

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

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (23)

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

Noes (25)

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

Pairs

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

Question thus negatived.

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

Second Reading - Cognate Debate

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ms S.E. Walker interjected.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Member's time extended.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Several members interjected.

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

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

Other metropolitan hospitals should be reconfigured in the following manner:

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

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

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

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

Ms J.A. Radisich: Every member?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Several members interjected.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr S.C. Thomas interjected.

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

Ms J.A. Radisich interjected.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Upped the sentence.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr G. Woodhams: I will disappear!

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

[Member's time extended.]

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

Ms K. Hodson-Thomas interjected.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr B.S. Wyatt: An excellent speech.

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

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

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

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

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

Mr R.F. Johnson: I disagree!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Now for six years they've spending the large
Throwing money on the city like there was no charge,
But that's not how it used to be.
When real electorates were provided for all
Not one vote one value tricking the soul
But a vote that came from you and me,
But while the people were looking down,
The budget stole every small town.
Parliament was adjourned;
No money was returned.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Several members interjected.

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

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

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

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

Dangerous Driving on Brand Highway 8th May 2006

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr G. WOODHAMS: Was it 40 years?

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

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

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

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

Mr M. McGowan interjected.

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

[Member's time extended.]

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

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

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

Mr E.S. Ripper: I did indeed.

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

Several members interjected.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Member's time extended.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr D.T. Redman: No!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Member's time extended.]

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

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

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

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

Mr D.T. REDMAN: That is right.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Member's time extended.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Several members interjected.

Mr A.D. McRAE: Peter Costello?

Dr E. Constable: Absolutely.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Member's time extended.]

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

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

I am sure every member can talk about this, but the direct effects of the community safety and anti-graffiti programs done in conjunction with local government have been very positive. There was a spate of racist graffiti in Willetton about 18 months ago. I contacted the local government authority and, within the space of a day, that graffiti, painted on a limestone wall, which is quite difficult to clean, was gone. A couple of different work teams had removed it within a day. That story has been repeated over the past 18 months, and I am delighted that this year's budget continues to give that priority to community safety. There is another interesting aspect to our anti-graffiti efforts, in that research is now showing a very strong correlation between repeat graffitiists and later criminal activity. I am making a distinction here between those who carry out large-scale, colourful graffiti with artistic merit, and those who daub racist slogans or tags. Research shows very strong links between the latter group and ongoing lives of criminal involvement; that is, the people who are involved at a young age in that type of antisocial graffiti have a greater likelihood of becoming involved in criminal activity in adult life. It does not mean that everybody involved in graffiti will necessarily become a criminal, but it is an indicator of

potential later criminal behaviour. If we can get in and remove some of the incentive, which is to gloat about the tag, slogan or slander on the wall, and remove them as fast as possible, and if we get people developing in their lives so that they do not see it as something that gives them gratification, I think we have a chance to move them out of that cycle of antisocial behaviour on the way to some form of criminal behaviour. I support those vitally important investments in our community. They are an absolute right as part of the dividend from the major boom that the state is undergoing.

My community, like many others, has great pressure on its roads. People in the southern suburbs, particularly those in my electorate, are very much looking forward to the opening of the southern rail line as the new link in New MetroRail. The combination of road and public transport rail infrastructure has caused a considerable amount of debate. When we came to government in 2001, we made a promise that we would get on and complete the Roe Highway connection to the Kwinana Freeway. We completed Roe Highway stages 4, 5 and 6, and this year opened Roe Highway stage 7, connecting it to Kwinana Freeway. We completed all those four stages in the space of five years, after the highway had been stalled for more than 10 years. People in William Street, Beckenham, endured the flow out from Roe Highway onto their street for 10 years while nobody took any action; indeed, the member for Bassendean, who was then the member for Roleystone - an electorate which now covers much of Serpentine-Jarrahdale - made it one of his election pledges: he said that if we did not move the highway out of William Street, Beckenham, in the space of a couple of years, he would resign from this place.

Mr M.P. Whitely: Just as Tom Price Road is the Speaker's route, Roe Highway is my route.

Mr A.D. McRAE: That is right. I think we made it by November of that year.

Mr M.P. Whitely: We made it with a month to spare.

Mr A.D. McRAE: That last month or so was a bit of a sweat, because a couple of heavy rainfalls in September and October had the member for Bassendean thinking that maybe he should have said April or May of the following year. Anyway, it was done, and it was a great achievement. The Liberal Party in particular is now saying that we must build Roe Highway stage 8 and the Fremantle eastern bypass. The Liberals have missed the point completely. The reform of freight movement in the southern suburbs will not occur by building more roads. We needed to connect Roe Highway to the Kwinana Freeway, because it would create a cross-city connection of Kwinana Freeway, Roe Highway, Tonkin Highway, Great Eastern Highway and Great Northern Highway. All those roads are now linked as a network. Prior to that achievement, they were not. It was the essential link identified under the Roads of National Importance funding program. This government completed that link when nobody else did. To change freight movement substantially, we must shift heavy freight onto rail. We must plan now, as this government is for the first time, for a new southern port that will prevent the load from continuing to build at Fremantle harbour. Those kinds of reforms will give real relief to the people in my electorate.

The rail stations at Bullcreek and Murdoch will also directly service my community. I have been very excited as I have watched those rail stations taking shape.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs J. Hughes): Will members keep their deliberations down a tad?

Mr A.D. McRAE: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker.

Those stations are now taking shape. The major earthworks for establishing the rail lines along the freeway were completed towards the end of last year and early this year, and all the imposing construction on the freeway moved inside that rail path on the railway line. Those train stations have been erected all of a sudden, almost like magic. They have come off the ground in the space of a month or so, and they are now looming four and five storeys high and reaching as far as the overpasses on Leach Highway and South Street. That will mean that people will be able to feed straight into these train stations and make the nine or 11-minute trip into the city on what will be one of the most modern and efficient public rail transport systems in the world. The investment that we are making now in that rail system will service the metropolitan region, and, indeed, people who come from regional Western Australia and move around the metropolitan region, for more than the next 100 years. The Western Australian government is very proud that it is making this kind of investment in the future of this state.

Another debate that has emerged in my electorate is with regard to the large truck deviation. We got the timing slightly wrong, because we said the deviation would be completed and the truck ban implemented by the end of this year; however, that was always based on the completion of both the train line and the Roe 7 connection to the freeway. We have completed the second leg. The first leg is to get the train and the stations in operation. That is now due for the middle of next year. We will not be able to put the heavy freight truck deviation into place until that has been done. It is important to note that we are going ahead with the expenditure of more than \$10 million on the Orrong Road-Leach Highway interchange. We are fixing the feeders onto Roe Highway so that that truck deviation away from the southern suburbs, onto Roe Highway and through to the freeway can be implemented as soon as those two major projects have been completed. That was the precondition, and that is what we will deliver.

I want to mention also the South Street pedestrian overpass - which I notice the member for Murdoch graciously raised in this Parliament the other week. I was very happy that he would think that he needed to check on how the people in my electorate are doing. I will write to him and let him know that the pedestrian overpass plans will be going to the respective local councils next week. For the past four or five months we have been doing the survey work and the planning for that overpass. That will be under construction this year. The \$1.5 million eco-education centre that will service schools throughout my district will also begin construction this year.

I will finish by contrasting our investment in the future and in communities with what the federal government has done. According to reports in today's paper, the federal government has again failed to satisfy the demand for university places in Western Australia. Western Australia is again short by thousands of places on a per capita basis. On the basis of our entitlement per head of population, the federal government is short-changing us. It is time the federal government was held responsible for its actions on this matter. I again contrast our investment in the future of the people of Western Australia with the investment that Peter Costello has made in his own future. He will not get the ultimate prize, because the people of Australia will reject him. The people of Western Australia will certainly see through him.

MR T.K. WALDRON (Wagin) [7.53 pm]: I begin by congratulating the member for Greenough on his magnificent spoken rendition and adaptation of *American Pie*. It was really good. It was uplifting and very clever. It certainly made his point very well.

The first thing I do when I look at the budget is turn to the middle page of the *Budget Overview*. The first thing I noticed on that middle page was the headline "A Budget for All Western Australians". Although that is a nice claim, and I guess we could say that the overall expenditure has been increased, it is not a true comment. I believe the truth of that statement will come out when I speak tonight. For each of the past three budgets I have picked up this document and looked at what the great southern has been given in the budget. I cannot remember the exact amount, but about three years ago Albany got about six out of seven. Last year it got five out of six. This year it has got five out of eight. I want to make a point about that. The member for Albany is not present but I must say that I do not mind Albany getting the funds it is getting because Albany is a very important port that services my region. It is a very important town and it should be looked after; it should get the facilities it requires. However, the problem we see is, once again, the concentration of funds in the metropolitan area and large coastal centres. Inland country WA once again misses out. I want to be positive tonight but I have to make some points of fact. Perth is the capital city of this great state. It is important that Perth has the great facilities it has, such as hospitals etc. Although I am a country member of Parliament I recognise that Perth is the capital. I like Perth, and people want services in Perth. People now refer to the "surplus train"; therein lies the big inequity. The member for Merredin, the Leader of the National Party, said in his speech last night that he does not want to create a city-country divide. I do not want to do that either because we are all one state. The problem is that, over the past few years -

Mr M. McGowan: You do not want to, but you will.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: A person cannot help it. I wish I did not have to. I am not saying that this government does not give things to country WA. However, when we hear the government refer to country WA, most of the time it is referring to Albany, Bunbury or Geraldton. Those are important towns and they should receive resources but it should not be at the expense of what is happening inland. Inland country WA is just as important. The country ports would not exist if it were not for the produce from inland country WA. That is an important point, particularly when we see the amount of money being spent on the railway. An amount of \$1.3 billion is being spent, which represents 65 per cent of the surplus. That is inequitable and unfair. It is an insult to people in country WA. We know that not all wealth production comes from Perth, and no-one expects that. The great bulk of the surplus has been generated mainly from regional Western Australia. Had the government said that it was going to pay 15 per cent, rather than 65 per cent, of the surplus towards the railway, that would have been acceptable. The rest of the surplus could have been spent on other things in Perth and the large coastal towns, as well as essential things for inland country WA. The member for Riverton talked about the federal government and the fact that voters would not forget. I do not think that they will forget this either. However, I want to remain positive.

