government is absolutely committed to maintain its AAA credit rating. I do not think we are in any danger of losing it.

Since coming into office, the state government has faced some really significant revenue challenges including lower-than-expected GST revenue, volatile royalty income and the effect of stamp duty collections in a very subdued property market. At the same time economic expansion, along with strong population growth, has driven the demand for public sector services and infrastructure. These are the things that the government is grappling with to maintain its AAA credit rating. I do not know whether Hon Darren West was looking for a figure or an understanding of what might be a trigger or something like that. All I can tell the member is that the government is very committed to maintaining its AAA credit rating. Taking all of those things into account is

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part of the reason the government has to be given the time to bring its budget in. That is what we are committed to doing.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I want to take the minister back a bit so that I can understand the process and why the minister is comfortable with this being a new government. Did the minister begin any form of bilaterals around the 2013 budget in 2012?

Hon HELEN MORTON: I assume the member is talking about bilaterals for the 2013–14 budget. The answer is that the normal negotiations that take place between agencies and Treasury were continuing. We then went into caretaker mode, and nothing occurred during that time. We then went into the election process, and it all started again after that.

Hon SUE ELLERY: So we have established that the process began in 2012; there was a hiatus over the caretaker period; there was the election; and the process was picked up again in 2013. Is that correct?

Hon HELEN MORTON: I do not think the Leader of the Opposition quite got what I said at the beginning. I said normal processes between agencies and Treasury; so this might be talking about current expenditure, or about trying to ensure that agencies are brought back to the level of expenditure that they are budgeted for, et cetera. These are normal day-to-day or week-to-week processes that take place between agencies and Treasury. In fact, at any one time throughout the year, three cycles are occurring at once. Those cycles are the acquittal stage for the year gone by, the current stage of expenditure that a process is in, and looking forward to where things might be for the coming budget. So, at any one stage, three levels of consideration are taking place continuously; it never stops.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Indeed; the minister is quite right. In the second part of the year, agencies start to identify what they want out of the following year's budget; and Treasury starts to figure out what it is not going to give, and what advice it is going to give the Treasurer on instructions that should be given to agencies and ministers about doing up their wish list. Did that process begin in 2012?

Hon HELEN MORTON: Again, I would say that those processes never stop. They are continuous processes that occur all the time. The actual formalisation of the budget process occurs in the period leading up to May, normally, when there is no election. But in this process, it is occurring right now, leading up to the August budget.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I thank the minister for her explanation. As I understood what the minister said, the normal budget processes were begun in 2012; there was then a hiatus during the caretaker period, as is appropriate; there was then the election; and the normal processes were then begun again. However, this time, the government has decided that the process will be extended to August, for reasons of its own choosing, which it is entitled to do. But the process was started in 2012, and it has continued, with a break in the middle around the caretaker period and the election, for a longer period than normal in 2013. But it is the same budget process, by the same government.

Hon HELEN MORTON: The same budget process that the Leader of the Opposition is referring to is the same budget process as the midyear review, which occurs every December. Those things occurred in December. But the formalisation of budget bids and budget information occurs after that process.

Hon Sue Ellery: Agreed. There is nothing new about that.

The DEPUTY CHAIR (Hon Liz Behjat): Members, we are dealing with the Supply Bill 2013, and the question is that clause 1 do stand as printed. Hon Ken Travers.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Aye!

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Was that an aye, or is someone seeking the call over there? I am happy for Hon Simon O'Brien to have the call if he wants it.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: I have given you the call, Hon Ken Travers.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Thank you.

Hon Simon O'Brien: I had almost gone to sleep, so I might get up and have a stretch!

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Feel free!

This bill allows the government to apply money out of the consolidated account for both recurrent services and capital purposes. How will the capital projects be selected? Will it be only those projects that are currently underway, or will some of this money be able to be applied to new projects?

Hon HELEN MORTON: They are ongoing projects.

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Hon KEN TRAVERS: So, even if a project was included in the capital works to commence in the 2013–14 year —

Hon Helen Morton: That is ongoing budget.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: According to the Premier, it is not, because forward estimates do not have any meaning; they are in never-never land. This is what I want to understand.

