

MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT — PERFORMANCE

Motion

MR D.T. REDMAN (Warren–Blackwood) [4.00 pm]: I move —

That this house expresses its lack of confidence in the Minister for Regional Development for failing to stand up for regional Western Australia, given the McGowan government's continual undermining of the regional development agenda, including the demise of royalties for regions.

It gives me great pleasure to get to my feet to speak to this motion. I just want to make a quick comment about the member for Maylands; this is a friendly comment. She was very successful in getting some recognition for her rose garden. Can I say that in regional Western Australia, roses might survive but petunias certainly do not. The Minister for Regional Development talks about paving bricks and petunias, being quite critical of building amenity and supporting those sorts of projects, and it is unfortunate because it is part of the topic we are discussing today about where we see the priorities of this government as they apply to regional Western Australia. The motion reads —

That this house expresses its lack of confidence in the Minister for Regional Development for failing to stand up for regional Western Australia, given the McGowan government's continual undermining of the regional development agenda, including the demise of royalties for regions.

I make the point from the outset that when the new government came in and the Premier was working through who was going to pick up particular portfolios, it finally came out that there would be 17 ministers in total, including the Premier. There was a fairly positive response to Hon Alannah MacTiernan picking up agriculture and regional development. That was fairly positive. She had a history and certainly a name out there; whether or not everyone in the Labor Party agrees with her contribution, she certainly had a name out there for being a doer and getting things done. The Mandurah railway line is an example of that. Of the government's choices and picks, she was the one who got that job and it seemed to get a pretty good reception.

One of the reasons I am on my feet now is that we believe the government has waned substantially in regional Western Australia. I am pretty certain that the Labor caucus room is very strongly supported by numbers from metropolitan Perth. Our party has feedback loops from our constituents and our party organisation, and they are massively strong when it comes to issues of regional development and agriculture in Western Australia, and small business development and progressing the regions as significant contributors to the economy of Western Australia. We get that very strongly. Parliament is the platform to give feedback to this government that all is not good out there. There is a bit of angst. I will walk through a number of topics and a few arguments to demonstrate why.

The Premier got to his feet to answer my quite genuine question today about some of the issues the Minister for Regional Development has been pushing. I hold the view that they are not necessarily the priorities of the broad agricultural sector in Western Australia, and probably give the sector cause for concern as to what her position and, by extension, what the position of this government is with regard to regional Western Australia. Of course, the Premier stood up and jumped down my throat about the history of that minister and what she had and had not done and had a crack at me, but I am not sure that the Premier is in a position to get feedback about what exactly is happening.

Let us walk through a few of the challenges. I will start with the agricultural sector. All ministers will come across issues; one cannot be a minister without some sort of disaster or something coming unstuck on one's watch. When I advise people who take on those roles, I always make the point that the measure of a minister is not the issue that happens, but it is how the minister responds to and deals with it. That is the measure. That is a big part of what has happened recently with respect to the live trade challenges, an area that is very, very sensitive for our constituency and for the agricultural sector. Live trade underpins the pricing structure for livestock in Western Australia, both cattle and sheep and, yes, there are challenges there, and nobody, least of all the agricultural sector, condones what we saw in the media in 2011 about the abattoirs in Indonesia. No-one condones that and no-one accepts that. No-one condones what we have seen with regard to the live sheep trade going to the Middle East. I want to put on the record that we do not accept that. It cannot be an acceptable position and we have to take strong action to respond to it.

Ms C.M. Rowe: So what actions do you propose?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The federal minister has jurisdiction over live exports into foreign countries and for the exporter supply chain assurance system, which is the process that followed the 2011 challenge. That probably needs revisiting; I think Barnaby Joyce, when he was in that role, made that point. The federal minister has had the McCarthy review and there have been responses to that. He has been quick in responding to that and he has been quick to step up and say that we need to take a hard line, and I think that is absolutely accurate. No-one on our side of the house believes that what has happened is acceptable. It is about how ministers work through this, and there are a number of issues.

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I want to refer to a number of newspaper articles, including regional newspaper articles in some cases. This article is from *The West Australian* of 24 April 2018 and is headed, “Farmer fury at MacTiernan”. It states —

WA farming leaders are headed for a showdown with Alannah MacTiernan today after accusing the Agriculture Minister of throwing the industry “under the bus” over the live sheep export furore.

Pastoralists and Graziers Association of WA president Tony Seabrook said Ms MacTiernan’s lack of support during the animal welfare scandal of the past few weeks had affected her standing in the agricultural community.

To quote his words —

“Appallingly—instead of working with us—to work our way through this, she has taken every opportunity to throw us under the bus,” he said.

That is the sort of sentiment that is coming through in a number of the articles in response to this issue.

The *Farm Weekly* of 31 May ran an article on page 3, headed, “Activists get live ex access”. It states —

THE Fremantle Port has allowed Animals’ Angels Australia —

I was hoping the Minister for Transport would still be here —

access to undertake independent monitoring of livestock loading at the port on a trial basis.

The proposal by the animal rights group, which is opposed to the live export of animals, was forwarded on to the Minister for Transport, Rita Saffioti, by State Agriculture Minister Alannah MacTiernan.

... the decision to allow Animals’ Angels to be present at the port was a “decision made by Minister Saffioti”.

“I simply forwarded the proposal by Animals’ Angels to Minister Saffioti for her consideration,” Ms MacTiernan said.

Here we have a decision by the government to allow an animal activist group to undertake what I am reading to be a very proactive monitoring role in respect of animals in live export. The sentiment here is that there are appropriate authorities in place to manage that, including under the jurisdiction of the Minister for Agriculture and Food. There is a chain of decision-making here that seems to be giving activist groups access to what they did not have access to before, and I am sure that the industry would view that with a little concern. It is not that the industry does not have the same concerns about animal welfare, but there are formal processes for working through this. That was an interesting comment that was made on 31 May in the *Farm Weekly*.

On the same day, again in the *Farm Weekly* on page 7, a further article reports that farming groups sought a meeting with the Premier. It states —

LAST Friday the Pastoralists and Graziers Association of WA (PGA) president Tony Seabrook and WAFarmers president Tony York met together with State Premier Mark McGowan for a “one on one” to discuss the live sheep export industry.

According to Mr Seabrook the meeting was “hijacked by Agriculture Minister Alannah MacTiernan”—who “dominated the meeting” and “denied us the opportunity to address the Premier with all the topics we had planned to bring up”.

Mr Seabrook said the “minister is saying she is helping, but in reality she is destabilising and causing uncertainty, which is not helpful”.

Again, the sentiment here is that the minister is destabilising and causing uncertainty. There are ways to work through this stuff. It is challenging and difficult, but there is responsibility in government, and there is an industry sector that wants an advocate to walk alongside it and work through these issues to get outcomes that respect not only the farmers and their plight, but also the animals and the social licence that needs to be earned in the broader community to continue these activities. Around that time, the federal minister took action on the McCarthy review, and we have seen the recommendations from that play through. On the same day, 31 May, in *Farm Weekly* was an article titled “Animal Welfare Tops Minister’s Agenda”. The second paragraph states —

The minister referred to herself as the “Minister for Animal Welfare” as she sought the backing of industry for a pause in the live sheep trade to the Middle East during the northern summer months, despite Federal Agriculture Minister David Littleproud saying that a temporary halt to the trade would not occur this year.

WA farmer organisations have asked the minister to “step aside” and let the changes recommended in the McCarthy Review, and implemented by the Federal government and the Australian Livestock Exporters’ Council, occur before pursuing her agenda.

There is reference later in the article to Mr John Wallace from Esperance, who is the WAFarmers senior vice-president of the livestock council —

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Mr Wallace said he had it on record that the minister referred to herself as “the Minister for Animal Welfare, rather than the Minister for Agriculture”—which revealed why producers were losing confidence in her ability to represent them.

“I think she has lost sight that if you suspend the trade for any length of time at all you will kill it,” Mr Wallace said.

...

“I would’ve thought that the Minister of Agriculture—with a trade that is so pivotal for WA producers—would be selling the good news stories about the industry,” he said, referring to the positive results from live sheep exports that have left Fremantle in recent weeks with mortality rates well below the new reportable threshold of one per cent.

Again the sentiment talks about the response to the issues and the sentiment by the farming community that the minister does not seem to be in a position of being an advocate for the sector, working through the challenges in a methodical way, but seems to have a broader agenda, perhaps to shut down the live trade. I realise that the Premier said that that is not the agenda of this government. I noticed the member for Maylands nodding in the background during question time. I am sure the member for Maylands has a different view on that. I understand and respect that, but I make the point that this sector is worth a lot to Western Australia.

Mr P. Papalia: Stop verballing people who are not in the chamber. Just get on with it. She is not able to speak from the Chair.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I do not think I was verballing her; I do not think I was doing anything wrong.

Mr P. Papalia: You were verballing her. Just get on with it—it is boring. The sooner you finish the better.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: This cuts to the view that when these issues start to move, the concern is that it rolls into other sectors. In *The West Australian* on 23 May, in an article headed “WA sheep exports all at sea”, Paul Murray writes —

It can’t be overstated, but the issues that have confronted the live sheep industry have no direct correlation with cattle exports. The cattle industry’s problems have been overwhelmingly in overseas abattoirs.

We know that from the exporter supply chain assurance system processes that were put in place after the 2011 concerns. The article continues —

However, activist groups have a history of connecting one victory to the next target, regardless of how tenuous the link. So cattle producers are right to be wary.

People watching this, who are not necessarily sheep or cattle producers, start to get concerned about what sentiment exists with this government towards a sector that is extremely important to regional Western Australia. If the sentiment is that other sectors are not free from the influence of government decisions, and that is absolutely fair to say, there are two cattle herds in Western Australia. There are about one million in the southern part, typically Bos Taurus animals—British breeds—and in the northern half there are about another million that are Bos Indicus breeds such as Brahman, Droughtmaster and the like.

Mr V.A. Catania: That’s just like Parliament, isn’t it?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Yes—some in the north and some in the south, but there is that line in the middle that we have to be careful of!

The challenges in the north are, firstly, getting animals to slaughter weight, and feed-on facilities—what we were doing in government about irrigated agriculture was one opportunity to achieve that—and, secondly, the lack of processing capacity. There was a fairly significant abattoir, operated by AACo, a company in the Northern Territory. That has now shut down, and the only one that is now operating is Jack Burton’s abattoir, between Broome and Derby. It does not have a significant capacity, and it is supporting processing animals out of their own properties. If we do not have the live cattle trade taking stock over to Indonesia to go onto their feed-on facilities and into their abattoirs, the only other option is pretty significant travel on the back of trucks, which in and of itself is an animal welfare challenge. The nature of Western Australia is that it is a hell of a big state and accessing those opportunities is very difficult. There are no easy answers and I maintain that the solution is a short trip across the water to Indonesia, supporting value adding, in this case processing in Indonesia in terms of feedlot facilities and supporting their markets, which in some cases cannot deal very well with the boxed-meat market, because of the nature of how they manage food into their wet markets. It is reasonable to say, linking some of the decisions together, that the sentiment that government pushes out via its minister is of concern to the industry, and this is reflected in the commentary we see, particularly in the rural media, and the circles in which we operate and work in throughout our electorates.