I will now speak about the Wagin electorate and acknowledge the good things going on. First of all, the Wagin and Bridgetown Fire Stations will receive some funding. An amount of \$11.7 million has been allocated for the Bridgetown bypass. The budget refers to the family car registration rebate, which is \$35 for each car. In addition, there is a 10 per cent rebate on third party car insurance, which is a small respite. That is about it for the electorate. I know that there will be some other little bits that we will find and there may be some overall benefits. However, it is a pretty poor result if a person happens to live in the Wagin electorate. That is a plain fact.

We notice that there is increased spending on health and education as well as other areas. Over the estimates period I want to see exactly where it all goes because that is the issue for country WA. When that is related to one vote, one value and the electoral redistribution, it makes one fear for what will happen in the future.

On a positive note I will mention BushChange. It is a movement that is gaining momentum in country towns, particularly in my region westwards from Great Southern Highway. There is an influx of new people to the region. There is population growth and housing problems in Katanning, Wagin, Bridgetown and Narrogin. There is population growth from people of different backgrounds and ages; more families are moving in. That is fantastic. However, governments must make sure that they recognise that and provide appropriate facilities.

I will outline the needs in my electorate and I will kick off with education. Education is getting a strong run in budget reply speeches and that is a good thing. Several members have spoken about education in this Parliament today. After the last election, the then Premier, Geoff Gallop, said that education was important and would be a focus for this government. I acknowledge that the education budget has increased this financial year from \$2.92 billion to \$3.26 billion and comprises 26 per cent of the budget. Although that is excellent, the problem arises with where that money is applied.

Last financial year \$1 million was allocated to the design and technology area at the Narrogin school. It is still a work in progress and the funds from last financial year have been carried forward to this financial year. I acknowledge that, because it is excellent. The maintenance of schools in my electorate has been poor over the past few years. Maintenance budgets in the Narrogin electorate and the member for Avon's electorate have been slashed over the past couple of years and the condition of those schools is deteriorating. A large allocation of funding is required to ensure that these schools do not fall into a state of disrepair. It is like the farmer who does no work to his fences: in 15 or 20 years he has a huge problem. That is what is happening in my electorate with schools. I warn the government that the maintenance of those schools needs urgent attention.

Earlier this year I put a proposal to the Minister for Education and Training that would utilise district high schools. The attendance rate at those schools has decreased. The local district high school in Pingelly, in the member for Avon's electorate, is no longer operating. However, those schools have fine facilities. The increase in the school leaving age provides an opportunity to utilise those schools for special projects for years 11 and 12; for example, vocational education, special traineeships and apprenticeships. I am pleased that the minister has taken my suggestion on board and I will be meeting someone from the education department shortly to progress that further. It is a positive way to go.

I refer now to the Narrogin Agricultural College in the context of the increase in the school leaving age from 16 to 17 years. The agricultural colleges are doing a fantastic job. Students who graduate from agricultural colleges are going into employment. We talk about vocational education and what can be done to provide education to get people ready to take up employment. The agricultural colleges have taken on that role and are doing it brilliantly. As a result, those colleges are full and with the rise in the school leaving age, more students will want to attend them. The boarding areas at Narrogin Agricultural College desperately need an upgrade. A large number of females are now attending the college and have been moved into what were the male boarding facilities to ensure that they have reasonable amenity. The facilities for the guys are not up to scratch. Actually, there are occupational health problems at Narrogin Agricultural College. An allocation to upgrade the boarding facilities was not forthcoming in this budget and I implore the government to give this consideration next year; otherwise, it will be confronted with a huge problem. I understand that Minister Chance was visiting the college today and I hope he brings back a similar message.

The federal government is promoting technical education schools, which is a good move. It would be fantastic if the federal and state governments were to spend more money on expanding agricultural colleges. Consideration should also be given to promoting a link between agricultural colleges and TAFE. The battle over who does what continues. It is ridiculous when agricultural colleges, such as those in Denmark, Narrogin, Corrigin, Cunderdin, Morawa and Harvey, are doing such a great job, but do not work closely with TAFE colleges. Groups are looking into that aspect, and I support some boundaries and guidance being given towards achieving a closer relationship between agricultural and TAFE colleges.

Teacher shortages are evident in country WA, particularly at the start of the year and during the year when teachers leave and are not replaced. At Narrogin Senior High School, which has about 800 students, it is important to have the correct number of teachers to deliver the programs. Incentives to keep teachers in country schools are extremely important. The issue of teacher permanency rules is an old chestnut. Some teachers receive their permanency if they teach in schools that are hard to staff for two years. Teachers who teach in country WA for two years should be given their permanency. It would be an incentive to encourage teachers to teach at country schools. We also need an incentive to attract high school teachers. One incentive is better pay and special job opportunities.

Government Employees Housing Authority rentals are a problem for teachers. The rentals keep going up. People living in rural communities such as Wandering or Kukerin are paying rentals similar to those paid in Narrogin or Northam, which is completely inappropriate. GEHA and the Department of Education have to address that issue. The staffing formulas in our district high schools also need to be looked at. There are reasons for staffing formulas. Those formulas need to be broadened. We also need to make sure that we have the appropriate teachers in our senior high schools, particularly the big inland senior high schools such as those in

Merredin, Northam and Narrogin. The other point I want to raise concerns professional development for teachers. We need to have more of that in country WA. There is a move towards it but it is costly for the schools to send teachers to Perth. There are people in country WA who can carry out that professional development and do it extremely well. The member for Greenough touched on the issue of year 7 classes in a middle school. That proposal will have a drastic effect on many country schools. He covered that issue well.

I will move on to health, which is also very important. Twenty-four per cent of the budget has been allocated to health. A concentration of funds has been directed to the major Perth hospitals. I do not mind that so much because we need those major hospitals, but we must ensure that we provide services to country WA. I was in Halls Creek recently, and I went through the new hospital last year. It is fantastic. Moora is getting a new hospital, which is great, but a lot more hospitals need attention. With the downgrading of a lot of our smaller hospitals, the Narrogin hospital has become more and more important. It is a magnificent hospital. It was upgraded under the former government but the final stage was never completed. While the hospital still runs well and delivers a fantastic service, it would run a heck of a lot better if the final stage were completed. We have been talking about this. I got some encouragement from the Minister for Health that it may be forthcoming but it has not happened at this stage. It was designed for the nurses so that their stations were central, enabling them to service the whole hospital. Without that last section, it does not quite work as it should. It has become a very, very important country hospital. I welcome the specialist services plan, but it mainly applies to the major coastal centres. It is good to see some extra specialists going to Merredin.

While on health, I want to mention government dental clinics. We do not have government dental clinics in inland country WA. The benefits of dental clinics to people with health cards are fantastic. People in my area cannot access these clinics. They are paying more but they are not getting the service that they should get. They have to go to private dentists. Rebates apply but there are some treatments that cannot be done under the rebate program, and the cost is higher to them. I do not think that is fair. I implore the health minister to look at blood collection in inland country WA. Last week I saw the Red Cross appealing for blood donations, but people in my region cannot donate blood because there is no mobile service or collection centre. Surely this is wrong in the twenty-first century.

Mr M.W. Trenorden: We're all blue bloods!

Mr T.K. WALDRON: Yes. I also want to mention the mental health drug teams. They should be operating in our areas. The health ministers met the other day. They discussed many different things, including the decriminalisation of cannabis. The longer I am in this role and the longer I work with the mental health workers in my region, there is less doubt in my mind that there is a linkage between drug use and mental health issues. That is a big factor. I notice that the other health ministers called on WA and South Australia to rethink their policies on cannabis. I ask the government to rethink its policy on that issue. I know that the government thought its motives were good. However, I do not think its policy has worked out and it is certainly not working out in my area. Just this week I had to deal with a very unpleasant matter as a result of drugs, and I think that the government needs to rethink that policy. There is nothing wrong with people saying that they did this in good faith and they thought they were right but it has not worked out that way, so they will knock it on the head and go the other way. I think the government would get a lot of credit for that.

I pay tribute to Tim Shackleton, who has been the head of the health service in the wheatbelt. Tim has resigned and will move to the Royal Flying Doctor Service, which is great. He has done a wonderful job. He has certainly made a difference in the delivery of health services in my electorate and the wheatbelt region. He has taken people in our region with him in what he has tried to do. He has involved his staff, and we will certainly miss him.