Hon HELEN MORTON: If it is reflected in expenditure for the 2013–14 year in the current budget papers, that expenditure will be able to be made in this current process through this allocation of funding.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Can the minister assure us that none of this money will be expended on projects that were not included in either last year's budget or the midyear review; that is, in the 2012–13 budget papers and the forward estimates? I assume that if a project was put in in the midyear review, that will be added to the list of capital projects. There are some projects that were announced in the midyear review. Does the minister understand what I am saying? Can the minister assure us that none of this money will be spent on capital projects that were not included in either the 2012–13 budget papers and forward estimates —

Hon Helen Morton: Not included, yes.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: — or the midyear review?

Hon Helen Morton: Which means that they have never been appropriated.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: They have never been publicly reported. My point is that there may be capital works projects that cabinet has made decisions to proceed with but that have never been publicly reported. I am trying to find out whether the minister is asking us to give the government money to spend on projects that have never been publicly reported.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Minister, before you take the call on that, perhaps I could direct Hon Ken Travers to clause 3, because I think he is definitely starting to stray into that area now when he is asking about the specifics of the capital purposes. We have had a very long and wide-reaching, but very interesting, debate around clause 1, and Hon Ken Travers might consider that we might like to move on a bit further this evening; so could he just bear that in mind?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: At the moment I am still asking about general issues, not the specifics of them. I assure the chair that the specific debate will be far more specific than it has been so far.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: I am sure it will be! I am just trying!

Hon HELEN MORTON: Obviously the process by which that can occur, if it were to occur, is through a Treasurer's advance. Even if it has been appropriated in the 2012–13 budget and has been picked up in some form through the midyear review, it would be via a Treasurer's advance. My advisers and I are not aware of any such project that is not in that process.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Is it the minister's view that this bill would allow cabinet to make a decision after 1 July to commence a project without it having been previously determined before the end of this financial year? Are we allowing the government to appropriate money for projects for which a decision has not yet been made by cabinet?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: The question is of the difference between an appropriation bill in the sense of a budget, which we will contemplate in August, and the Supply Bill, such as the one before us now that has taken up some time in committee stage. I wonder how protracted the discussion about that really has to be. Hon Ken Travers has been careful to keep his line of questioning and discussion relevant to clause 1 of the Supply Bill. However, in doing that, he and one or two of his colleagues are making these matters far more protracted than they need to be. I remind the Committee of the Whole that the purpose of this Supply Bill, as has been the purpose of other Supply Bills in the past, including Supply Bills when it was standard for a budget not to be passed until August or September of the financial year, is that the funds to be approved by Parliament under the Supply Bill are for the normal ongoing expenses of government as the new financial year commences. The question Hon Ken Travers has put to the minister is an unreasonable question.

Hon Helen Morton: It is hypothetical.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: It is hypothetical, but there is a little more to it than that. He is asking for a definitive answer to the question of whether the money allocated for capital expenditure proposed in this bill, which is ostensibly for up to several months extra normal expense of government payment if approved by the house—I presume it will be approved because we have heard nothing to the contrary—can be allocated by cabinet for capital works projects that have not been announced. The member is asking that question in a definitive sense so

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that if the minister were to say no and it was ever used for such a purpose, the opposition would say, “Aha, we’ve got you!” Conversely, if the minister was to say that it could be, the opposition would also say, “Aha, we’ve got you! Tell us what it’s for or else you’re requiring us to give you money for some unknown purpose.” Again we come back to the purpose of a Supply Bill, which is to continue the normal processes of government. I am pretty darn sure that there is no proposal to spend the \$1 billion-odd contained in the bill for capital purposes on new, unannounced capital works ventures to build bridges over the water in Melville or anything like that. It will be for the normal process of government. Sometimes cabinet will make decisions outside and subsequent to any budgetary or appropriation process and will want to spend money to do it. The fact is that that is a normal process of government.

Hon Ken Travers: But they can only do it when it has been appropriated by Parliament.

Hon SIMON O’BRIEN: Indeed it can. This allocation is for the normal purposes of government activity. I think the member’s question is a non-question in that sense and I do not think it is germane to the consideration of clause 1. I give full marks to Hon Ken Travers for having a go at perpetuating the habit of successive oppositions to continue to talk these matters out unnecessarily while protesting that they are doing their job.