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Another example, moving on to another topic, is the dog fence. I know this will probably be mentioned by the member for Roe when he is on his feet. All three of us here were in New South Wales recently at the New South Wales Nationals conference in Cowra. We had a chance to meet with David Littleproud. The member for Roe will talk about that conversation, but it was a chance for us to push a Western Australian agenda, on behalf of government, because we are not in government, and to get resources to support investment in Western Australia. We are sometimes a lonely light over there, but nevertheless we take every opportunity we can as a party to push those issues. We put fairly significant investments into the state barrier fence, running from the Zuytdorp Cliffs right the way down to Ravensthorpe. Earlier on, it was there to stop rabbits, but that did not happen, and later on it was there to stop the migration of emus, in particular. We upgraded it to dog-proof standards, with a lap fence on the bottom, thereby keeping the dogs on the pastoral side rather than the agricultural side. There is a push, rightly so, to extend that fence from Ravensthorpe right the way through to the other side of Esperance, and we have funds going towards that. Despite the big investments we have made, there is money on the table right now, which is a legacy of the Liberal–National government, I might add. There is a big push from people down there to support putting that fence in place for, in many cases, animal welfare reasons. Wild dogs attacking sheep, young lambs and the like is not very nice, and that in itself is an animal welfare challenge, and that is something this government should be stepping up to. In the *Countryman* of 14 June 2018, there is an article titled, “Political pestilence jumps fence”, which reads —

WA Agriculture Minister Alannah MacTiernan is under fire for making “empty promises” over the extension to Esperance of the State Barrier Fence after she trumpeted a \$6.9 million State package which is contingent on Federal funding.

Ms MacTiernan told *Countryman* this week that no work to extend the fence from Ravensthorpe to Cape Arid National Park would take place until the Federal Government committed funds to the project.

Towards the end of the same article, it states —

News of the delay has enraged Esperance farmer Scott Pickering, who sits on the national Wild Dog Action Plan Committee and has been pushing for the upgrade for 14 years.

“The minister (Alannah MacTiernan) was very critical of the previous government for the lack of action on this important issue,” he said. “Wild dogs tear apart and kill thousands of sheep and cattle, costing the supply chain millions of dollars annually.

“She has made it clear she is keen to suspend the live export trade at certain times of the year ... she has again diverted key priorities and promises for the agriculture industry, in preference to playing political games.”

That sentiment is of concern for where this minister sits on industry advocacy and support. The minister seems to be either sitting at the cabinet table and losing the argument, or sitting in the caucus room and losing the argument, for making a case for regional Western Australia.

I refer to an article at page 3 of *Farm Weekly* of 24 May this year about a Waroona cattle, sheep and grains producer, Peter Stacey, and I quote —

He said to *Farm Weekly* that removing the minister was essential for the future of WA agriculture.

“She is the worst ag minister we have had,” Mr Stacey said.

“If she is not removed she is going to do a lot of damage to the industry.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I am making the point that there is a sentiment in the ag sector that there is not an industry advocate within government, for a sector worth \$9 billion in Western Australia. A serious lack of confidence is coming through. I am sure that is not being portrayed to party circles in the Labor caucus. It is certainly not being portrayed through the commentary I am hearing in this chamber, even after my question to the Premier today. Nonetheless, it is there, and it requires, in my view, a bit of work to be done.

I make another point. I used these examples in my question today—the question is probably sitting in the bin here. I used these examples for a reason. We are talking about managing the live trade issue. I have used examples of that. In the past, I have heard concerns about genetically modified organisms. That was a big argument. The Labor Party took a particular position on GMOs and the minister has also taken that position. That is a very important technology to support Western Australian grain farmers. The government is happy to stand on the heights of the investment by the Department of Regional Development in the grains sector, which was a point made by the Premier today, yet it fundamentally opposes GM. The government even supported an inquiry in the upper house into compensatory pathways for farmers who have a GM crop that affects a farmer next door who has chosen not to have GM, despite the fact that sufficient legal processes are in place to manage those issues on a range of fronts, whether GM or not. That is also a sentiment that comes through.

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I also talked about how, when I was Minister for Agriculture and Food, ministerial councils were able to achieve consistent national standards in many areas. That was always the right platform to work through to ensure we had consistent national standards on these issues. On the issue of caged eggs and caged hens, the minister wants to depart from that position. I understand the issue and the views. However, nevertheless, a national standard was advocated for, and the minister wants to depart from that. The minister also talks about regenerative agriculture. I use these examples, because I have an agriculture background. I have been in the agriculture space for a long time. The National Party has a strong constituency in that area. In my view, some of these issues seem to be disconnected from the agricultural industry in Western Australia. That is reason why a lack of confidence sits in the agricultural industry. I have heard a lot of commentary about regenerative agriculture. I have read *Hansard*. I have seen the articles and comments made by the minister. I have seen the website of the Department of Agriculture and Food about the speakers who have come to talk about regenerative agriculture, so I thought I would look it up. The best way to get updates on what these things mean is to look at Wikipedia. It states —

Regenerative agriculture ... is an approach ...

Mr D.R. Michael interjected.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Does the member know what regenerative agriculture is?

Mr D.R. Michael: No, but I would look up something better than Wikipedia to find out.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Does anyone else know what regenerative agriculture is? This is a quote from a website.

Mr W.J. Johnston: What website?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: It is Wikipedia. This was the first thing that popped up when I googled “regenerative agriculture”. The article lists some pretty good references, if members want to go through where this comes from. In fact, if members want to talk about whether this is well referenced or not, one of the references for this article was a guest speaker whom the minister invited to the Department of Agriculture and Food to talk about it. It states —

Regenerative agriculture ... is an approach to food and farming systems that rejects pesticides, artificial fertilizers and claims to regenerate topsoil, increase biodiversity, improve water cycles, enhance ecosystem services, increase resilience to climate fluctuation and strengthen the health and vitality of farming and ranching communities.

I was intrigued by that. When I first heard about it, having an ag background, I thought it must have been in reference to perhaps an east coast perennial farming system with perennial pastures and so on, which provides scope for grazing systems that are very different from those in Western Australia. Yes, there are perennial pastures in our south west, but for the most part this state has dry land agriculture. That is almost totally in conflict with a lot of the points made in this article. In this state, artificial fertilisers and pesticides are used. That is the nature of our agriculture sector. If the minister wants to prosecute this as a lead example of what should be happening in Western Australia, I think there is a disconnect. That is the point I am making. I am not suggesting this is false or wrong or not an opportunity or pathway that some people might want to take. We support, to use our term, “organic agriculture”, and investing in pathways in which people can get a premium for a particular product that consumers want to purchase. I do not for one minute think that is necessarily wrong. I make the point that I believe there is a disconnect with the agricultural sector.

In my view, there is also a lack of narrative. What is the narrative of this government about the agricultural sector? What is the story this government needs to tell to show leadership in this sector? I have said on a number of occasions that we have lacked leadership from industry in the ag sector. Government has a massive role to play in that space. That is one of the reasons the former government took to the 2013 election a policy called Seizing the Opportunity Agriculture. Some of the elements of that policy are still there in the royalties for regions budget. That reflected what we viewed as the contemporary reporting of areas that needed to be unlocked in order for Western Australia to capitalise on opportunities in the Asian markets. We are very close to that export market. We are in the same time zone. There are massive issues in that area with food security. We need to set that up. The investments of our government went into our land and water asset. They went into the availability of water right up through the Fitzroy Valley, and in the Canning Basin and down to the south west in my electorate. Another element was land tenure pathways to unlock the potential in pastoral areas to bring in outside investment. Other key elements were: land and water; research and development; investing in the grains sector; investing in the sheep and cattle livestock sectors; and investing in horticulture and organics. To sum it up, the key elements were the land and water asset; research and development; pathways to market to ensure efficient supply chains from the farmer’s plate through to a product overseas; trade and investment to understand the trade opportunities that exist and what the market wants or demands; and investment from outside and scope to bring capital into the sector. The last one was skills. That was the story that we told. We captured that and we had programs that supported that.

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Our government had a narrative. I do not believe this government has a narrative. There is a bit of randomness about this government's approach to the ag sector that, frankly, needs to be pulled together. If any issue comes out of this debate today, it is the need for the government to have a narrative. There is now a level of uncertainty about the priorities of this government as they apply to agriculture and to being an advocate for the agriculture sector, and about its approach to the agriculture sector by making a bunch of random investments that are seen in isolation from the broader story that needs to be told. That is one of the key issues that we see, and we certainly get feedback from our electorates and the broader community about where the government sits on that. That is the agriculture sector. I am sure that others will expand on that.

I have raised in this place ad nauseam the wave farm trial in Albany. The story that has been told goes from this wave farm producing a big stack of renewable energy to it just being a trial that will produce one megawatt for one year with an investment of \$15.75 million to upgrade a substation that will have capacity for only 1.5 megawatts. Even if someone wanted to connect on a commercial scale, they could not. I think that is a really disappointing investment. What is more, it does not have a business case. There have been a few questions on notice about this matter. On 20 March, Hon Martin Aldridge in the upper house asked question on notice 1069, which states —

I refer to the Minister's media statement on 6 October 2017 'Albany to become wave energy innovation centre', and I ask:

- (a) please table the business case supporting the \$15.75 million grant to Carnegie Clean Energy as a contribution toward a wave energy technology project;

The response he got was —

- (a) The State investment into the Wave Energy Technology project was an election commitment approved by Cabinet. The decision to award the grant to Carnegie followed a rigorous tender process.

There was no reference to a business case. I asked a question on 13 March, a bit before that question was asked, but I did not get the answer until 17 May. I asked —

I refer to the Albany Wave Farm Project and ask:

- (a) Was a business case for the project completed prior to ERC —

That is the Expenditure Review Committee, a subcommittee of cabinet —

approval for the project funds;

The answer was —

- (a) The State investment into the Wave Energy Technology project was an election commitment approved by Cabinet. As it is an R & D project, the standard business case methodology is not relevant. The decision to award the grant to Carnegie followed a rigorous tender process.

The Minister for Regional Development said that because it is an R&D project, the standard business case methodology is not relevant.

Mr V.A. Catania: So no business case at all, then?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: There was no business case at all. I then asked the Treasurer during the estimates hearing to tell me what his policy is on business cases. He asked me what I meant and I said that I was referring to the Albany wave farm and he told me to ask the question. His advisers were behind him, one of whom was Kaylene Gulich, whom I know quite well. Kaylene was a very well respected adviser. She leaned over and whispered in his ear, and his response was that the government was currently doing a business case. It was doing the business case after the project was committed, after Carnegie Clean Energy had got the project, after it had been through cabinet and after it had been through the ERC. My next question was: why was the government doing the business case? I was told that it was to show whether there were any risks with the project.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Sixteen million dollars.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Yes, there was \$16 million worth of risk attached to it. The advice the Treasurer got was that a business case was being drafted, despite what the Minister for Regional Development said. From what I could see, there was a disconnect. The Treasurer then got up in this place—I missed it because I was out of the chamber—and set the record straight and said that there was not a business case. We are wondering what is going on behind the scenes. We are wondering whether the Minister for Regional Development has verbed the Treasurer and said, "You need to back up on the business case; I'm not looking good on this" or whether they have decided to shut it down because the risks have already started to emerge. I raised one of those risks in a question to the Minister for Regional Development. I asked her whether she was aware of any environmental issues with the

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Carnegie trial off Garden Island and the answer was that, yes, there are some issues with that. I do not have the response with me, but there was leakage of nearly two tonnes of hydraulic fluid in the Carnegie trial off Garden Island that had only just been discovered when I asked the question. I think that a business case would have highlighted issues like that and they could have been taken into account with the Albany project. I have talked about this before. There are a number of issues with the Albany wave farm project that are cause for concern, the least of which is that a business case has not been done. A business case would have identified all the issues and risks around that. The Minister for Regional Development has described this as her number one project, yet it has “dud” written all over it. Even those in industry struggle with the notion that wave energy will make any sort of contribution to —

Mr P. Papalia: When did she say that it was her number one project?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: It came through in my freedom of information application. I had notes of meetings that she had with people in the Great Southern Development Commission.