I will not go into road funding in detail because of the time.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I welcome the funding of \$11.7 million for the construction of the Bridgetown bypass. That is great; the bypass is needed. Someone will get hurt in the main street of Bridgetown if the bypass is not constructed. A couple of issues have arisen in my area in the past four years. They are not big-ticket items, but they keep getting ignored. That is what I was talking about at the beginning of my speech. There is a link-road project in Narrogin that ensures that big trucks go around Narrogin. The middle bit was completed by the previous government, but nothing more has been done. We have a road to nowhere. It is ridiculous, particularly now that new industries have been attracted to the region. I can recall saying early in my time in Parliament that we needed to attract new industries. We now have done that; we have a big hay industry, a piggery and a cattle lot feeding industry. We have the oil mallee plant, which is a bit shaky at the moment, but I will talk about that if I get time. The need for that road to be completed has increased dramatically. There are real safety issues. For the sake of \$2 million, that road should have been completed. The road from Wickopin to Jitarning and overtaking lanes on the road north of Kojonup and Williams are very important. Road safety includes the need for safe roads. I know that overtaking lanes are expensive and cannot all be built at once, but the overtaking lanes north of Kojonup and Williams are vital. I often travel along that road and it is impatience that causes a lot

of problems. If people know that there are overtaking lanes, they will show patience and not take risks that have dire results. The Jitarning to Wickepin road is used by school buses and mums and dads travelling between Kulin and Wickepin. There is an extremely narrow strip of bitumen, so that when hay trucks, which travel that road all the time, come along, people have to pull up and stop; that is all they can do. Those road projects do not require a lot of funding and I urge the government to ensure that they are completed.

I often talk about road safety. I have spoken to the Road Safety Council; in fact, I will run a road safety forum in my electorate shortly. One of the issues that concerns me - I have said this to Grant Dorrington - is that the Road Safety Council, although its intentions are great and I support a heck of a lot of things it does, is in real danger of losing community support for some of its proposals, but not all of them. It does a lot of good things and there are a lot of good people at the Road Safety Council. It seems to me that there is a great deal of emphasis on enforcement, penalties and punitive measures. I do not think there are enough positive proposals. I know that the Road Safety Council does not rate highly advanced driver training. I know it is only one part of road safety. I have done two driver training courses. The Rotary club and the police in Kojonup are working together on conducting advanced driver courses for every kid who gets his licence and wants to do the course. The cost of the course is subsidised. However, the Road Safety Council has said that it does not support these training courses because it does not think they are worthwhile. People in the community are trying to assist in training and they are getting shoved off. I will speak with Grant Dorrington about that issue, but there is a real concern with where the Road Safety Council may be going. That is why I will hold the road safety forum. I want to hear what the Road Safety Council has to say, but it also needs to hear what the people in the electorate of Wagin have to say.

I turn now to sport and recreation, which is pretty dear to my heart. I welcome the continuance of the community sporting and recreation facilities fund program. It is one area in which country WA does well. The allocation of community sport and recreation facilities funding is done very well. It is a very important matter because sport and recreation is a very important part of country living and country communities, as it is in the city. The benefits of sport and recreation are underestimated. We see how much money is spent on health and we talk about obesity, leadership and children with low self-esteem. Sport and recreation and team sports provide many positive benefits, and I support them. The Minister for Sport and Recreation is in the chamber.

We need to do more to provide support for the maintenance of pools. A program that was active a few years ago has dropped off. There are two or three public pools in my electorate, and they need major refurbishment, which is very costly. It is very important for country towns to have a pool. A committee I am involved with has looked at the pools in the north of the state. They are wonderful. The former minister who was responsible for them just walked in the chamber. They are wonderful things. Pools are important to country towns. The maintenance of pools puts a big yoke around the necks of local governments. Although the Shire of Boyup Brook could not get extra funding, it has upgraded its pool, and I congratulate it for doing that. An ongoing maintenance program is needed. I realise that the state government cannot fix all the pools, but it must assist local government and local communities because pools are an important part of those communities.

I welcome the allocation of funds in the budget for the club officers' program. It is a very good program and it is a positive initiative to come out of the budget.

Halls Creek has been prominent in Parliament lately. The member for Merredin and I visited Halls Creek recently. Part of my sporting background involved managing country football. At that time, the north west of the state was not affiliated with country football and I had to campaign to get it involved. Through the Aboriginal sport and recreation development group called the Garnduwa Sports Association, we were able to do that. Garnduwa has a fantastic network. There were issues between Garnduwa and the Department of Sport and Recreation in the early days, but they now work closely together. I was asked to go to Halls Creek because of the association I had with country football and the network of people I knew there. Some positive things will happen in Halls Creek regarding the provision of sport and recreation opportunities for young people. That is only part of the solution to the overall problem that Halls Creek is experiencing. However, I believe it is an important part and that it is a great start. I was greatly encouraged by the principal of the Halls Creek High School and the federal government's after-school program, which is about to start. The key has been getting the shire, the Department of Sport and Recreation and Garnduwa to work together. I congratulate the government and the department for providing funding for a full-time position to employ a lady called Leslie Wolfe, who will work with Garnduwa and the local council in not only Halls Creek, but also other Aboriginal communities. I believe that program will be of great benefit to those communities. I will watch that with great interest. I congratulate Alan Bishop and Jeff Davis from Garnduwa and also Peter McConnell, the CEO of the council. The time is right to make sure that we take advantage of the magnificent new pool and the new recreation centre. The state government must ensure that those facilities are resourced so that the communities can take advantage of it. It is a 15-year project. It will not happen overnight, no matter what we try to do. However, if we make a start on sport and recreation with the current generation, we will have a much better chance in the future. That is a very important initiative.

I will congratulate our Western Australian Commonwealth Games athletes because I have not had a chance to do that yet. They did a wonderful job representing the state. When I was up north last week, members from the Western Australian Commonwealth Games team were also there. They are great role models and give children something to aim for. I want to congratulate Bevan George from the men's hockey team for his ongoing success in that sport. He is a local Narrogin boy. I congratulate also young Chris Troode, who is originally from Willetton. Many members would remember his father Peter, who was an outstanding footballer for the South Fremantle Football Club. I worked with Peter for many years at the Western Australian Football Commission. I knew young Chris. He attended athletics as a 16 year-year-old, and as a 20-year-old he won a medal at the Commonwealth Games. It is a great story, and I congratulate them.

This week is National Volunteer Week. Today I heard the federal Treasurer, Peter Costello, talk about volunteers. He said that a government cannot deliver without volunteers. That is really true. In National Volunteer Week, I want to acknowledge the volunteers throughout Western Australia, both in the metropolitan area and in the country. The government must make sure that it continues to support and resource volunteers. It does not want to cut off its nose to spite its face. I believe National Volunteer Week is a good idea, because it puts emphasis on volunteers. I believe that more than 40 per cent of Australians are volunteers - in fact, I thought the figure was higher than that - and their worth to Australia is considered to be about \$42 billion. Therefore, it is a pretty important area.

I have about four minutes left in which to speak. I will touch briefly on the infill sewerage program, which is an issue I harp on about. We are still waiting for Kukerin and Boyup Brook to get infill sewerage. I will deal with Boyup Brook in particular. I know that someone from the Water Corporation will go there soon to look at the problems that the people are having with material from the septic systems leaching into the Blackwood River. It is really good that someone will visit there soon. I understand that I will be asked to go there on that day. I will keep the minister informed about that, because I worry about Boyup Brook in particular. When the people of Boyup Brook thought that they would get infill sewerage in 2001-02, the standards for septic systems in new and renovated houses were lowered. There is now leaching in that area. I will be interested in finding out the severity of it in the next few weeks, hopefully, and I will certainly let the minister know about that. Bearing in mind the budget surplus, infill sewerage should be installed in Boyup Brook in particular. I believe that the plan is to install infill sewerage in Kukerin fairly soon. I congratulate the minister for proceeding with the infill sewerage program in Tambellup, because that was also very important.

On the question of power and the disaggregation of Western Power, we will watch what happens with the four new networks. I know that the Treasurer was heavily involved in the pole replacement program. It is a good program, but we must make sure that we keep up with it, with the new insulators etc, if for no other reason than the risk of fire. We did not do too badly this year, but the fire situation continues to worry me.

Today I had the CEO of the oil mallee association in Narrogin meet me at Parliament House. We have managed to keep the plant going. Today we met with the minister, Hon Fran Logan. I thank him for meeting with the oil mallee people again today. I know that there will be support under the national action plan and from the South West Catchments Council. Although the government is saying that it has done enough, it is only a pilot plant and it has proved what it can and cannot do, and it now needs to be evaluated. However, to make it a commercial operation, it needs to run for a little longer. I draw this analogy: if the government got almost to the end of the Mandurah railway, and it had half a kilometre to go and needed something extra, it would not stop it. I believe that is the situation with the oil mallee plant.

Mr E.S. Ripper: How much?

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I do not think it needs a lot - probably only a few hundred thousand dollars. I think if the Treasurer talked to Hon Fran Logan, he would find that Western Power and the minister are starting to realise that that plant could be well worthwhile. All we need is a couple of months. I put that to the Treasurer.

I have one minute left. It is amazing how time flies when one is having fun, is it not?

Mr C.J. Barnett: It was very long for those of us listening.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I am sorry about that. I have been sitting here for a while listening to a few speeches myself, member for Cottesloe.

I conclude by saying that budgets are about priorities. It is obvious where the government's priorities are. The metropolitan area and the coastal strip are the priority. Although I understand that to a certain degree, I say to the government that it should not forget the inland areas, because they are very important to this state. I go back to what I said at the start: it should be a budget for all Western Australians. As time goes on over the next year and issues are raised, on behalf of my region I will call on ministers. I always get a good hearing from the ministers. I always try to raise projects that are reasonable and fair, and I will continue to do that.

DR E. CONSTABLE (Churchlands) [8.23 pm]: This is the sixteenth budget in which I have been involved. I have been in this place for a while. I must say that my reaction to this budget was, "Well, ho-hum; same song,

next verse.” There was not anything particularly sparkling or exciting about it, certainly from my point of view. However, one of the things that struck me when I started to glance through some of the dot points in some of the areas in which I am particularly interested was that quite often we see very poor strategic thinking and strategic planning in various portfolio areas. I will draw attention to one example tonight in education to show what I mean. Too often I believe we see short-term thinking and not good, long-term thinking. A front-page article in *The West Australian* last Wednesday covered a question asked by Hon Peter Collier in the upper house the day before. I will talk about that and develop it back through the budget papers of a few years ago. Hon Peter Collier asked the Minister for Education and Training the following question -

Will the minister confirm that the Western Australian Department of Education and Training is planning for all year 7 students to be part of secondary education in 2009?