Hon HELEN MORTON: A Treasurer’s advance can be used for anything that is unforeseen, urgent or extraordinary that takes place, and that can be a recurrent or capital expenditure. I cannot anticipate whether anything of that nature is likely to happen between now and August. I hope not because that would mean there was a major catastrophe that would require a Treasurer’s advance to fix. Even if that did occur, the funding would have to be reflected in the 8 August budget. In the absence of that, I cannot think of any way that type of expenditure could take place other than if the funding was already being appropriated through the Parliament or through the 2012–13 process or the 2013–14 budget process on 8 August. There always have been Treasurer’s advances, as the member is aware.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I agree with the minister’s comments that the Treasurer’s advance would pick it up. I am testing my memory but my recollection is that when Supply Bills were a regular event in Parliament, we also had annual Treasurer’s advances. Three per cent of the budget was not automatically available for a Treasurer’s advance as contained in the Financial Management Act. Potentially, at the same time as the Supply Bill would have been passed, a Treasurer’s advance would have gone through so that Treasury would have been informed of those issues until 30 June this year. As a way of trying to help facilitate the debate, perhaps the minister could give an undertaking to confirm that no new capital projects have commenced that are over and above those that were contained in last year’s budget and its forward estimates or in the midyear review. I appreciate the minister’s comment that to the best of her knowledge she is not aware of anything like that. I am sure we will have an opportunity during the debate on clause 3 tomorrow to discuss that if the minister is in a position to give us that undertaking now so that we can move on.

Hon HELEN MORTON: The difficulty is that the financial year has not ended and the new financial year has not started. Therefore, trying to give the member information about any capital expenditure that may have occurred via a Treasurer’s advance that is not already known into the two months of the new financial year at this stage is difficult.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I accept that the minister cannot tell me what will happen in the future, although if there are ongoing discussions, she could give us a scoop.

Hon Helen Morton: Crystal ball.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: We have all heard the terms “unforeseen” and “extraordinary” used in a fairly liberal way for many years. We regularly debate on a Treasurer’s Advance Bill exactly what unforeseen and extraordinary mean. I am asking the minister to confirm whether any decisions have been taken by cabinet up to today that have not previously been reported and whether the expenditure will continue beyond this financial year and, therefore, some of the money made available under the Supply Bill is being used.

Hon HELEN MORTON: I am about to ask the committee to report progress. I will read the transcript to see all the things the member has asked because it is still a bit confusing around what he is specifically wanting. I do not think I will be providing hypothetical information.

Hon Ken Travers: Decisions that have been taken.

Hon HELEN MORTON: The member is reflecting specifically on capital expenditure issues that might not have yet been appropriated in some way through the Parliament in the 2012–13 report. The member made some comments about them not being known to the public in some way or another. I think the member is asking whether some secret thing might have already commenced —

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Hon Ken Travers: I am saying that, in the normal course of events, cabinet might take a decision and that would normally have been reported as part of the budget process.

Hon HELEN MORTON: — and will be reported on 8 August.

Hon Ken Travers: Yes. Those budgets are going forward.

Hon HELEN MORTON: I understand what the member is asking for and I think his concern is that there is some unknown agenda or unknown initiative that has taken place that the member does not know about.

Hon Ken Travers: I am not suggesting anything Machiavellian about it or that it's deliberately secret. I am saying that in a normal budget cycle, a Treasurer's advance and budget papers for the following year would be brought down together. That gives a clear picture going forward. I want a similar clear picture going forward to the next budget.

Hon HELEN MORTON: My problem with providing that information is that it will be the first of a number of those asks the member will make, and it is the information I said I would not provide. I will not get into that level of information.

Hon Ken Travers interjected.

Hon HELEN MORTON: I will not get into that level of information around the budget. This is a total allocation of funding for both capital and recurrent funding, as I have indicated, to enable the government to continue to progress the work of government until 8 August.

Hon Ken Travers: You've changed your language already.

Progress reported and leave granted to sit again, on motion by Hon Helen Morton (Minister for Mental Health).