Mr P. Papalia: So it was her number one project in the Great Southern Development Commission.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: No; she said that it was her number one project.

Mr P. Papalia: You’re verballing people again. You verbal people all the time.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: She was putting a priority —

Ms M.J. Davies: It’s in black and white in an FOI.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: It is in black and white in an FOI.

Mr W.J. Johnston: You said that they were notes of somebody else.

Mr P. Papalia: So it’s hearsay.

Mr W.J. Johnston: So it’s somebody else’s notes of what the minister said, not what the minister said.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I can get it. I do not have it here, but I should get it and read it because I can tell members how it reads.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: No-one has denied it. This is the number one project. I have said that in this chamber before and it is in black and white from an FOI, which shows exactly that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can we not have quite so much shrieking across the chamber. Hansard is not going to be able to follow this debate.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: There are a lot of things that should be priorities in regional Western Australia and I would have thought that making that project the number one project lets down those priorities a little. At one megawatt for one year for \$15.75 million, it is very expensive.

We have talked before in this place about the next issue, which is the Karratha community. We do not have the seat now; the seat was lost. Members might wonder why we would raise the Karratha city issues, including the Pelago Apartments investment at the end of the main street, the investment in The Quarter, the investment in the cultural centre and the work camp. Why would these issues be raised by people who do not represent the seat? I will tell members why. It is because these issues are a measure of the commitment of this government to regional Western Australia. Members opposite lambasted us for putting at the end of the street a pretty significant multistorey project called Pelago, which is now full, and having a cultural centre in a community of 25 000 people. We are making a case by saying that if the government wants to get regional development right, the lead example in Western Australia is probably Karratha, a city of 25 000 or 26 000 people, and it will not work if a work camp is built next to that community. In fact, it totally undermines the community if a work camp is built next to a particular town.

We got out of the Premier yesterday the Woodside participation plan, which is the negotiated document on Woodside’s commitments in seeking from the government a lease for a piece of land right on the edge of town to house 700 beds. That will undermine just about everything else that happens in that community. That is what this is. Yes, at a high level it reads pretty well, but the only formal commitment in this document relates to the level of local content and local participation in the construction of the village. This government is saying, “We’re going to build a village and, by the way, this village is going to totally undermine the community, but we’re going to have some targets of local content and local people constructing the village.” Yes, it is great for a short construction period, but it is pretty average over the long term when 700 people will come in on a regular basis. It will totally undermine whatever else happens in that community. This undermines regional development itself. If the government is going to support regional development, it cannot make decisions like that. It cannot have work camps next to communities of 25 000 or 26 000 people. No member in this chamber, particularly those who

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represent some of the smaller communities in Western Australia, would accept having a big private sector-owned long-term work camp for operational workers built next to their community. They would not accept it. Even the drive in, drive out workforce in Collie is a challenge. The member for Collie–Preston will be all too familiar with that. I am pretty certain that he would support a local workforce to support the Collie community and the businesses in that town. This document does not commit to anything in strong terms other than the construction of the village. All the rest of it says, “Thou shalt use the portal.” There are no targets for the number of people living in the community who will be employed. The only other commitment is that 50 people will be shifted into the existing Woodside-owned buildings. For a community of 25 000 or 26 000 people, it is pretty underwhelming.

If that is the chip that was put on the table to allow a company like Woodside to sign off on a 700-bed work camp in Karratha, it is really disappointing. This is the stuff that the regional development minister should be very strongly advocating for. She should be slamming down her hand around the cabinet table and strongly talking to her local member. I am pretty certain that under the circumstances, the local member supports our position. I know what he would be hearing on the streets up there. I reckon he probably supports our position, but we have a Premier who has rolled over to a big company because the argument is that we will bring the Browse and Scarborough gas fields onshore, and, unless we do this, they will not do that. That was not even in the application. The application to get the work camp there did not even make reference to Scarborough and/or Browse gas coming onshore. No-one in regional Western Australia, if they have an ounce of regional development blood in them, would accept that as a fair and reasonable position of government, which, in this case, totally undermines regional development. Our advocacy with this issue is not about the people in the Karratha community who complain, because they have a local member—he can advocate for them. It is about this being a measure of the sentiment of the current government as it applies to decision-making in regional Western Australia and the notion of regional development. It is what we are trying to achieve so that a few more than 600 000 people will live in regional Western Australia. What we have seen so far has been terribly challenging against what we see as reasonable standards of regional development.

On other issues such as regional education and the Moora hostel, Shane Love and the member for Roe —

Dr A.D. Buti: You never talked about it in your time in government. You are an absolute disgrace on this issue.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I will tell the member about our time in government. Six months before the change of government there was a cabinet decision —

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Of course we did.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, can you just calm down. If you would like to take the interjection, that is fine, member.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: We invested in the Esperance hostel, Amity House in Albany, the Geraldton hostel, and the Merredin hostel; and in a bunch of regional hospitals, telehealth and the education system.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The answer is yes. As we work through all of that—what have the Romans ever done for us?

Dr A.D. Buti: In estimates —

Mr D.T. REDMAN: In answer to the member’s question, there was a cabinet decision.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: It went through cabinet.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: It went through cabinet as a cabinet decision.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, member for Armadale, everybody! I have just had Hansard look at me, so I am assuming that means they cannot get this debate, so please hold in your yelling. Do it outside.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, enough. Member, please address me unless you wish to take that interjection.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Can I take a casual interjection?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Of course, you may, but I would not rely on it.

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Dr A.D. Buti: If it was such a high priority, surely you would have done something about it earlier in the eight years. Plus the member for Moora, in estimates when you were in government, asked the minister representing the education minister in the last government a question about Moora. The answer was that nothing needed to be done. He did not follow up with a supplementary question or anything. He was just satisfied. If Moora Residential College is so important, why was it not so important when you were in government? To say that in the last six months you made a decision shows that for the seven years before it was not important.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: It is my go now. There was a massive agenda for regional Western Australia, in our view, as we came to government in 2008.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Hang on; I have given the member for Armadale a chance to talk, so I should get a bit of space on that. There was \$7.1 million spent on a range of projects. The member for Bunbury knows the nature of these investments, and I do not need to go through the list here. We held a regional cabinet meeting in Moora. Peter Collier and I announced funds that cabinet decided upon on that day—about six months prior to the election—\$8.7 million to support investing in that. I take my hat off to Alan Carpenter on this because one of the schools in my electorate is Mount Barker Community College. Some of the middle-sized communities have a K–12 model and in some cases an opportunity to have K–TAFE consolidated on one site, with full service. That means a lot of ancillary services can be done at the schools, such as day care and kids' vaccinations at certain points in their life. The first and best example is Mount Barker Community College, and we did it also for Merredin. I think the other good example, which could be progressed further, is Kununurra. The next one, in my view, because of its catchment, is Moora. I talked about that on the day. It was not the component that got up in the cabinet decision. It was a cabinet decision and it was in the budget but, sadly, it was taken out. That was the commentary that happened. I am trying to put the record as it is and that is all I can do.

On the issue of camp schools, I think what has happened is terribly tragic. Our kids need more access to those sorts of things, not less. I have two in my electorate—the Pemberton camp school and the Bridgetown camp school on the old hospital site. They are very useful and cost effective to users. The feedback we are getting concerns us, particularly about metropolitan schools. They had a cost structure they could work with; someone else manages the program. They can come in with their kids and get access to a range of opportunities that someone else is organising in a cost-effective way. If we take that out, there are two options left. If someone is going to manage the program, we have to pay for it, and that means we are paying for the private sector to do that or, effectively, they are going into a caravan park. That means we are looking at just the residential side and have to manage food, transport and access to programs that someone else would otherwise be doing. I think that will have downward pressure on exposing our kids to experiences that enrich their educational opportunities. Particularly in the very centralist state that we are, exposing kids to regional Western Australia is a massive opportunity. I use the example of the one that is staying open, which is good, which I said when the member for Kimberley was in the chamber. For the kids who use the Broome camp school, in some cases, it is the first time the kids who come out of the Western Desert have seen the ocean.

Mr P. Papalia: They used to go to Secret Harbour and you shut it.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I do not know about the Secret Harbour one.

Mr P. Papalia: I do.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: If we use that Broome example, the same applies to a range of experiences for other people—in many cases from metropolitan schools going to regional Western Australia. It is a tragedy that that will be lost. I am not sure that what has been put up as a substitute will flow through.

I talked about the narrative around agricultural education. One of the elements of our narrative for agriculture was the importance of building up skill levels to support an industry that has a lot of opportunity to grow in Western Australia, particularly given our access to understanding water and some of the Water for Food projects there, but also an increasingly more complex and sophisticated trade relationship with many countries, which brings with it opportunities. We have to have the people and the skills to support that. Skills development is very important.

We have fantastic agricultural colleges in this state. We will not see them in any other state. I was the principal of one of those for nearly a decade and worked in them for 18 years. They are outstanding and make a massive contribution to agricultural education in supporting a range of skills for people to access the sector to support it. I might add that—I probably did not get a chance to say this in the past—in recent times, probably the last decade, the agricultural schools have bucked the trend. Firstly, they are encouraging kids to move from metropolitan Perth to regional Western Australia—the trend has been going the other way. Secondly, there is an increasing number of girls in agriculture schools. In fact, Denmark Agriculture College has more girls than boys. I find that to be a fantastic achievement. They have also bucked the trend in moving from the private sector back to the government

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sector. Those have probably been occurring over the last decade or so. They are delivering training opportunities that buck the trend in our agricultural sector. Five fantastic lead schools and a range of smaller schools with agricultural wings support that, including here in Perth at Kelmscott, Lockridge—Kiara College—and Landsdale, which has been shut, and that is terribly disappointing. Because the government reversed its decision, the Schools of the Air are still open. But I guess the initial decision shows what the government is prepared to do to hit up the regions. The correct decision was made on the Schools of the Air, but I think all the other decisions should have been reversed. I think the minister was wrong.

My last point is on community resource centres. There are 105 across the state, but a decision has been made to take away 40 per cent of their funding. I do not know whether that was a strategic decision or otherwise, but the government pitched a two-tier system, and some centres will lose 30 per cent and others will lose 50 per cent of their funding. Some of the bigger centres will lose 50 per cent. That has created a bit of tension between the different cohorts as to whether they will accept the hit, knowing that if it was not this hit, it could be worse. Some of those centres are going through the challenge of working out how they will manage their budgets to provide services that in many cases are not available in those communities because they are very isolated. Some centres such as the Kununurra CRC have already made the decision that this is too hard and they will shut down. I think that the decisions of this government have been a terrible disappointment for the network of community resource centres.