The answer was -

The Department of Education and Training is investigating -

That is a very important word -

the feasibility of the possible relocation of year 7 students to secondary schooling rather than planning for any such change.

This issue has a long history and, as it turns out, it has a long history of discussion in this Parliament. The decision to change the school entry age was made in 1997, nearly 10 years ago, by the then minister, the member for Cottesloe. That decision was made before the first cohort of children was born. There was plenty of notice to enable planning for the future of those kids.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Some may have been conceived.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Some may have been conceived but they certainly had not been born. The change was implemented in 2001 when those children entered kindergarten. It was a change in school entry age by six months, so that, on average, they were six months older when entering school. Therefore, on average, they were six months older at school entry age than they were in previous years. At about the time that this decision was made, other very significant changes were made that impinged on early education. It amounted to more or less a package of changes. A full-time preprimary year was introduced, followed by every child being guaranteed four half-days or the equivalent, which means two full days, in kindergarten if their parents wished it. At about the same time, government kindergartens were established on government primary school sites where it was feasible, and if there was not enough land, they stayed off site. Generally speaking, they came on site. That package of change to early childhood education was hotly debated in the community, and we have reaped the benefits of those changes since.

Although there was a change in school entry age and children entering school now are older, they are actually receiving more schooling than they used to. The state has made an enormous investment in early childhood learning. The first cohort of children in that new age group is now in year 4, although it is a half-cohort because they were six months older when they entered primary school. Therefore, there are about 10 000 children in that first year and about 20 000 children will be in the cohort in subsequent years.

A number of consequences arise from this age change. Previously, the vast majority of children entering year 7 were 12 years of age. However, with this change, at least half the children will turn 13 in year 7. It is a major change from younger children to children well into their adolescence. Currently, almost all students turn 17 in year 12, but under the new regime, at least half will turn 18 when this cohort moves through. That means that those students will be able to go to hotels and drink alcohol. They will also be able to vote. It is quite possible that students in year 12 will have a beer at the pub with their teachers because they will be able to do that. Enormous social change is attached to these changes, as well as educational change. The change in school entry age has far-reaching consequences for schools. They are yet to be dealt with by the government and the Department of Education and Training. I find that incredible because it will be only about two and a half years before the first cohort will be in year 7. Consequences for the curriculum are being worked through, for which I give the department credit. There are consequences also for how children are taught, and that is also being considered. There are also consequences for how schools are organised, and I do not think enough is being done to deal with that issue. The central question is: will year 7 students remain in primary school or will year 7 become the first year of high school? That first cohort, as I said, is now in year 4. Therefore, at the beginning of 2009, less than three years away, those students will be entering year 7, and the decision still has not been made about where they will be best located for their own wellbeing and education.

I will go back to the 2002 estimates committees. This issue has been raised many times through questions in Parliament and certainly in the estimates committees. In 2002 a dot point in the budget papers highlighted a change to the school entry age. I raised a question about this and asked the minister, who is now the Premier -

What policy decisions have been made concerning the structure of schooling and schools for those children, half of whom will be 13 years of age when they reach year 7? Does the minister envisage that

those students will be part of the high school structure, or will they remain in the primary school structure? If they are to remain in the primary school structure, what modifications will need to be made to accommodate those children who are in early adolescence? What funding does the minister anticipate will be required to make the changes?

The main response from the minister was -

There is not yet a firm policy about how this matter will be dealt with. I have asked the department to provide some information about the anticipated effect in preparation for sensible, long-term planning.

In reply to that I said that it was not so much long-term planning but short-term, and at best medium-term, planning to be thinking about it in 2002. At that time the former minister enlightened the estimates committee with this statement -

At the time the decision to change the school starting age was made, -

That is about 1997 -

the intention was that the year 7 class would move into a high school-middle school environment. It was too early to make a firm decision about that, but that was the intention.

Therefore, early on there was the intention to move these students into high schools.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Is that right?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: He said it; it is in *Hansard*.

We then continued with quite a lot of across-chamber discussion about it, and I was fairly strong in my comments that I thought it was very poor planning to have not at that time made a decision, because -

Mr C.J. Barnett: Can I interrupt for a second?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Yes, of course.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I just make the point that Ballajura and Kinross already do that.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Yes, I know.

Mr C.J. Barnett: So in some of the new schools it had started to happen on a small scale.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Yes, but currently 38 schools are being built over a four-year period and this has not been taken into account; certainly not in the building of primary schools.

Mr C.J. Barnett: That is right.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: My firm view is that it should have been more on the way in 2002. Finally, the minister said -

The member is correct - planning must be done to accommodate this group of students and all students thereafter in both a physical and pedagogical sense.

The minister, therefore, was well aware of the issues in 2002.

I now turn to the 2003 estimates committee - same song, next verse. Again a dot point covered this area, so it was regarded as a major issue to be dealt with. The dot point referred to a plan for management of the half-cohort. I asked -

What is involved in that plan? What aspects of children's education, planning, finance, capital works, teacher development and so on will be involved in that plan?

The minister answered -

I, like the member, think this is a significant issue.

We were therefore in agreement there. He then discussed Kinross, Ballajura and other issues, and said -

The plan is an initiative for the forthcoming year, not something that we have developed hitherto.

There was, therefore, a promise that in 2004 we might really get some news on this. Mr Albert, the Director General of Education, commented -

We are looking at what implications this will have for the curriculum and school structures, the staffing implications, where will it have the most impact and on what schools, and so on. That project has just started and we have a target date for completion of October-November this year.

Therefore, some heavy work was being done to get some strong information by October-November 2003. I made a comment about the issue and the minister said -

I agree, and I also agree with the corollary that we need to have leadership and direction in this area; it is not something we should leave to the market as an ad hoc arrangement.

The former Minister for Education and Training then went on to say -

We must make a decision about how we will manage this thing as a cohort, because there are important flow-ons for teacher-training, preparation and resourcing.

All the issues are recognised. He continued -

Those sorts of decisions have to be made, and the decision must ultimately come from the top,

That is good to know -

with advice obviously prepared and sought from the department and the community.

When I read that, I thought that the decision must come from the government because it has major implications, particularly budgetary implications. That was in 2003.

In 2004, there was no dot point; however, I tied it into the output and asked the same question again. The then Minister for Education and Training - it was the same minister - who is now the Premier, said -

... the issue that needs a lot of attention is what will happen when they get to years 6 and 7.

I said -

The crunch issue is that there will be many 13-year-olds in primary school. What is the plan for those kids? Will they stay in primary school?

We still do not have an answer because the same question was asked of the Minister for Education and Training last week by Hon Peter Collier. This is the worst possible strategic planning. There are two and a half years to go, and a decision has not been made. I suspect that no decision will be made. Rather, it will be a little bit of this and a little bit of that. There has been no real thinking about what is required for these students. Given that we have had a decade to get it right and that the intention was expressed earlier, the Department of Education and Training has not got its act together to advise the government. It has been putzing around with committees and little investigations for years and years. This is looming large. If the decision is that these students would receive the best education in high school, the cost will be huge. It is certainly not reflected in the forward estimates of the budget.

Mr E.S. Ripper: I was going to ask you about that. What do you think about the cost-benefit analysis, or what the cost-benefit trade-off is?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: My personal assessment is that those students would be better off in high school. Given that the Treasurer was involved with schools in the past, he would know that those students are young adolescents who are way beyond the culture of a primary school. They are ready to move onto high school. With the changes in years 11 and 12, we would do well to look at years 7, 8 and 9 as a package, and then years 10, 11 and 12. A lot of the year 11 and 12 work will have to start in year 10 if students are to be prepared at the beginning of the fourth term of year 12. A number of non-government schools that cater for K-12 have already decided that their year 7s will be placed into the secondary school.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Even if there are benefits, they must be sufficient to justify the cost. I do not know what the cost will be.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: A policy decision about what is best should have been made years ago. As the Treasurer knows, I have my own views about this. However, if it is decided that, yes, those students should stay in primary schools, adjustments will need to be made to that area also. That would not be as expensive as moving the year 7 students into high schools, because if that happened, we would need more classrooms, more science labs and more cooking facilities for whatever that subject is called now.

Mr E.S. Ripper: More duties other than teaching time.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: Yes.

More teachers would be needed at both the secondary and primary levels. The shifts and changes must be thoroughly thought through. That is my whole point. This issue needed a lot of early strategic thinking and planning. However, that did not happen. It is time someone got on with the job. Maybe it is time that someone looked to see whether there are any key performance indicators for the senior executives of the Department of Education and Training and, if so, whether they are living up to them, because they have performed extremely badly on this issue.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Member for Churchlands, will you tell Parliament what is happening in the private school sector?

Dr E. CONSTABLE: I did. I said that a number of established non-government schools have already placed their year 7 students into high school.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Most of the private schools are in my electorate. I did a little survey of them about three months ago, and all except one will have year 7 in high school within two years.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: They will be well prepared for it. They have done their thinking. In a way, the policy decision is not all that hard to make. The hard part, and the expensive part, is the implementation of the decision. If that decision is made, there will not be enough time to implement it well, which is a pity. Maybe the decision will be made to move year 7 students to the high schools, and it will not be in 2009; it may have to be later. It is an issue that we have to look at, and that should be done in the context of all the other changes that are happening, particularly in years 11 and 12. I repeat what I said before. High schools would be better configured if we had years 7 to 9 and years 10 to 12. It is not necessarily middle schooling, but separate packages in the delivery of schooling.

Mr E.S. Ripper: That was the logic behind the previous government's move to middle schooling in certain circumstances.

Dr E. CONSTABLE: That is right. I will give the former minister, now the Premier, his due. He saw the issue and he asked the Department of Education and Training to look into it. However, somewhere along the line that has not been delivered. It is still hanging around as a major issue that is not being dealt with.

I have covered most of the points I wanted to deal with, but I want to mention just one other issue that is of very great interest in my electorate. I asked the Minister for Tourism a question about this issue; that is, the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships to be held in Scarborough next year and for the following two years. For three years the championships will be held in Western Australia. I want to highlight two matters. I asked a question about the investment of \$1.8 million a year for three years from the tourism portfolio towards this event. So far, \$25 000 of the first \$1.8 million has been spent, which is not very much, given that the first event will be occurring on Scarborough Beach within 10 months. Interestingly, the money has been allocated to marketing, specifically a sales initiative to directly target competitor registrations and bookings for the inaugural Western Australian event. I was at the dinner at the Scarboro Surf Life Saving Club on Saturday night, and I asked about this amount. This should be an event that basically sells itself. We should not have to spend \$1.8 million to encourage people to come, because this is an event that has been held for a long time. In fact, next year is the centenary of surf-lifesaving in Australia. Every time the event is held it attracts 13 000 or 14 000 competitors, which is more than the Commonwealth Games attract. It is sold through the state organisations and the local clubs, so the \$1.8 million allocated by the state seemed a huge amount of money to be spending to market this event. I would like some further explanation at some point from the minister about why we need that.

At the dinner I mentioned, several people spoke very angrily about a brief ministerial statement made in this house on 4 April. I want to add to what the minister said. She informed the house that she had been over to the 2006 Australian Surf Life Saving Championships on the Gold Coast to participate in the official handover to Western Australia. That is fine; tourism ministers should do that sort of thing. However, she then went to great pains to acknowledge the member for Mindarie, formerly the member for Innaloo, for securing this event for Western Australia. I know that the member for Mindarie was involved in the process, but it is a bit of an exaggeration to say that he secured the event for Western Australia. The minister then went on to acknowledge Surf Life Saving Western Australia. Of course that organisation was the prime mover in the process. However, the other person who was a prime mover but was not mentioned - I will mention him tonight to correct the record - was the former mayor of the City of Stirling, Tony Vallelonga. Without Tony Vallelonga's enthusiasm and the money that the City of Stirling invested in this, I do not think we would have got these championships in Western Australia. It is really important to note that the minister, for whatever reason - maybe she was ill-informed - left out one of the most important people who spent an enormous amount of time and energy to make sure the event came to Scarborough. It will be a great event for Scarborough, the metropolitan area and Western Australia. However, a number of things must be done to enhance Scarborough for it to be a really great event. I hope that the Minister for Tourism is looking at things like making Scarborough a tourism precinct for the two weeks of the championships so that shops can stay open later and Scarborough can buzz during that period. I hope that she will at some time correct her record and note the great contribution of Tony Vallelonga to securing this event for Western Australia.

MR J.H.D. DAY (Darling Range) [8.46 pm]: The 2006-07 budget is notable for a number of reasons, probably none more so than the fact that there has been very substantial growth in the amount of revenue available to the government over the past two years and very substantial growth in the amount of expenditure by the government as a result of that revenue. In 2004-05 the revenue to the government was \$14.2 billion and in 2006-07 it is predicted to be \$16.5 billion, which is an increase of 16 per cent in two years. Expenditure in 2004-05 was \$13 billion and in 2006-07 it is expected to be \$15.2 billion, which is an increase of 17 per cent over those two years. I guess that can be looked at in a number of ways, but one interpretation is that the government is in office at a very fortunate time when the economy is strong and it is able to be in the rather luxurious position of

not having to scratch around for money for a whole range of programs, to the extent that governments need to when money is much tighter.

Many people would question whether good value for money is being achieved as a result of this very large growth in expenditure. The government's flagship project is, of course, the construction of the Perth-Mandurah rail line, which has increased in cost from the \$1.2 billion that the government initially estimated when it announced the change of route so that it would go over the Narrows Bridge and down the middle of the Kwinana Freeway through Como, Melville, Murdoch and so on. By the government's own admission, the increase is from at least \$400 million to an estimated current cost of about \$1.6 billion. I do not think that too many people in this state would seriously expect it to be maintained at \$1.6 billion. Certainly, most people would expect another \$100 million or \$200 million to be incurred in completing that project. Many people would question whether it is a good use of taxpayers' money; certainly, many people in my electorate would question whether it is when compared with the government's rather miserly decision to remove obstetrics from Kalamunda District Community Hospital. I will come back to that subject in a short time. As an aside, I make the observation that if the government really wanted to do something productive and worthwhile with the new rail project, it would extend the passenger rail network out past Midland station in the eastern suburbs to the Swan View-Stratton-Jane Brook area; that would benefit a large number of people in a rapidly growing area where I am sure there is a great need for good public transport services.

Of course, the rail line already extends into that area, with the standard gauge line to the eastern states. It seems to me that an extension of the passenger rail network towards the area that I have mentioned could be done for not a particularly large investment. Certainly, from a value for money point of view, there would be a better return than from the construction of a railway to Mandurah.

The government has made a big deal of the fact that it has decided, as a result of the surplus that it has achieved in 2005-06, to pay off all the debt associated with the Perth-Mandurah rail project. That is understandable to some extent. However, what is happening in reality is that the government is trying to make a good story out of one that is rather sour. As I have said, the government gave a strong commitment that the cost of the railway would be \$1.2 billion. That has blown out by at least \$400 million, and probably a lot more. The government is clearly rather embarrassed by that fact; therefore, it is trying to put a positive spin on it by arguing that it is paying off all the debt associated with that project so that the cost of constructing that railway will be lower than would otherwise be the case. Is that a good use of funds? Many people in this state would very much doubt that it is. The government cannot deny that a big opportunity cost is involved in constructing the railway to Mandurah in the way that it is. As we have debated on many occasions in this Parliament over the past four or five years, the previous government had proposed another route that would have benefited a greater number of people and would have been better value for money.

The government is in office at a very fortunate time, because it has available to it a large growth in revenue as a result of a number of factors. One of those factors is the greater than expected payments as a result of the introduction of the goods and services tax. The goods and services tax applies nationally, of course, but it is ironic that the introduction of that tax was resisted very strongly by the Labor Party. The Treasurer has a broad smile on his face at the moment. He is smiling at the irony of the fact that although Labor strongly opposed the introduction of a goods and services tax, it is now in office and is benefiting very much from that tax. The Treasurer is smiling. He probably will not want to admit that on the record in *Hansard*, but I will mention for the record that he is smiling. He clearly agrees with me. It would be difficult not to.

Mr E.S. Ripper: I am wondering whether you think the introduction of the GST helped cost you the 2001 election.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I do not think it was the introduction of the GST itself. I think the business activity statements - the so called BAS statements - was one of the factors that produced a hostile environment for us in the 2001 election. Although that was associated with the GST, it was not the GST itself. I will accept that that was one of the factors. A range of other factors were also involved in the 2001 election, of course, and helped bring the Labor Party to government.

The second reason the government is doing so well from a revenue point of view is the large increase in revenue from conveyancing duty in this state. That is partly the result of the fact that the Labor Government has increased stamp duty, and partly the result of the significant increase in property values that has occurred over the past two years. The third reason is the substantial growth in royalties from our natural resources in this state, both mineral and petroleum, which has also occurred over the past two or three years. A further substantial increase in royalty income in Western Australia is predicted in 2006-07 to bring the amount to \$2.225 billion. The government clearly has available to it the benefit of all those large increases in revenue.

I made the comment in a speech in this chamber in March of this year that one important issue is that some of the funds that are being acquired in ever increasing amounts from royalties from our natural resources should be put aside in a perpetual investment fund so that some of the benefits that are available to us now from these non-

renewable resources in our large state will be available for people in this state in the long-term - indeed, in perpetuity. All of those who will follow us - our children, grandchildren and future generations - have the right to benefit from the substantial resources that we have available to us at the moment. Those resources will certainly not be there forever. All the resources are non-renewable; once they are dug up and exported they cannot be replaced. One day they will run out. That will obviously happen at different times. There are various amounts left of the different commodities that are mined in this state. Some will last a very long time and others will last a much shorter period. The important point is that they are not infinite; they will deplete and run out at certain times. We need to do more than is being done at the moment to ensure that some of the benefits are available in the long term. To that extent it is my strong view, as I mentioned in my comments in March, that we should be setting up an investment fund, a portfolio, for Western Australia so that there will be an income stream earned in perpetuity that will maintain and indeed grow the capital value of the fund. That will provide benefits for the long term. As I pointed out back in March, such a fund has been established in a number of jurisdictions around the world. There are three that I am particularly aware of. One is Alberta, which has a fund worth about \$13.5 billion in Canadian terms. An additional \$1 billion for the fund was provided in the province's budget, which was handed down only a few months ago. I have become aware of that since I made my previous comments. Alaska has a fund worth about \$45 billion in Australian dollar terms. Norway has a fund worth about \$280 billion in Australian dollar terms. Those are three examples of jurisdictions that have had, at various times, the foresight to put in place an arrangement that I believe needs to be put in place for Western Australia. This is an issue that should be pursued. To me, this is an important moral issue. We cannot simply continue to spend at the rate that we are without making some provision for the future, by which I mean perpetuity. We should not just build infrastructure that is available for the next 30 or 40 years, whether it is school buildings or police stations that will ultimately need replacing. It is a matter of ensuring that we have a strong income stream available from a strongly growing capital fund that we are in a good position to establish now. If I had my way, the government would have allocated at least \$500 million from its \$2 billion surplus from 2005-06 to start such a fund. There would also be a minimum of 10 per cent of royalties going into that fund on an annual basis. That would not have a dramatic impact on the state's finances now. Obviously, it would take some adjustment. It would ensure that we started a fund and that it would grow in the long term. If we continued to add funds at the rate of 10 per cent or more of royalties each year, we would find within a few years that we had a significant fund that would continue to grow and start providing an income stream of its own for the state. We need to establish a much stronger culture and mentality of putting something aside for the future, which is not being adequately done in Western Australia at the moment.