I will touch on a couple of other topics, the first of which is the royalties for regions program. We have talked about this in the past, but an interesting article appeared in *The West Australian* online of Monday, 10 April 2017. That was just after the Labor Party came into government. The article reads —

Alannah MacTiernan has confirmed a major shake-up to the Royalties for Regions scheme, suggesting funds will be “reprioritised” for genuine job and infrastructure programs such as solar power schemes rather than spending on small town recreational centres.

The biggest shift in royalties for regions is that it now picks up a \$300 million-plus a year water subsidy for Water Corp and a \$42 million TAFE subsidy, and it is paying for orange school buses. Is that reprioritising —

Mr M.P. Murray: Let’s have a plastic cow to eat! Geez, that was real smart!

Mr D.T. REDMAN: It was! It was! Do you want to know the story about the plastic cows?

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Mr M.P. Murray: If he wants to have a go at my disability, I’ll give him more than one disability!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, I call you for the first time. I am on my feet. It is not appropriate to be —

Mr M.P. Murray: That is right!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, I will call you for the second time!

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I make the point that —

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: As you are aware, I am required to raise objection the moment words are used. Of course, you rose to your feet and I was not going to interrupt you, but I would ask that the member for North West Central withdraw his remark about the minister’s disability.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I did not actually hear a remark.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: He said, “He has to turn up his hearing aid.” I would ask him to withdraw that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, I do agree. I do not think that is appropriate, member for North West Central.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I withdraw, but I would also like to say that violence is not an answer.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Point taken, but thank you for withdrawing that. Let us just calm things down again.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.T. REDMAN: My point is that in a newspaper article in April last year, the minister talked about reprioritising for “genuine job and infrastructure programs”. Taking a half a billion dollars a year out of royalties for regions for water subsidies, TAFE subsidies and the orange school bus service is not reprioritising for genuine job and infrastructure programs. It is totally contrary to the program, and she is misleading the people of Western Australia if that is what she said and this is the outcome. The very program that supports regional

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development initiatives to grow and develop regional Western Australia has gone; it has been killed and totally shafted. That is a terrible tragedy.

The second paragraph of the same article states —

Ms MacTiernan, who has taken charge of the controversial \$1 billion-a-year scheme as Regional Development Minister, said there had been a lack of rigour around RFR spending and many projects had left country shires saddled with facilities they could not afford to maintain.

I have two comments on that. One is about rigour. There has hardly been rigour in the wave farm project, which does not have a business case. Sorry; it started without a business case. It then had a business case, and now it does not have a business case. It is a bit like musical chairs in respect of business cases. Again, the principles of rigour have not been applied to the first cab off the rank that the minister took through cabinet—the wave farm project. I find that totally hypocritical.

The article made reference to building facilities that local governments could not afford. I asked a question on notice of the Premier about comments made by the Premier in an article. My question was —

I refer to comments attributed to the Premier in the West Australian on 27th October where, in reference to Royalties for Regions funded projects, he said the government has been inundated with complaints from councils about the recurrent costs of operating said facilities, and ask:

(a) can the Premier please list the local governments and the Royalties for Regions funded projects he has received complaints about;

He said he had been inundated; he could give us the list. My question continued —

(b) can the Premier please provide a list of local Government Royalties for Regions funded Projects where local governments have formally requested support from the State Government for ongoing recurrent costs of the projects; ...

The answers to (a) and (b) were —

(a)–(b) As canvassed in the article in the preamble, there numerous examples of the former Liberal–National Government’s dual budget processes whereby due diligence were not conducted on whether the local governments had the financial capacity to fund their operations.

He was making big statements in the newspaper but could not provide any examples of shires making requests to the government for funds to support the operational costs of facilities built with royalties for regions’ funds. He said he had been inundated with comments. He has not been, because he said, “I can’t find them”, and gave some sort of bureaucratic response. The notion of where RforR is at is a massive smoke and mirrors game by this government. It does not appreciate and understand royalties for regions. In the agriculture and regional development space now, the lead minister is not an advocate for the sector. There have been massive cuts that she has not stood up against in respect of decisions around the cabinet table. The strong concern we have is that our constituency is being let down.

Local government amalgamations is another little thought bubble that was shot out to the side. The Minister for Regional Development said that she thought local governments should be amalgamated to build the level of capacity. That is a great idea! I remember comments when the government was in opposition when that issue was raised by Premier Barnett. We had our position, but the minister is again throwing a bit of a grenade—a thought bubble—into the mix to throw a little ripple of concern and angst across regional communities.

I turn to Busselton airport. The member for Vasse is not in the chamber, but she is all too familiar with the investments that we made. There were questions in the upper house from Hon Dr Steve Thomas about when the government would make a decision about the final \$10 million to build the terminal to support a facility that can then attract airlines into it. I think the comment to the city down there was, “We’re going to give you until the end of the year.” But the point I make is that no-one is out there advocating. The Minister for Tourism is very active. The Premier was right—the minister is very active out there, jumping up and down and waving stuff about—but Busselton airport is not even in the mix. It was taken out of the two-year plan to lay out what the government is going to do in two years in tourism.

Mr P. Papalia: If you are really interested, which airline wants to fly to Busselton?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Talk to the local government down there, because it is the only one —

Mr P. Papalia: I have! I have said to them —

Mr D.T. REDMAN: — working through it. I do not want to say the name in here, but I have had a number of conversations with it about where it is at.

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The point is that sometimes it is challenging without a facility. The minister knows that in the tourism sector, capacity has to be demonstrated to make the stuff happen. Getting a facility in place will attract an airline to the south west, which is important. I think there has been an active decision that the government will shut it down. I do not think anyone out there —

Mr P. Papalia: Shut what down?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Shut down the idea of building a regional airport in Busselton that can take traffic from the eastern states. Another \$10 million will finish the terminal. The government is shutting it down.

Mr P. Papalia: No, we aren't!

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The government has been effective in delivering something to Broome, but nothing else for the rest of the state. It is running the numbers and saying, "Look what we're doing in tourism", but not one person in government is lifting a finger to deliver an outcome for a facility —

Mr P. Papalia: You don't know what you're talking about.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I am talking about the Busselton–Margaret River Regional Airport.

Mr P. Papalia: Do you know that you can fly affordably to Esperance as a consequence of our government taking direct action on behalf of Esperance residents?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The REX contract was in place before it changed over, was it not?

Mr P. Papalia: No, it wasn't!

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I think the Busselton–Margaret River Regional Airport is a very good example of what the minister described, when she first came into government, as "genuine job and infrastructure programs". I would have thought investing in the Busselton–Margaret River Regional Airport would have been a very good example of that. It is \$10 million —

Mr W.J. Johnston: Every single airline that was flying there in the past is still flying there.

Mr V.A. Catania: You're missing the point.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The minister is totally missing the point. This is about proactively setting up an opportunity for regional Western Australia and the south west part of the state.

Several members interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: I can't hear anything.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): Take a seat, member.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, I am on my feet. I call you for the first time.

Members, you may have an issue with each other, but I have an issue with making sure Hansard can take down what is going on in this place. I can stand for an hour—it is good for me; sitting is not good for me. Please keep it low. If you want to take interjections, member, then you need to stop, let them interject, listen, and have that debate across the chamber. If you want to have a debate across the chamber, I am happy to facilitate that, but I will stand up if you yell at each other, because Hansard needs to listen.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: In the last couple of minutes I want to go back to the ag sector because it is a really important sector for WA. As important as tourism is, both are worth about \$8 billion to \$9 billion in economic activity to Western Australia. I think the ag sector, on the broadacre side, is coming up for a pretty challenging year; even in the south west part of the state with the lack of rain down there. We have not been through that for a little while. It is incumbent on the Minister for Regional Development to ensure she connects with that and understands the challenges that that will perhaps present. We hope that the finish to the season is good and that the rains come. We found, going through the 2010 year, that engaging with the finance sector—the banks—and understanding the levels of equity and the risks that sit around that equity and how to expose the farming community is really important. I certainly hope she is meeting with them. We need trade relations and trade links to give confidence to our overseas markets. We are a unique market compared with other parts of the nation. Western Australia is heavily focused on exports; therefore our relationship with them is pretty critical not only in China, Indonesia and Vietnam, but also in the Middle East. We need to ensure we understand what their needs are and engage with them. The pathways to market issue is one of the critical issues for Western Australia, much more than in other states. The member for Cannington knows Western Australia has a strong Indonesian background. He strongly recognises the opportunities that —

Mr W.J. Johnston: I get criticised for going there by the member for North West Central.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The minister will not get criticism from me.

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A number of projects that the current government is investing in were actually projects that we initiated. I think in many cases that is good because we want good projects to span governments. We have a passion for regional development. We feel that the regions are a little let down. We feel the ag sector is let down. We would like to think that this debate in Parliament sends some signals to say that this needs to be rectified if we are to continue to grow this state into a great state.

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury) [5.03 pm]: I am not the lead speaker on this matter, but I could not resist the opportunity to thank members opposite for giving me the opportunity to acknowledge what a fantastic minister the Minister for Regional Development is! She has a long history in Western Australia of contributing to major projects and absolutely contributing to the south west. She was the minister who led the Forrest Highway project. We had traffic jams right through Peel and there had been a total lack of action by the Court government. The Minister for Regional Development, in her previous role as Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, led that project to completion. And not only the Forrest Highway, she also completed the Mandurah railway line. That fantastic asset is used continuously. It is a great opportunity to acknowledge that contribution. I would like to say that on coming to government, and on the minister being appointed to the regional development portfolio, she has been an absolutely enthusiastic, vibrant and engaging minister, visiting the regions. She is always visiting the regions. She came down to Bunbury, wanted a full briefing —

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: Listen and learn, member for Dawesville!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Dawesville, you are on one call. Would you like to be on two? Stop now!

Mr D.T. PUNCH: The member for Dawesville could learn a lot from the Minister for Regional Development—just observe. She is out there taking up the issues not only on behalf of regional Western Australia, but also on behalf of Western Australia as a whole. As I said, she has been an enthusiastic minister out there in the bush talking to people. All the reports that I get, no matter what the sector, say that she is absolutely engaging and interested and is an across-the-issues minister. Well done to the minister.

I want to talk a little more about the McGowan Labor government. We were elected with a clear plan for jobs, clear commitments and a clear agenda, and we were up-front with regional Western Australia about what we would deliver. That is why we have so many regional members in this place and in the other place. We have a very strong commitment. We have a roll-the-sleeves-up approach. We are getting on with the job of delivering those commitments. We are absolutely committed to those commitments. One billion dollars of new regional projects was included in the 2017–18 budget. That is a significant commitment. The emphasis is on job creation, regional health, mental health, education, roads, ports, tourism and economic development. They are all things that matter from a regional development point of view.