I will make some other comments based on one or two other observations I have made of the budget. They are particularly in connection with the water resources portfolio, for which I now have opposition responsibility. In particular, I refer to the infill sewerage program. The program was established in about 1994; certainly in the first term of the Court government. It was put in place to try to improve the environmental and social conditions of a lot of the older suburbs, particularly in the Perth metropolitan area, but also in rural towns in Western Australia. In many cases, the deep sewerage systems were not installed when the suburbs were originally established. The original value of the program was approximately \$900 million. Certainly in the time of the previous government, approximately \$80 million to \$90 million was spent on an annual basis on extending the sewerage system to a significant number of homes. The maximum expenditure that I am aware of was in 1998-99 when \$96 million was expended, and it enabled the sewerage system to be connected to an additional 10 181 homes. Unfortunately, since the Labor government came into office in 2001, there has been a continual decline in the amount of funds allocated to this very important project. In the current financial year there has been a reduction to \$34.4 million of expenditure on the infill sewerage program. That will enable 2 320 homes to be connected to deep sewerage as opposed to about 10 000 homes that were connected in 1998-99. Unfortunately, the story gets worse. In 2006-07 the government shows in its budget papers that there is a further reduction to \$30.6 million available for the infill sewerage program. It is a retrograde step, and there is no question about that.

I certainly do not consider my comments to be in conflict with my previous comments about the need to establish an investment fund for Western Australia. It is all about the government's priorities and where it chooses to spend the funds. It chooses big, flashy, expensive projects such as the railway line to Mandurah and the particular route it is following. In the meantime, it is ignoring the needs of people in older homes in this state, many in Labor electorates, who are putting up with substandard conditions. At the moment they have to deal with old septic tanks, and in many cases the leach drains are collapsing or the soil is no longer adequate to absorb the effluent that is leaching out of the leach drains. A prime example of that is in the Premier's electorate in Spearwood, to which I referred in question time two or three weeks ago. I visited that area with Hon Barbara Scott, member for the South Metropolitan Region, about four weeks ago, and the enormous problems experienced in that neighbourhood were very clear. The people there expected to have been connected to the infill sewerage program by now, but, unfortunately, that time frame has been substantially extended by the current Labor government. Therefore, people in the Premier's electorate, for example, have to put up with very substandard sewerage conditions.

The reduction in the funds allocated to the infill sewerage program by the Labor government is in dramatic contrast with the ever-increasing amount of revenue that the government is obtaining from the Water Corporation through the fees paid by residents of Western Australia for the provision of water, sewerage and drainage. Most people would be surprised to learn that the amount of payments by the Water Corporation to the government is expected in 2006-07 to be a massive \$547.7 million. The Water Corporation is expected to pay the government almost \$550 million in the next financial year. That will go into general revenue and represents an annual increase of about \$100 million over the past two years. It is in excess of \$10 million a week - an enormous amount of money. It is a miserly attitude by the government when it continues to reduce the amount of funds allocated for the infill sewerage program, so that people in electorates such as Willagee and others will continue to suffer and will have to wait much longer than they would have had to wait if the coalition government were still in office.

I mentioned earlier the Kalamunda District Community Hospital, which is in my electorate. It is a subject that I have raised in this Parliament on numerous occasions over the past five years. I do not need to re-cover all the issues that have been raised in those previous debates, except to make the observation that the \$5.5 million redevelopment of the hospital has been completed. Obviously, that is a positive thing and is the result of funding being allocated by the previous government in 2000. Finally, this government was dragged into completing its version of the design work for the redevelopment of that hospital, putting it out to tender and going ahead with construction. It was on hold for about three years during the first term of this current Labor government. It is extremely sad that the government has now removed obstetric services from the Kalamunda hospital.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr J.H.D. DAY: That will certainly result in the loss of expertise from both a medical and midwifery point of view in the hills area. It means that experienced obstetricians and midwives who have been providing services at Kalamunda will no longer be able to do so, certainly at that location, and they are quite likely to move away from the area. A very reasonable compromise was put to the government; that is, to maintain the provision of obstetrics at Kalamunda until the new hospital is built in Midland in 2011. That would have resulted in services continuing in Kalamunda for the next five years or so. It is important to note that the government has admitted that it will save only about \$500 000 a year as a result of this change, a very small saving indeed for the amount of pain and disappointment that has been caused in the hills area as a result of the unfortunate decision that it made. If that compromise had been accepted by the government, it would have meant that obstetrics would have transferred when a brand-new hospital was built in Midland in 2011, which, importantly, would have been a substantial degree closer to most of the residents of the Shire of Kalamunda than is currently the case with the Swan District Hospital. That very unfortunate decision of the government has now been put into effect, but it has certainly been to the great disappointment of just about everybody in my electorate. I make the observation that the priorities of residents of my electorate are very much down the list of priorities of the Labor government. If Darling Range was a marginal Labor seat, the Labor government would have taken our concerns a lot more seriously.

The other subject I will comment on briefly relates to the education portfolio. There was debate in this chamber earlier today about the outcomes-based approach to education. I heard comments from the members for Cottesloe and Churchlands on this aspect, and it was the subject of a question in question time from me to the Premier yesterday. I will not go over all the ground that has been previously covered, except to make two observations. Firstly, not all the changes that are being put in place are bad or ill-founded. There is some good theory behind what is being put in place. Equally, major concerns have been expressed by experienced, serious and responsible teachers in many parts of Western Australia who are not being adequately taken into account by the government. Those concerns include the fact that there is a lack of adequate syllabus material being provided or a lack of adequate content within whatever syllabus may exist within the OBE arrangement that is being put in place. Vague and confusing forms of assessment are being proposed, and there is a whole range of other concerns, not the least of which is the enormous workload being imposed on teachers as a result of the changes. The reality is that many teachers in Western Australia are very angry about what is being put in place, and in particular the way in which the OBE system is being implemented. If there had been a change of government at the last election in 2005, as a result of the concerns coming through me as shadow education minister in 2004, we would have had a major review of the curriculum framework, the overarching theory under which OBE is being implemented, to ascertain both the benefits and the disadvantages of its implementation up to the year 10 level, and to make whatever changes were necessary to get a much wider degree of acceptance of OBE and higher educational standards in years 11 and 12 than we are seeing at the moment.

I received a copy of a letter from a friend of mine who is a head of department at a government high school in a large country town in Western Australia. He asked me not to give his name because of the edict from the Director General of the Department of Education and Training late last week that any teachers who comment publicly about or, in particular, criticise outcomes-based education would suffer consequences. I think that is a very unfortunate directive that was given by the director general, because there should be some open and free

debate about the issue. It is unfortunate that it has had the effect of causing some teachers to be silent. He has asked me not to give his name, but I make the observation that he is known to both me and the Premier, as we all attended the University of Western Australia at the same time. He is also known to the Minister for Education and Training, as he taught at the same school as she did early in his career. In fact, he has written directly to her, so I trust that he will get a considered response. To help outline and put on the record some of the concerns of a teacher at the coalface, I will read some of his letter. Among other things, he says -

I write to you -

As I have said, the letter was written to the Minister for Education and Training -

today because of my concerns, specific and general, about the roll out of the New Courses of Study (NCoS) and the adoption of Outcomes Based Education in Western Australia.

Yesterday (April 13), I attended Day Two of NCoS for History. The experience was disappointing, if not sad. It left me more concerned than ever about the future for our students and our system . . .

The materials presented revealed a multi layered bureaucratic approach to the teaching of children that is almost incomprehensible to teachers, let alone children and their parents. What was offered up as the future of History could well be its death knell. I fear for Geography and Economics as well.

The lack of a clear syllabus of what is to be taught and learnt in the process of education will have far reaching consequences. Students will not gain the knowledge and skills that they will need as a basis for their tertiary education and Western Australian students will be placed at a considerable disadvantage nationally. (An examination of the clarity of the NSW Economics and History syllabus documents will reveal this immediately).

I am not opposed to the changing or updating of syllabus documents from time to time. This has to be done as new knowledge develops or as new skills are required. However, the changes to our Upper School syllabi as proposed in the NCoS are fundamentally flawed and our system . . . will be even further challenged because of them.

The problem that DET has created for itself is that the measures of success revolve around students attaining, and moving through the Levels until they reach the point of exit, the conclusion of Year 12. This places Levelling at the centre of the process of teaching whether the student is Year One or Year Twelve. The process is highly subjective, unwieldy and bureaucratic. After almost 7 to 10 years of operation in Primary and Lower Secondary, depending on where you are, there is still very little consensus about Level 'Fourness', 'Fiveness' and so on.

As an example, at the History NCoS yesterday twelve very experienced teachers of History could not agree on a level for a work sample. Levels Three to Seven for a piece of work were offered, all with valid reasons.

That letter was from somebody who has had at least 20 years of teaching experience and who, I have no doubt, is very well intentioned. He is not interested in making political points about this issue, but he certainly wants to see a better outcome to ensure higher standards of education for the benefit of children in Western Australia. From those comments, it is clear that there needs to be at least a deferral of the implementation of many of the courses that are expected to be put into effect in 2007. There needs to be a reconsideration of this, and experienced educators and others in the community need to be listened to a lot more to ensure that what is put in place will produce higher standards rather than lower standards in the school education system in this state. I very much encourage and urge the Minister for Education and Training and the government to listen seriously to those types of comments. Unfortunately, we have heard very little from the minister on this issue. She has been very reluctant to debate the issues on radio or in the wider public arena. She has adopted a very obstinate attitude to many of the concerns that have been expressed. That is simply not good enough, in my view. Any minister who deals with these issues must be in the public arena and must listen. If a minister believes that the government has a good case or that the government is implementing good policies appropriately, the minister must explain that to the community and try to persuade the community of its merits. However, we have seen very little of that from the current Minister for Education and Training. I hope that the minister and the government will undertake to listen more closely and that some of the concerns that have been expressed will be effectively responded to by the government.

MR M.W. TRENORDEN (Avon) [9.15 pm]: The Deputy Speaker must be the luckiest person in the state. I will spend my time on the budget address on the Sandakan death marches. Of all the issues that confront the state, I feel a great passion about the Sandakan death marches and the terrible stories thereof. Also, there is a substantial lack of knowledge of those events among Western Australians. I am curious to know how many Western Australians know about the Sandakan death marches and the terrible ordeal that 137 Western Australians, 2 000 other Australians and 500 British soldiers went through. Over the years I have taken the time

to walk the battlefields of Gettysburg, Cold Harbour, Richmond, Bull Run, the Wilderness and several others because it is a passion of mine. The passion is not about battle; it is man's endeavours that amaze me. However, I do not want to have that debate. I have been to places that Americans revere, such as Gettysburg, and I have been to Sandakan, where my heart went out to those Australian soldiers aged between 18 and 22 years who suffered through those terrible events. They were just lads who were captured in Singapore and were taken to Sandakan, which is where I spent Anzac Day this year.

I went on the Ben Hart memorial tour, which left Western Australia on 18 April, and I joined the tour on 21 April. I did not go to the initial events but I wish I had because I did not fully comprehend some aspects of the tour until I arrived in Borneo. I went as part of the Bakers Hill Primary School contingent. A Bakers Hill resident called Ben Hart was a commando in the landings in 1945, although he was not a part of the Sandakan experience. I will provide members with my summary of the events and I will then perhaps read from a book to provide more details. I will outline the three death marches. My father-in-law, Jim Horsley, who is the best man I have ever known, was in Borneo at the time of the landings. It is important to keep in mind that the forces that landed in west Borneo were all Australian. It involved the Australian Navy and Army; no British or Americans were involved. Another very outstanding Western Australian who has received significant recognition - although not enough - is Jack Sue. Jack Sue spends much of his time in his diving shop in Midland. He has written one book which I have but which I have not read yet. In fact, I bought seven books on the Sandakan and Borneo experiences. Jack is currently attempting to write another book. However, he is not in the best of health, and I really wish him well. I do not think very many Western Australians understand the enormous risks that Jack Sue took in Borneo. Perhaps I will have time to talk about that as I go through.

The story started in Singapore with the fall of Singapore. Some of the soldiers actually volunteered to go to Borneo. The reasoning was that Borneo was closer to Australia, and, if they were in Borneo, they would be more likely to be relieved in a successful campaign than they would be in some of the other places to which prisoners were being sent. Two lots went - some in 1942 and some in 1943. Perhaps to put this more accurately, I will read from a publication that I have with me. It is just a page, which will take me a little time to read, but at least it will provide more accuracy. It is headed "The Sandakan Death March" and is from a book titled *Horror in the East* by Laurence Rees, published by BBC Books in 2001. I will not read all of it, but I will start at the place at which I want to get the message across. Two thousand Australians and 500 English went to the Sandakan area. They were actually put on Berhala Island, which was a leper colony for many decades before the Second World War. When they got to Sandakan, the treatment was not all that bad in the early years, but it went down significantly. However, I will read from the book and get back to some of that. This is what happened towards the end of the process. To provide the picture, there were two and a half thousand soldiers. This is a direct quotation from the book -

By the beginning of 1945, only 1,900 prisoners were left alive at Sandakan. Allied bombing had rendered the airstrip unusable, -

The purpose of moving the soldiers to Sandakan was to build a Japanese airstrip. The reason for the Japanese taking Borneo was to get the high-quality crude oil in Borneo, as we all know, and the airstrip was there to protect the oilfields and also to be a link in the bombing raids by Japanese bombers. It continues -

and the prisoners were of no further use to the Japanese as forced labour. With Allied landings on Borneo anticipated at any moment, the Japanese decided to prevent the prisoners being liberated by working them to death, starving them, or murdering them in cold blood. Knowledge that they were losing the war caused the Japanese prison guards to intensify their brutality towards the prisoners.

In fact, many of the guards were Taiwanese, and many of the prisoners said that the Taiwanese guards were even more savage than the Japanese guards. It continues -

In late January 1945, the Japanese paraded the Australian prisoners to select porters for two of their battalions being relocated from Sandakan to the western coast of northern Borneo. Only 470 prisoners could be found who were thought to be fit enough to carry baggage and supplies.

Basically, what they carried from east Borneo to west Borneo was rice and munitions for the Japanese war effort. It continues -

This was to be the first of the Sandakan Death Marches, and would require a 120 mile (192 kilometre) trek by the Japanese troops and their forced prisoner of war labour through marshland, dense jungle, and then up the eastern slope of Mount Kimabula.

That is about 4 000 metres above sea level -

The journey would have tried severely the endurance of fit soldiers let alone weak, sick, and starving prisoners burdened with heavy loads. The Japanese guards were under instructions to kill any prisoners who collapsed or were too weak to continue the march, and they did so.

The trek was so arduous that even the Japanese found it exhausting, and they called a halt at the town of Ranau which is 100 miles . . . from Sandakan.

The full march did not take place. I will talk about Ranau later. The march was about 160 kilometres from Sandakan. It continues -

Only 190 of the Australian prisoners had survived the first death march.

That is 190 out of 470. It continues -

The bodies of the rest lay scattered along the track where they had collapsed and been murdered by their Japanese guards. Although the surviving prisoners were all sick, weak, and exhausted from the trek, the Japanese immediately set them to work building huts for the Japanese and a temporary camp for themselves on the outskirts of Ranau. Some of the exhausted prisoners were forced to carry heavy loads from the centre of Ranau to the camp. Some were forced to carry heavy barrels of water up a hill to the makeshift camp from a nearby stream. The prisoner's food ration was cut to only four ounces (100 grams) of rice a day.

The Japanese undertook a second death march on 29 May 1945 with 536 prisoners who could still stand on their feet. The Sandakan camp commander, Captain Takakura, assembled these prisoners outside the gate and then they set off towards Ranau in groups of about fifty with Japanese guards at the front, rear and sides of each group. The Japanese guards had been ordered to kill instantly any prisoner who collapsed from exhaustion or tried to escape. The main camp was set on fire behind them to destroy any evidence of its existence.

The second Sandakan Death March lasted for twenty-six days. Only 183 prisoners reached Ranau. The remaining 353 prisoners had either died on the march from a combination of starvation, sickness and exhaustion, or were killed by the Japanese guards because they were too weak to continue the trek. On their arrival at Ranau on 24 June 1945, the participants in the second death march found that only six prisoners from the 470 who had left Sandakan in January were still alive. Although weak and exhausted, the survivors of the second death march were then put to hard labour and the death toll soared.

About two hundred and fifty prisoners were left behind at Sandakan after the departure of the participants in the second death march. These prisoners were so ill that the Japanese initially intended to leave them at Sandakan to die of starvation. However, they decided to send another group of seventy-five on a third death march on 9 June 1945. This group was so weak and sick that none survived beyond 30 miles (50 kilometres). When each man collapsed, he was instantly killed by a Japanese guard. Of those seriously ill prisoners who were left at Sandakan, all were either murdered by the Japanese guards or died from starvation and sickness before the Japanese surrender on 15 August 1945.

Those dates are important because these terrible marches were in the last days of the Second World War, but I will talk about that later. It continues -

As a result of brutal treatment and a starvation diet, there were only thirty-eight prisoners left alive at Ranau on 1 August.

We should bear in mind that 15 August was the date on which the war ended. It continues -

They were too sick and feeble to work, and the senior Japanese officer at Ranau ordered that these survivors of the death marches be shot.

They were summarily shot. It continues -

At the time of the Japanese surrender on 15 August 1945, only six prisoners had survived the horrors of the Sandakan prisoner of war camp and the Sandakan Death Marches.

One of those prisoners died within a few days of escaping, so, in reality, only five soldiers survived. They were all Australians; no English survived. Two prisoners escaped into the jungle during the march and four escaped at the end of the march. Interestingly, at the end of the march one of the very brutal Taiwanese guards approached the soldiers and said, "Tomorrow morning you will be executed." Only four prisoners could muster the strength to escape, and they escaped during a tropical downpour that night. One died. None of those six people would have survived without the assistance of the locals; that is one of the sad stories I will talk about later. However, four had the strength to escape on that night, and they survived. They were found on a road by a local who took them to a farmer's hut and looked after them until the Allied troops arrived. That person is still alive today and still has not been recognised for doing that for those four Australians. Everyone knows what he did, but unlike the fuzzy wuzzies in Papua New Guinea and other places where people have been officially recognised for such help, the only recognition that person ever received was one thank-you letter. Why the Sandakan process is not better known is beyond me.