This motion refers to the Minister for Regional Development failing to stand up for regional WA and undermining the regional development agenda. Members opposite never had a regional development agenda—they never had one! All they had was royalties for regions. Their agenda was splash the cash and hope that some of it produces something really good. In the very first year of royalties for regions, they did not know what they were actually going to spend the money on. They said, “We’ll put out a grants scheme and see what comes back.” That went for quite a few years. Then there was the thought bubble of SuperTowns. That took a lot of people by surprise. There was a mad scramble to put that program together. I am not saying that there were not some good outcomes out of that, but it was a thought bubble—there was no thought ahead of announcing it. Then there were questions such as: What do we do with delivering all of this money? What do we do with development commissions? So we had the review of development commissions. There was a thought bubble about bringing them all together and then the thought bubble of disaggregating them again. We went to an independent chair of the Regional Development Council, which I think is quoted in this document at one point, referring to the fact that each of the development commissions had a line of sight to the minister. That allowed no coordination because it was all disaggregated. Then we had the idea of the blueprints. Blueprints are a good idea. It was an attempt to align planning with the state’s strategic plan. After that, I think about six and a half years into the term, the final thought bubble was: we need a regional development strategy. It took quite a while to work through all of that process. We have been in government for 15 months and we are getting on with the job. We have retained royalties for regions as a standalone fund and strengthened its governance and accountability to deliver the benefits to regional Western Australia. That is for years to come.

The Royalties for Regions Act is still there—nothing has changed. We have kept our commitment. The funding is there. The 2018–19 budget, delivered by an absolutely fantastic Treasurer, includes significant new regional investment over the next four years to deliver our plan; the plan that we went to the election with. There is a guaranteed \$4 billion in royalties for regions funding, to invest in the things that really do matter to the people of regional WA. There is \$3.4 billion —

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

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Mr D.T. PUNCH: I will come to you, member for Roe. You're not doing too badly in this little exercise!

There was a \$3.4 billion investment in job-creating regional infrastructure and more than \$2 billion being spent on regional roads, improving economic efficiency and safety outcomes. Our focus was about creating jobs in regional Western Australia and at the same time doing that in a way that turns the state's finances around and builds a better Western Australia for everybody. If we have a strong Western Australia, we have strong regions.

The member for Warren–Blackwood's motion condemns our minister, the Minister for Regional Development. He should be looking at his colleagues across the way. Let us not go too far from the fact that the Liberal Party made it clear in the run-up to the last election that it would shift \$800 million from the consolidated account into royalties for regions. In response to the Langoulant inquiry we heard the Leader of the Opposition make it clear that royalties for regions should be normalised and no longer seen as a separate fund. I do not know why the opposition is pointing the finger at us; we have absolutely committed to keeping royalties for regions. The Liberal Party pre-election costings noted that \$800 million would shift from the consolidated account to royalties for regions. Treasury's 2017 state election costings for the impact of the Liberal Party's commitments on state finances stated —

The proposed Royalties for Regions Realignment is a Liberal Party policy that "rural service provision in areas like water, buses, remote area communities currently funded by Consolidated Account will be funded from Royalties for Regions commencing 1 July 2018".

I do not know why the Nationals are looking over here; they should be looking to their side and having a chat with their colleagues.

The Leader of the Opposition on 22 February 2018, post the Langoulant report, said —

... while it was a reasonable policy to implement in the Barnett government's first term, its time has passed.

"It should be normalised, it should be built right in to the overall budget," Dr Nahan said.

"In the first term we needed to reinvest in rural areas, —

This was at the time when the National Party was going out with multiple grant schemes —

that was absolutely important, but in the second term we should have normalised it."

Asked how that would operate under a potential government led by him, Dr Nahan said the Regional Development department would be given a budget allocation determined by the Government in the same way as other agencies.

He was on the mark! No dual Treasury, no dual funding. The article continues —

"It would have to go into the process and argue for funds, just like every other department," Dr Nahan said.

The only party that is guaranteeing that royalties for regions has a life is the Labor Party. It is clear that royalties for regions would be dead under an alliance government with the Liberal Party. We are striking the right balance—we have done it through multiple budgets—between getting the state's finances back on track, fixing the mess, and making sure that Western Australia has a strong future. Certainly, that is a view shared by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia. It is clearly indicating that our budgets are excellent budgets; it loves them. It can see the potential for the whole of Western Australia. We are not the party of division; we are the party for Western Australia. The National Party's clear reason for existence is that it excels in creating the divide of having to fight for the bush, and its Liberal colleagues over the road are quite happy with that because they fight for the metro area, and they have this internal tension. The state that misses out is Western Australia as a whole because there is no coordination.

The Minister for Regional Development understands those issues and is out there, fighting the fight with the member for Murray–Wellington, the member for Pilbara and the member for Collie–Preston. She is out there, fighting the fight for regional Western Australia but recognising that it needs to be done in a way that builds the whole of the state—a strong Western Australia.

Let us have a look at some of these investments in the regions. There is \$50 million for the construction of the next stage of the Karratha–Tom Price Road; \$73.3 million over five years for the Geraldton Health Campus stage 1 redevelopment —

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: Nothing for Peel; nothing for Mandurah!

Mr D.T. PUNCH: I will come to the member for Dawesville shortly.

There is \$10.2 million over the next five years to construct and operate the midwest community mental health service. There is \$9.8 million to commence upgrades at the co-located Albany Secondary Education Support

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Centre and North Albany Senior High School, to increase student capacity and, importantly, provide learning opportunities for students with a disability. There is more support for students right across regional Western Australia. I might add that we have a great commitment to an Albany wave energy project that was in the “Great Southern Regional Investment Blueprint” when the previous government endorsed it. There is \$20 million over five years for the Collie futures fund—a community that is desperately seeking a new future in a state that is going through transition. There are numerous examples of good investment and I could talk about them for a long time.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: I am coming to the member for Dawesville.

Compare some of those projects with what the Langoulant report said about the previous process. I think the most telling comment came from the chief executive officer of the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder, who said —

“Another project was the Ray Finlayson Centre. A \$16 million project. Did we need it? Probably not. We had quality sporting fields already. But because there is a lot of money there, it had to be spent.”

That sums it up.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): Members! Enough!

Mr D.T. PUNCH: I am coming to the member for North West Central.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr D.T. PUNCH: We on this side of the house have been criticised, both in question time and in previous private members’ motions, on the issue of core government services. It is such a difficult concept to actually define. What is a core government service and what is not? It is certainly something that we have grappled with over many, many years. I have had a look at some of the core government services that could be argued were funded through royalties for regions under the previous government, if we accept that they are services that arguably would normally be part of the agenda of the relevant department and portfolio.

The regional schools plan undertaken by the Department of Education was a very appropriate project aiming to support the provision of better educational opportunities for rural and remote students by constructing new and refurbished facilities at 13 schools across regional WA. Hedland Senior High School, Karratha Senior High School, Pinjarra Senior High School, Collie Senior High School, Merredin, Northam, Narrogin, Katanning, Denmark, Esperance, Derby and Broome—it is a very comprehensive list, but they are all education department services that the previous government funded. It could not understand the difference between core and non-core services there. Then there was the relocation of year 7 students to Broome Senior High School, John Willcock College, Halls Head College, Australind Senior High School, Bunbury Senior High School, Cape Naturaliste College and Margaret River Senior High School—\$42.6 million. There was \$45 million for the Kalgoorlie–Boulder Community High School. These are surely things that normally would have been spent under consolidated revenue. There was \$51.8 million for regional residential college upgrades, but Moora clearly missed out; they were in Esperance, Merredin, Broome, Narrogin and Geraldton. There was \$29.5 million for Carnarvon Community College stage 2; \$6 million for Cape Naturaliste College; and \$110 million for the skills training initiative. I am really struggling to understand why those are not the core business of government.

Then there are roads and bridges. The Gascoyne River low-level bridge actually got a mention by the Regional Development Trust as being a questionable shift of expenditure that should have been met under consolidated revenue.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member!

Mr D.T. PUNCH: No, I am saying it is core government expenditure. I cannot see how the National Party can justify the difference between core and non-core, and that is something that members opposite struggled with.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: The member will get his turn.

Margaret River Perimeter Road was a great project, but it could arguably have been a Main Roads consolidated revenue project. There were also the Brand Highway and Greenough River bridge projects. These are all good projects; I am not disputing that at all. I am arguing that the National Party is criticising this side of the house for spending royalties for regions money on items that it regards as core government expenditure, and I am saying that

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it has a track record of spending money on appropriate projects that should have been core government expenditure. It is hypocritical to say that we are doing that.

I turn now to hospitals. Royalties for regions money was spent on Karratha Health Campus, Kalgoorlie Health Campus, Albany Hospital and Carnarvon Health Campus. The member for North West Central has his eyes on the member for Pilbara's seat, so I am sure his constituents are getting very poor service at the moment. There was \$18.8 million for Esperance Health Campus and \$40.5 million for Busselton Health Campus; it goes on.

Then, of course, there is the *pièce de résistance*—the shift of core government expenditure to royalties for regions. The member for Roe will well remember this because he was part of the Regional Development Trust that raised the flag on this issue back in 2013. There was operational funding for the Department of Regional Development, \$23 million per year, and operational funding for the regional development commissions, \$22 million per year. How can that not be core government expenditure? There was \$14.4 million for the community sporting and recreation facilities fund, and so it goes on. We are also criticised for investing only in the Labor seats. Let us just set the record straight on that. I am very pleased to note that \$1.8 million has been spent in the electorate of the member for Dawesville.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: Listen and learn, member for Dawesville. I am very pleased to note that around \$88 million has been allocated in the electorate of the member for North West Central.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): Member, you are on —

Mr V.A. Catania: Two.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Shall I call you for the third time? I will not call you three now, but if I stand, silence. Do we get that, member for Dawesville? Thank you. Silence, member for Dawesville.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker. A few home truths are certainly not appreciated on the other side. The electorate of Warren–Blackwood has been allocated around \$87 million on some very good projects; Vasse, \$30.1 million; Central Wheatbelt, an estimated \$81 million; and Roe, an estimated \$89 million. That is a pretty good outcome. I think that, overall, we are doing pretty well. There is also around \$112 million for the member for Moore, who is not here to hear that, which is a pity. We are absolutely committed to the whole of regional Western Australia, and we are making significant inroads into major projects that will generate jobs and economic opportunity and improve the quality of life in regional WA.

I will just mention the community resource centres, since the member raised those. The CRCs were a great Labor initiative back in the day. Hon Mal Bryce put those projects together, but it is interesting how they escalated. When the National Party thought it did not know what to spend royalties for regions on, we suddenly found that the funding of \$5.9 million in 2009 ballooned to \$13 million five years later. I have no doubt that the CRCs are making a great contribution. I know and have worked with many of the CRCs. The problem with royalties for regions was that it blinkered the thinking. There was a little bit of talk about leveraging alternative funds back in the day, but I do not think an awful lot was ever leveraged. We have said to organisations and groups that they can live on royalties for regions forever, but that becomes fundamentally unsustainable. CRCs, as with many other community organisations, need to look at the broad spectrum for income generation, and there are some great opportunities out there for CRCs.

On that note, I would like to say that the Minister for Regional Development has made a tremendous contribution in the first part of this government's term. There is a long way to run, and regional Western Australia will benefit considerably, but, more importantly, regional Western Australia will benefit from an absolutely strong, forward-looking and vibrant Western Australia that the Treasurer's budgets are continually delivering.

MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [5.23 pm]: Someone has drunk the Kool-Aid—someone who was part of the regional development program when he was not a member of Parliament now suddenly says there was no regional development. Oh, my gosh! When we talk about spending royalties for regions in seats like North West Central, what is being spent in my electorate is on leftover projects from the previous government that are under construction or could not be stopped, or that the government has tried to stop, such as aged care in Carnarvon. I do not even know where to start today. Do I start with the member for Pilbara, or do I start with the Minister for Tourism, about flights or work camps? Then the member for Bunbury throws in that the government is still delivering royalties for regions, but it is going into ensuring that water is being delivered to people in regional Western Australia. That is the government's royalties for regions. People in regional WA are lucky to be able to turn the tap on and get water. They are very lucky and the government will spend royalties for regions money to make sure they get water in their taps. How good are we? We are all about regional development, and

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people can have water. What is next? They can have power so that they can turn on the lights at night or have a bit of heating and cooling.

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: Madam Acting Speaker, you were very keen that people on this side did not interject, and we have had constant interjections from the member for Armadale, consistently.

The ACTING SPEAKER: You mentioned standing order 96. I am having a look at the standing orders as we speak. I am happy to spend the next half an hour discussing with you something that I find very fascinating in a point of order, and then the member for North West Central will not be able to get back on his feet. I am sure the member for North West Central will not like that. Looking at Erskine May, which is what we do in relation to the points of order such as the one you are raising, if the member invites interjections, then it is not for the Speaker to be able to hold order in the house. The member is inviting interjections. If Hansard cannot hear, I will call that party to order, but it appears at the moment that the debate is in general.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Madam Acting Speaker, the member did not invite interjections.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Madam Acting Speaker, I seek your clarification. Is the member for struggle street—I mean Cottesloe—querying your ruling? It appears that he is querying your ruling. If he is, he knows the procedure that he must take.

The ACTING SPEAKER: There is no point of order. Let the member for North West Central give his speech. The member for North West Central is inviting interjections by actually going to each of the members, and that is how I am ruling on it.

Debate Resumed

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker, I will direct my comments directly to you. Is it everyone's right in Western Australia to be able to have a switch that turns on the lights, and a switch that turns on heating or cooling? Is it everyone's right? Is it everyone's right to have water coming out of their tap? Is it a privilege? Obviously, it is a privilege to have water.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Luxury!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Yes, it is a luxury; that is right, member! It is a luxury, because, given the amount of money that the Labor government has put into water, so that people in regional WA can turn on the tap and have water, and calling that royalties for regions and delivering a regional agenda, blows my mind. I know I am inviting an interjection from the member for Bunbury, but he had his chance to say something. He is now saying that a regional agenda is to allow a regional person to turn on their tap, and for water to come out, and to flick on a switch to see the light come up, and to turn on heating and power. That is what the member is saying. We should be lucky in regional Western Australia, if we have power and water, because we surely are not going to give anyone any cheap airfares to fly up and back—we are surely not going to do that. We have a regional agenda like that of the member for Pilbara, who says that the best day of his life is to have a 700-bed camp in the middle of a city, or when he makes comments to the paper that the companies that set up these towns are the companies that run these towns. There is the regional agenda that the member for Pilbara aspires to. It is the best day of his life, having a 700-bed camp in a vibrant city that started late in 2008 or early 2009, when the local member there was a very good local member. He put Karratha back on the agenda. The Leader of the National Party was the member for Pilbara then. He has actually done more in regional development than anyone before him. Look at what the now Minister for Regional Development has done in Carnarvon. I will pick Carnarvon.

Dr A.D. Buti: That's surprising!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Does the member for Armadale know why I have picked Carnarvon? Hon Alannah MacTiernan is very well respected in Carnarvon, because she built a bridge—the Bibbawarra crossing—across the Gascoyne River, at a cost of \$7.5 million. I was the local member back then. The people of Carnarvon thought Alannah was an absolute godsend because they no longer had to drive right around Northville Street to get to the other side of the river but could drive across a crossing that was not being washed away by the mighty Gascoyne River.

The previous government invested \$75 million into the horticultural area through royalties for regions. It invested \$65 million into flood mitigation for the floods that occur from time to time in Carnarvon. It invested \$26 million into revamping Carnarvon hospital.

Dr A.D. Buti: This was under your term in government, you say?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Yes. It invested \$5 million towards a heritage precinct at One Mile Jetty. The list goes on. It invested close to \$300 million in the town of Carnarvon. Our government invested from \$7.5 million to close to \$300 million. That is the difference between the regional agenda of our government and the regional agenda of

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this government. This government's regional agenda is to say to people in regional areas that they are fortunate enough to have a road and to have power and water. Regional towns deserve to have infrastructure that is parallel to the infrastructure in the seats of Armadale or Perth or wherever. A realistic view of regional development is not just about having a sealed road, and having power and water. Regional development is about developing a town to enable it to attract and retain people. That is what royalties for regions is all about. That is why royalties for regions started. It started because of the Pilbara and the neglect —

Dr A.D. Buti: Will you take an interjection?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Hang on a second, member for Armadale. I will get there. I am on a roll. I want to get it out. The member has fired me up.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I bet your mum said that to you when you were a baby!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: This is serious, member for Mandurah.

The Pilbara was the birthplace of royalties for regions. Given all the royalties that were coming out of the Pilbara and never coming back, there was an opportunity for royalties for regions to put funding back into the community. That is why development is happening in Karratha and in Port Hedland. Regional development is all about building towns to make them liveable and to provide the amenities that people in other places in Western Australia, like the suburbs of Perth, and the city, expect. Royalties for regions is all about delivering vibrant communities. We are seeing a transformation of the regional agenda of our government in building hospitals and schools. Regional hospitals and schools were never built under previous governments, because in building hospitals and schools, they always focused on where the population is. Our agenda has always been that places like Carnarvon, Exmouth and Karratha should have a new hospital. I am sure the government will take credit for building the new hospital in Karratha.

Mr K.J.J. Michel: We're paying for it!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is the best day of my life that the member for Pilbara is in this chamber, because he supports having a fly in, fly out culture in a regional town. I put this challenge to the member. Will the member please get up and defend some of the decisions that have been made by this government that he is a part of? Where is the Dampier camp school? The government got rid of the Dampier camp school. The government got rid of the Dampier Water Police. Soon the government will get rid of the sealed road. Soon the government will get rid of Dampier airport. Soon it will rid of all the amenities that the people of Karratha have driven so hard to get.

I am getting side-tracked. There is much to talk about. I want to mention three people in my speech—the Minister for Tourism, the member for Pilbara, and the person who has drunk the Kool-Aid, the member for Bunbury. We all know what has happened to regional education. It is interesting to watch members on the other side, because when we start to strike a nerve, they get very personal. They start saying, “Oh, you're a rat. You're this and that.”

Mr P. Papalia: Why is it about you?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is about regional development, something the minister would not understand. I will go back to regional education. This government tried to absolutely destroy regional education, and it is still doing that. We managed to save Schools of the Air because of the public pressure. It was like getting rid of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. It was left to the opposition to save Schools of the Air. It was not left to the country members, like the member for Pilbara, and like Hon Darren West, who clearly was not part of any decision-making process—and why would he be when he would probably get it wrong on Twitter? The point is that the government's regional members did not fight to save Schools of the Air.

Dr A.D. Buti: What about the member for Kimberley?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Sorry. I take that back, member for Kimberley. I remember hearing the member for Kimberley say on radio that these cuts are absurd. I take my hat off to the member for Kimberley, because she broke ranks. She is not a sheep. She is not part of that flock. She does what is right for her community. I accept that. But the others stood there saying, “This is the best day of my life”, or something along those lines. The education cuts are absolutely crippling the regions.

I have spoken previously in this place about the cuts to health at Tom Price Hospital, Meekatharra Hospital, Mount Magnet hospital and so forth.

One thing that is having a real effect is the 15 full-time equivalents that have been cut from the Department of Child Protection in the midwest and Gascoyne. That is having a dramatic effect on crime, and on school attendance. Fifteen FTEs, funded by royalties for regions, have been cut out of the midwest and Gascoyne. Do members opposite know that? Carnarvon has gone from having 10 FTEs to having funding for five, but it has only three

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FTEs. That is having a dramatic effect on the lives of families and the community, and also on children's lives, because there are no case-work officers to work with children. That is 15 FTEs that this government has got rid of.

Mr P. Papalia: You're misleading the house and you know it.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I beg your pardon?

Mr P. Papalia: You're misleading the house.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Minister, please go and check it and come back with the facts. That is 15 FTEs taken out of the midwest and Gascoyne.

I now want to go to tourism. It is very disappointing. The Minister for Tourism has stood in this place several times and said how much this government is doing for tourism. However, when we see in today's paper that there has been a \$140 million hit to tourism in Western Australia, we have to wonder what is happening in tourism. The government's tourism strategy is obviously focused on only Rottneest and Perth. The member for Kimberley is fortunate that some tourism money has been spent in Broome. However, people in the rest of regional WA are saying, "Where the bloody hell are you, Labor?" That is because Labor is nowhere to be seen. The National Party wants to see all regional flights subsidised in the same way as the government has done for Broome. It is only fair that the government be open and transparent about how much taxpayers' money is being spent on subsidising regional air flights to Broome. Why not places like Exmouth, Carnarvon, Esperance, Albany, Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, Karratha, Paraburdoo, Tom Price and Kununurra?

Why are those towns not subsidised? In a post on my Facebook page today by Shona Knoels, she states that she recently flew to Perth from Karratha and the cost of the return flight was \$1 760 and that she could have done an around-the-world trip for that.

Ms A. Sanderson: What did you do?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: What did we do? We did not pick one town over another.

Several members interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Excuse me! The government has subsidised one town. Why does it not subsidise the rest of regional Western Australia as well? It has not been open and transparent about the taxpayers' money that has been spent on subsidising airfares to Broome. Is it something that Qantas pushed the government towards? I do not know. Please come clean, Minister for Tourism. The cost of regional flights obviously has an effect on tourism in Western Australia. Mr Evan Hall from the Tourism Council Western Australia said that the fall in the number of nights could be attributed to fewer visitors venturing into WA regions.

Mr P. Papalia: Or maybe not.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: So the minister is saying that Evan Hall, the CEO of the Tourism Council, is not right. Visitors generally stay longer if they travel to the regions. It is important that our marketing campaigns are not too narrowly focused and also direct tourists to some of our tremendous regional attractions. The industry body is saying that tourism is suffering because of the lack of support for regional tourism. As I said, where the bloody hell is the Labor Party when it comes to regional tourism? Where the bloody hell is the Labor Party when it comes to reducing the cost of flights in regional Western Australia? Where the bloody hell is the Minister for Tourism? He is obviously picking favourites—he has picked Broome—and is using taxpayers' money. Be open and transparent.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, shoosh!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: We have the very good report titled "Perceptions and Realities of Regional Airfare Prices in Western Australia" by the committee. The member for Swan Hills is here. It is a very good report, but it still lacks recommendations. It is a wet-lettuce approach.

Ms J.J. Shaw: Your recommendations were completely nonsensical.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I am quoted all the way through this report; that is how nonsensical it is. It is interesting that the member says that. Clearly, I was wrong in saying that it is a very good report.