A total of 2 390 prisoners at the Sandakan camp were either murdered by the Japanese in cold blood or died because of starvation, sickness or overwork. When it became certain that Japan would have to surrender, extraordinary efforts were made to protect those responsible for Japan's atrocities, including the Emperor, by destroying all incriminating evidence. On 20 August - five days after the war finished - the senior Japanese officer in charge of prisoner of war and civilian internment camps ordered camp guards to destroy all incriminating evidence of atrocities and of brutal treatment of prisoners of war and civilians and advised guilty camp guards to transfer or flee. It took some weeks for the Allies to get to the Sandakan area. During the marches Jack Sue saw one marcher bringing in the soldiers at Ranau at the end of the march. He did not know why all that was happening, but one thing he has to live with is actually watching that terrible ordeal of fellow Australians. I cannot say enough for Jack Sue. As I said before, 137 Western Australians were involved. I intend to do some work and read about those people to find out where they came from. I understand that several brothers from Toodyay were lost, and I am told that of all the Western Australian towns that those 137 Western Australians came from, Toodyay was over-represented. There are a lot of stories that turn me cold, such as the story about the officer in charge, Matthews, who led the underground movement in the area, which included the locals. He was found out and taken further into Borneo and executed. In 1943 all the officers were taken away from the Sandakan camp.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: All the officers were taken away because the Japanese thought that if they took out the leadership group, it might be easier to deal with the prisoners. There are many stories, as you would expect, Madam Deputy Speaker, of heroism. There was a radio built in the camp. There is an interesting story about a steamer that people can see when they visit the memorial now. At night the steamer used to drive a motor that drove an alternator that knocked out 110 volts of power to drive the lighting in the camp. However, the radio had to be kicked up to 118 volts to get it to work. At night the power was kicked up, but that was never discovered. The guards never noticed that the lights got brighter at a certain time at night. That was because the Australian soldiers had built themselves a radio and were listening in to the progress of the war. They could not successfully transmit but they were in touch with what was happening outside their own domain. Only recently a memorial park has been established. I have a brochure on it with me. The brochure has three flowers on the cover: one to represent the Australian and English soldiers who died there; one to represent the Malays who died there; and one to represent the Japanese who died there. However, I have to tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that there is still a lot of bitterness in and around Malaysia - or Malaya as it was then. Many families suffered horribly during the occupation. There were 1 000 people executed in the capital in an uprising; the Japanese just brutally put them down. The difference was that when a soldier put his neck on the line by escaping under the wire, as some of them did to gather food and so forth, they put their lives at risk. However, every time a local Malay did that, he put his whole extended family at risk. If a local was caught, the Japanese would wipe out his whole family. During my visit, I met several people whose parents had been executed by the Japanese. They had survived only because others took them to the hills and hid them from the Japanese.

One of the things that caught my attention at Ranau was a stone monument, which comprises some 370-odd stones, a stone for each of the soldiers. Some British soldiers also died at Ranau at the end of the marches. A Victorian soldier who attempted to escape - unfortunately, I could not find his name - was caught, brought back, chained to the ground in the sun for 11 days and beaten every day until he died. That monument is in a church and school area. It is very basic, but visiting it was an overwhelming moment. I think that poor soldier was 21 or 22 years of age. I cannot begin to imagine what he had to endure until the end of his life to defend what we take for granted.

I mentioned a story in the house last week, but it is worth retelling. I refer to the eight soldiers and their dixies. A dixie is what the soldiers used to gather food from the locals to take back to the other soldiers before they were executed. On the last day, the locals found the soldiers' wedding rings in the dixies. One of the locals at Ranau claims - when I was at Ranau I read an article about this - that she still has one of those wedding rings. I guess that the soldiers had only their wedding rings to give the locals to thank them for the food that they brought and for their kindness, even though they knew full well - because they had been told - that they were to be executed the next day. There is a strong affiliation with and affection for Australians in Borneo. When I was on the streets doing what tourists do, quite a few people approached me and told me that they remembered the Australians. That is something we should not forget.

One of the things that worries me is that although we send our students - I am arguing against this; indeed, it is the right thing to do - to Kokoda, the Somme, Thailand and Gallipoli, we do not send them to Sandakan. It is in no way a contest. However, people should consider that despite all the terrible atrocities that happened on the Burma-Thai railway, 60 per cent of Australians at that camp survived that ordeal. At Sandakan, only six per cent of Australians survived. Along the Thai railway, I think there was something like 22 000 deaths, which is a significantly higher number of soldiers than there were in Ranau. I am in no way suggesting that it is a contest; however, we must remember the terrible conditions in which young Australians died at Ranau. Again, it is not a

contest. Only a few days ago I saw the movie *Kokoda*. I had to go and see it. The Sandakan death track was every bit as hard as the Kokoda Track. For those who have not been there, the terrain on the Sandakan track is the same as the terrain on the Kokoda Track. It was the same race of people as the locals. In the hills of Papua and the hills of Malaysia, these sick and dying soldiers, with enormous weights on their backs, really did not have a chance.

At a dinner I met the President of Sabah, who could be equated with our Premier. I had a half-hour conversation with him. It is very clear that he would like to have a stronger association with Western Australia. That is the reason I am using tonight's debate to put this message out to all 57 members of this chamber and to ask them to give it some consideration. I raised this with our Premier - I do not want to put words in his mouth, because that would not be fair - and he said that he had heard a few remarks I had made last week. He also signed off my application for imprest to go on this trip, so he knew where I was going. He said that he had a relative over there and would have liked to be there himself. I would like to make sure that some of us take the time and effort to look at this process, and do it for two reasons: firstly, to remember the Western Australian, Australian and British soldiers who died under such terrible conditions in Borneo and, secondly, to celebrate and remember the fantastic locals who had such passion for our soldiers and such empathy for the cause, and fought the Japanese so hard. Let us see whether we cannot get some economic activity going between us. It is a tropical country, and palm oil is one of its main exports. Fish is another. Most members would know that we put a fair bit of time and effort into tropical agriculture in Kununurra. In fact, in the past couple of weeks some forums have been held to which I have been invited, although I am not sure why. I love to go to Kununurra, because it is a wonderful place. We spend a lot of time on tropical agriculture in this state, and perhaps there are some issues on which we can assist Malaysia.

Even though we talk about China every day in this place, as we should, let us not forget the obligations to countries other than China. We talk a fair bit about Indonesia. Standing in the town of Sandakan, the Philippines can be seen on the horizon. Part of Borneo is actually Indonesia. It is important that, when we cast our eyes towards Malaysia, we think not only of Kuala Lumpur, but also of the two provinces of Borneo, with which we have such a strong association, even though many Western Australians do not know this history. I have been aware of this history for some time, because I read this kind of information. I cannot say when I first became aware of it, but it would not have been more than 15 years ago.

It is a terrible story, but my interest is not motivated by revenge or bitterness. I met a brother and sister on the trip. This story explains some of the bitterness that exists. Their aunt died in the 1970s believing that her son had died at Changi prison. Her husband died seven years later. He knew that his son had died at Sandakan, but did not know about the death marches. How could it be that, in the 1970s, the war having ended in 1945, a mother did not know where her son had died? A few years after that a father died believing that his son died in a prisoner of war camp in Sandakan, whereas in fact he died nearly at the end of the death march. Many people there feel bitterness, not just with the Japanese; they argue that MacArthur wanted to save the Australian soldiers but Blamey did not. I will not promote that argument, although I heard it quite a few times during the course of the trip. There is a lot of feeling there. The only way to change those attitudes is to look to the future. The wonderful Malayan people in Borneo have a fantastic attitude towards us. They would like to seek some common bonds with us, as has clearly been said to me on many occasions. I ask members to give it some thought. I will attempt to get the Speaker to arrange for some of us to go there. The appropriate time may be Anzac Day next year, or it may be some other time, but we need to remember those 137 Western Australians and 2 000 Australians. Let us also remember the people who are now there where those Australian lads died. Let us remember what those lads died for. If we can make things a little better by having a strong association with those two provinces in Borneo, we should.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr J.C. Kobelke (Leader of the House)**.

House adjourned at 9.45 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS - DETAILS

707. Mr M.J. Birney to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure

(1) Have any agencies or departments under the Minister's control entered into any contractual arrangements with any of the following companies since February 2001 -

- (a) Strategic Computer Solutions (SCS);
- (b) Strategic & IT Consulting Services;
- (c) Strategic Knowledge Solutions; or
- (d) Nexus Strategic Solutions?

(2) If yes to (1) can the Minister please advise -

- (a) what was the contract for;
- (b) what was the value of the contract; and
- (c) when was the contract signed?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN replied:

DPI

- 1. (a) Yes
- (b) No
- (c)-(d) Yes

2. Strategic Computer Solutions (SCS)

- (a) Technical and Project Management Services associated with implementation of a new email and calendaring solution.
- (b) \$370,255.
- (c) 19 June 2002

Strategic Knowledge Solutions

- (a) Consultancy charges in relation to Complaints Handling System.
- (b) \$989.00
- (c) 19 December 2005

Nexus Strategic Solutions

- (a) Professional Recruitment and Human Resource Services.
- (b) \$2,397.00
- (c) 11 April 2006.

Western Australian Planning Commission:

- 1. (a) Yes
- (b)-(d) No
- 2. (a) IT Maintenance
- (b) \$5,775.00, \$478.50 and \$2,348.50.
- (c) 28 May 2001, 30 June 2001 and 17 April 2002.

MRWA

- 1 (a)-(c) No
- (d) Yes
- 2 In regards to (1) (d) above - Nexus Strategic Solutions
 - (a) Training services to Main Roads staff
 - (b) \$5 053.33 inc GST
 - (c) 20 June 2005

PTA

- (1) (a)-(c) None
- (d) Two