Regional aviation is clearly having an effect on tourism in Western Australia, when one-way airfares to places like Karratha can cost up to \$1 000. At Christmas time a return airfare for a flight from Paraburdoo costs \$3 200. It is an hour and 35 minute flight. This is the problem. I commend the minister for what he is doing for Broome. At least he is having a crack. But what about all the other regional towns? Why has the minister selected Broome only? Why is he not rolling it out to other regional towns? More importantly, why is he not being open and

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transparent in ensuring that we know where the taxpayer's dollar has gone? If it has gone into the pockets of Qantas to reduce airfares, that is a bit concerning. I hope it has shown the minister its books and that for a flight costing under \$200, it is still making a nice little profit. If it is still making a profit, why is the government subsidising it? That is what I want to get to the bottom of: being open and transparent in how this deal has been struck so that other regional towns—there are too many to name again—have that same benefit.

Dr A.D. Buti: Do you really think it's realistic for every regional town?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Why not?

Dr A.D. Buti: How are you going to pay for it?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: How is the government paying for Broome?

Dr A.D. Buti: No; how are you going to pay for them all? Is there a limitless pit of money?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The government has picked one regional town over another. Why will it not afford the same offer to other regional towns? Is that not a fair question? Why can other regional towns not get the same benefit? Taxpayers' money is being used.

The focus has also been on trying to attract cruise ships to Broome, but where else? Exmouth has missed out. It has a plan to get cruise liners in to build regional tourism. That seems to be off the radar. This government's focus with regional tourism is: "Where the bloody hell are you?" The Nationals are running a campaign to show the Minister for Tourism and the Labor government that affordable regional flights do matter. The government has created a rod for its own back by subsidising flights to Broome. Now we want that subsidy to be spent right across regional Western Australia.

As the member for Warren–Blackwood said, everyone in Carnarvon had some confidence in the Minister for Regional Development, Alannah MacTiernan, to deliver a regional agenda. That was prior to 2008. Now the minister stands in the community hall and says that the government cannot deliver regional development or royalties for regions because it cannot afford it. That is the answer that the Minister for Regional Development gives constantly as she travels around Western Australia. When the government is ripping the guts out of aged care in places like Carnarvon by reducing the number of beds from 38 to 21 and reducing funding by \$5 million, it does not have a regional agenda. The minister, whom I consider to be a good friend, has clearly overstepped the mark in going from the upper house to the lower house to federal Parliament and back to the upper house.

Dr A.D. Buti: She started off in local government.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: She started off in local government. That adds another layer to the onion. Clearly, the minister is constrained in what she can do and say. When the Labor government has a large representation of members in the city, its regional agenda will never be heard or developed. The member for Bunbury referred to the Liberal Party and the National Party. Yes, the only way to get hospitals, schools and other infrastructure and amenities built is to have some tension, because if there is no tension, there is no change. The problem with the Labor Party is that there is no tension. There are so few regional members and so many city members that they do not get the opportunity to stand up. The member for Pilbara is not stopping a 700-bed camp in a city that has amenities and diversified accommodation from the royalties for regions investment, which was greater than a water subsidy, greater than perhaps a future power subsidy, and greater than road funding. We all know that the government is taking money out of the roads budget and putting it into the budget to pay for Metronet in Perth, when it does not even have a handle on how much it is going to cost.

Regional Western Australia will be an even greater loser, as the years go by, because of the government's duckshoving of royalties for regions and taking it out of the regions and putting it into Metronet. Metronet is still unfunded and we still do not know how much Metronet will cost the people of Western Australia. That is the problem we have. As I said, too much funding has been cut in my electorate and right across regional Western Australia from regional projects and from regional education and community resource centres, which play a vital role in our community. Community resource centres such as those in Meekatharra, Cue, Gascoyne Junction, Shark Bay, Denham and Tom Price are wondering how they will be able to service their communities. The effect funding cuts are having from the ground up in regional Western Australia is to see that the Labor Party is becoming an anti-regional party in that the Minister for Regional Development is becoming an anti-regional development minister. That is the problem. Members opposite may not see it and often people do not tell those in government what they think. They pat them on the back and say, "Yes, good on you." But in opposition, we hear everything. People are asking us, "What's happened to Hon Alannah MacTiernan? She used to stand up for us; she used to be able to deliver some projects." As I said, one project in Carnarvon is worth \$7.5 million compared with just under \$300 million. Who has the regional development agenda?

One of the other things this government is not tackling and which is having a huge effect, I believe, on people's safety is the transportation of firearms. This is a major issue for regional Western Australia. No-one can transport

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firearms anywhere in Western Australia through Australia Post. Even couriers are stopping the transport of firearms. This is a problem. Whether we agree with having a firearm is not the issue. The issue is that people are transporting firearms in vehicles. They are uncontrolled, not in locked boxes and not being recorded so that we know where they are being transported to. People are taking their own risks in transporting firearms around Western Australia. It is a major problem. How can we fix it? The government needs to fix this major problem. Who knows how many quantities of firearms and ammunition are being transported in vehicles? Neither the police nor the public know how and where. At least when they were being transported through Australia Post, they were recorded.

Mr P. Papalia: Do you know how confused your argument sounds?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I beg your pardon?

Mr P. Papalia: It's bizarre. You're saying that people are breaking the law so it is the government's problem to solve the federal government's decision about mailing firearms.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is not a federal government issue. It is a state government issue, whereby the police interpretation of the legislation referring to delivery by post is that it is not by Australia Post.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is a Western Australian law and the way the police are interpreting that law prevents our firearms from being transported through Australia Post or by couriers. It is a major problem. It is a safety issue. This is why government members do not understand regional development.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: People are making runs with firearms that are perhaps not properly secured. I am raising the transportation of firearms in this house as a major issue for the regions and, I think, a major issue for public safety. I hope the police minister and the government can perhaps intervene to change the legislation to ensure that firearms can be delivered by Australia Post to ensure the safety of the people of Western Australia and that the transportation of firearms can work because they are the tools of the trade for a lot of people in regional Western Australia. That is why we need those changes.

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston — Minister for Seniors and Ageing) [5.54 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to this debate. In my travels in recent times, getting around the countryside a lot more in the new job, although not so new now, I have noticed a huge distinction between towns. The distinction is about which way people vote in certain towns. It is an absolute standout that some towns that had National Party support have received far more funding than other towns.

Several members interjected.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: It is quite evident. Even when I have flown from one town to another and looked out the window, I could see all the shiny roofs. The funny thing is, most of those shiny roofs are in the National Party area. Maybe, as the previous speaker mentioned, it illustrates a disconnect between the different parties. I have seen a great disconnect between the Labor and National Parties about what has been put on the ground under royalties for regions. It was bastardised, to say the least. It was utilised for political purposes, not for the communities themselves. Some of those councils are now in debt and are unable to —

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Madam Chair, can I have your protection, please?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): In the House of Representatives' debate on 12 September 1901, the Chair, recognising all interjections as disorderly, was of the opinion that it should not interfere, as long as they were short and did not interrupt the thread of the speech being delivered. Leader of the National Party, all interjections are disorderly, but one interjection can be overlooked; twice is annoying; three times, I need to stand on my feet. Thank you.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Thank you for your protection, Madam Chair, being such a little flower and gentle person that I am!

I have noticed the great distinction in where the funding has gone. I refer to some of the towns in the lower south west. We have heard about the problem with the road between Busselton and Bunbury, yet further down, a \$60 million road is being built around Margaret River. On the other side of Margaret River is a very small town called Augusta, which probably has a population of 400 and maybe 600 at its peak. The former government built

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this \$60 million road to service the 400 people—600 in summertime—on the other side of the road, yet they come into this house and demand that this government fix the dual lanes between Busselton and Bunbury. It beggars belief that those sorts of things could happen.

Mr D.T. Redman: Minister, can you take an interjection?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, he is not taking your interjection.

Mr D.T. Redman: It looks like he's thinking about it!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, continue but understand that if you say things that provoke interjections, they will want to interject. Please continue, minister.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Madam Chair, I certainly understand that; that is why I asked for your protection. They are so vile and violent on that side of the house!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, you cannot direct the Chair.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Certainly, but I thought it would be a good idea so we could get on with the job.

Money has been spent in Margaret River, Manjimup has a brand-new hospital next to the old one—not an upgrade—and there are areas with a new soundshell. Many of those things were done because of the town, not because of political fairness, but because of the party the member for that electorate belongs to. I have seen it. It does not matter which way we go.

But there is an anomaly, and it is Capel. Capel has done very well out of royalties for regions, and I worked out why: the shire president and two councillors appeared in the National Party ads in the lead-up to the last election. It all adds up when we look at it. We see Mr Scott, the shire president, marching up the street in the National Party ad. I checked with him about it. Do not worry; I had a crack at him. I said, “The shire president should probably be a bit more careful whose ads he appears in”, but he said, “Oh, I know, but they will look after me because I have been in the ad for the National Party.” That is exactly what happened.

Let us look a bit further into Capel. For probably 10 years, Capel has been promised a police station. This week the National Party came out very strongly and said that there should not be a police station in Capel. Isn't that contradictory to previous speakers who have said that everything should be fair? So anyone south of Bunbury —

Mr V.A. Catania: Who said that?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Hon Colin Holt from the other house. He has been advocating on radio and at meetings that there should not be a police station in Capel. I am pleased to say that there will be one, because when I make an election promise, I make sure that I deliver on it. I will not lead people down the garden path or say nothing before the election, and then afterwards say that we should not be doing what I promised. If what a member has said before is wrong, they should tell people before the election. But that is the way of the National Party. It does not do that. It comes in and snipes away at small issues. It is a bit like a broken record: it does not get off track; it just goes around and around and around on the same things. For the last few weeks in this house the same questions have been asked over and again. Sometimes I worry about the intelligence of National Party members because they cannot quite understand the answers they are getting. Maybe they should ask for a written answer, and they might get it. But to ask the same questions week in, week out has become just boring. To be quite honest, it has become very boring to be in here. Sometimes we have to liven the place up to keep members awake!

But back to the police station in Capel. Before the election I went to a public meeting in Dalyellup—now the member for Bunbury's area; previously mine—where the then Minister for Police stood and said, “You'll not get a police station in this area.” The National Party never said a word. It takes about 25 minutes for the police to get from Bunbury to Capel, but the strategic location of a police station in Capel is very important. I do not think many National Party people have been down that way; otherwise, they would understand it. Capel is in the middle, out to the east is Donnybrook, then around to Dardanup, back to Dalyellup, and then over to the little coastal villages along there. It is very important that they have a police station. There is stock theft, and we were talking about rifles a little while ago—things like that. But any young bloke down there can do 50 whizzies in the middle of the main street, because it would take that long for the police to get there. So that is why they have to have a police station in Capel.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: What's a whizzy?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Oh, gee—Z-z-z-z! That is what a whizzy is. I am sure the member has done a few himself, and not always in a car. The new word is “hooning”. The police can get there in 25 minutes.

We had an awful incident that really convinced me that we should have a police station at Capel. An ambulance driver attended a domestic violence incident, but was unable to render assistance and was virtually held against her will before the police got there. The police got there two hours later, because the domestic was not deemed to

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be a priority problem. But that lady, who is a life member of the volunteer ambulance brigade in Capel, was terrified. That is one of the reasons; we should not allow that to happen.

But back to Hon Colin Holt. Why would he be against extra policing in any area? I do not understand that at all. Which party does he come from? He comes from the National Party. So the National Party is saying that in one area of Western Australia it would love extra police, but another area, because it is a Labor seat, is not allowed to have extra police. It is as simple as that. I think the Legislative Assembly National Party members should take their member to task for going crook about a small country town in a high-growth area asking for a police station. Sometimes we play many different games along the way, but this is a serious issue. Why would anyone in this or the other house want to say, “You shouldn’t have a police station in a high-growth area”? Bunbury is growing north and south. Growth in the north area is starting to slow down, but, certainly, south of Bunbury the Satterley Group is looking at extending that area in Dalyellup. Capel is growing at a very, very high rate. In recent times the numbers have gone up in Dardanup, and it is moving very, very well. Since the Labor Party got in, another 20 or 30 houses have been built. Previously, people did not have the confidence to do that.

I think it is time that instead of grandstanding, the National Party should have a look at what it is doing and work with the communities. I said that we had a public meeting in Dalyellup. I also had one in Capel and 150 people turned out—I did not have enough cakes or chairs!—for a public meeting about policing. They spoke to me, and I spoke to government about it. The Labor Party has done the planning and identified the block and will deliver. That is what the Labor Party is about. We are not about singing toilets or plastic cows; we are about putting real, tangible results in place so that people can live happily ever after.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [6.08 pm]: I rise to speak on this motion. I notice the member for Collie–Preston has conveniently slipped out of the chamber, but I want to make a distinction in relation to the member for Collie–Preston because he has the \$22 million slush fund that I think a lot of other members in this place would love to have. Having listened to what the member just spoke about, I found it bizarre. Some of the projects funded under royalties for regions include Collie Senior High School and the Collie Mineworkers Memorial Pool redevelopment, which the minister has cut the ribbon for.

There was also the main street redevelopment; the art gallery; the skate park; the Collie Health Service; the Wellington Dam revitalisation; the Coalfields Highway, which certainly needed much repair under the previous Labor government; and then of course the motor park. I found the attack launched by the minister, the member for Collie–Preston, quite bizarre, especially when his electorate has probably gained more than just about any other from royalties for regions.

I will return to the motion. The Minister for Regional Development is very experienced, as has been noted here today. The Premier spoke today in question time about her experience and about her different roles in different levels of government. I went to the Australasian Study of Parliament Group function last night in the Parliamentary Library and listened to the Minister for Regional Development. I learnt about different levels of government and about different experiences, including committee experiences and so on in the federal and state Parliaments. I think she is well respected amongst many people, but I am really concerned about the way she is handling her portfolios of regional development and agriculture. The more I think about it, Minister MacTiernan has been put in place to slash and burn various projects in both agriculture and regional development. I have been thinking about this for a while and I am quite sure that that is the situation. After listening to her last night and thinking about what is taking place at the moment, she is playing off the federal government when it suits her.

I would like to give a couple of examples. One example is federal funding for aged care. In my electorate we have the Great Southern Housing Initiative. We secured \$10 million from the federal government through its Building Better Regions Fund and matching funding was committed to by the previous Liberal–National government. It was announced and went through cabinet. Now the Minister for Regional Development will not commit to it. Our federal member for O’Connor is frustrated that even though \$10 million from the Building Better Regions Fund had been committed to, the regional development minister will not commit to it. I might add that that funding runs out in about two or three weeks’ time—it runs out on 30 June. On the other hand, the Minister for Regional Development has \$6.9 million in the budget for wild dog funding for the Esperance barrier fence but she will not spend it because she wants federal funding. Which way is it? One minute she has the federal funding and she will not commit the state funding, then she has the state funding and she will not spend it because she wants federal funding to go with it. As far as I am concerned, she cannot have it both ways.

The member for Warren–Blackwood spoke about this earlier. I quote from the *Farm Weekly*. The article refers to Peter Stacey, a farmer in the south west. The article commences —

THE State Agriculture Minister Alannah MacTiernan must go.

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That's the call from Waroona cattle, sheep, and grains producer Peter Stacey, who has called on the WA agricultural industry to come together and petition the government to remove the minister from the agriculture portfolio.

Mr Stacey told the *Farm Weekly* that removing the minister was essential for the future of WA agriculture. He is quoted as saying —

“She is the worst ag minister we have had,” Mr Stacey said.

“If she is not removed she is going to do a lot of damage to the industry.

“The sooner she is removed the better.”

This is the feeling that is starting to come through from the agriculture sector.

The Pastoralists and Graziers Association and the Western Australian Farmers Federation have lost confidence. They cannot get an audience with her. As was quoted earlier, the PGA had an audience with the Premier. It tried to get some issues across there, but the ag minister just came in and basically took control of the meeting and ran through her agenda.

I would like to quote from another article; this one was in the *Countryman*. It states —

WA Agriculture Minister Alannah MacTiernan is under fire for making “empty promises” over the extension to Esperance of the State Barrier Fence after she trumpeted a \$6.9 million State package which is contingent on Federal funding.

The minister said that no work will be done to extend the fence from Ravensthorpe to Cape Arid National Park until federal funds are committed. That is not a federal project; that is a state project. The self-confessed minister for animal welfare is basically saying that she is going to keep trying to leverage federal funding. She already has state funding of \$6.9 million but she is going to try to leverage federal funding. She does not care whether those wild dogs continue to attack sheep for the next few years because she is going to stand there and try to leverage that federal funding. To me, that is a disgrace for someone who calls herself the animal welfare minister.

We have farmers such as Scott Pickering in Esperance, who is the main protagonist I guess I could call him; he is a farmer who has been on that biosecurity group for 14 years. He was quoted recently as saying —

“Wild dogs tear apart and kill thousands of sheep and cattle, costing the supply chain millions of dollars annually.

“She —

The minister —

has made it clear she is keen to suspend the live export trade at certain times of the year ... she has again diverted key priorities and promises for the agriculture industry, in preference to playing political games.”

That sums it up perfectly. It is all about using the stance as the minister to somehow leverage some extra funding from somewhere. The money is already there. Everything is laid out, the fence is ready to be built, the various parties have committed—the farmers, the shires and all the rest of it—and all the minister seems to want to do is pick a fight and play politics. That is unfortunately what the federal minister for agriculture is up against. He is being accused of all these things from across the Nullarbor. He has been accused of not supplying federal funding for an issue that is not a federal issue. I certainly call on the minister to come forth with that funding. She has it there. Funding of \$6.9 million was announced; it is in the budget. Start the barrier fence. It is a \$10 million project. By the time we get to the other end, or three-quarters of the way around, I am sure that we will have secured more funding from elsewhere. We are attempting to get the likes of the Shire of Esperance to put in the cattle grids. I am really conscious that this is an animal welfare issue that needs to be dealt with.

I will go on to the undermining of the live export trade. I think this is a big one. We have asked questions about it but we do not seem to have received any answers. The Premier at one stage said that state Labor was committed to the live export trade. I certainly welcome that. I know that his agriculture minister seems to be intent on bringing it to a halt. I reflect on the fact that the other week the minister came to Katanning, to my home town where my farm is, and rustled up about 30 sheep producers.

Basically, she tried to turn the argument, if you like, to getting those producers to agree that the summer trade had to go and that this would be the way to retain the live export trade. Unfortunately for her and fortunately for the industry, the producers actually stood up for themselves. They all recognise that this is not the answer. We cannot have a three or four-month ban because we will lose that market and next thing it will go off to Sudan, South Africa or wherever, and we will have a way worse animal welfare outcome.

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It was very interesting when we went to the Darkan sheep forum. There were about 150 producers there, the Leader of the National Party and our agricultural spokesperson, Hon Colin de Grussa. We really took that on board. The growers there are passionate; they are all sheep producers. The Darkan area has about five per cent of the state's sheep flock. The producers were very constructive; they were not having a crack at anyone and they just want to find a solution. One thing they recognised was that continuity of the industry is really important.

Ms A. Sanderson: What about animal welfare?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: As the member for Warren–Blackwood said, no-one was happy with that vision. We all agree that it is not on and the animal welfare side of it needs to be improved, but we need to do it in a measured way, which I believe the federal agriculture minister is doing. We got some really good advice and suggestions at the Darkan forum. When we asked the Premier a question the next week, he said that the industry has to put out the right message. I agree with him on that, and that is what we told the likes of the Pastoralists and Graziers Association, the Western Australian Farmers Federation, all the producers there and the Australian Livestock Exporters' Council. We have to have a consistent message and everyone has to be on board.

Unfortunately, as I said, this motion is about the Minister for Agriculture and Food undermining regional agriculture. She is trying to follow her agenda, which is to ban the trade over four or five months, and then in four or five years ban the whole trade. We have already seen an effect in our saleyards; we have lost value at around the \$20 to \$30 mark, and it is really disappointing.

I woke up this morning to see in the paper that there had been a raid overnight on the office of one of our live export companies because the minister decided that even though this is a federal issue, she would raid one of our live export companies to see whether she could somehow prosecute it or get some sort of information out of it. What has happened now? One of our three live export companies has decided to divert its ships to South America. There has been an undermining of that trade. Rather than letting Animals' Angels Australia, or whatever it is called, into the Fremantle port, we need to communicate with these companies and with the whole industry. As I said, there has been an undermining of the industry and I am really concerned.

The Pastoralists and Graziers Association of WA president, Tony Seabrook, was quoted in *The West Australian* of 24 April. The article quotes him as having said —

... Ms MacTiernan's lack of support during the animal welfare scandal of the past few weeks had affected her standing in the agricultural community.

“Appallingly—instead of working with us—to work our way through this, she has taken every opportunity to throw us under the bus,” he said.

That is the perception that is out there. If members listen to *Country Hour* every afternoon between 12 noon and 1.00 pm, they will hear that filtering through —

Dr A.D. Buti: The Liberals want to ban the ABC!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: — on the Labor Party ABC!

There is no two ways about it; we have had a very disappointing result. We have a minister who is saying that she needs to maintain credibility so as not to lose control of the issue.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: She is trying to control the issue and it is a federal issue. Minister Littleproud is dealing with it; he recognises the issues. We are working with him constructively through the National Party. The member for Warren–Blackwood and I met with him in Cowra in New South Wales last week and expressed our thoughts.

Dr A.D. Buti: Why didn't he come over here?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: We have met with him in both states, but there is a drought in New South Wales that he has to deal with.

I question where Hon Darren West is on this issue. He has said, “We're the party for the regions. We have the most regional members in Western Australia.” Certainly, I can see a couple in here: the member for Pilbara, the member for Bunbury and the member for Murray–Wellington, so there certainly are some. The former member for Darling Range was on the urban fringe!

It is very concerning that Hon Darren West, who purports to be the only active farmer in this place—I can assure members he is not—is missing on this issue. Where is he? Sorry; he did say that we need to phase out the live export industry.

Mr V.A. Catania: I was looking for his tweet!

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Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Yes, unfortunately I am afraid we will not be seeing them anymore, member for North West Central.

Once again I ask the regional members of the Labor Party to stand up and be counted. I ask them to talk to our Minister for Regional Development; Agriculture and Food about consistency and about not trying to leverage results by undermining our relationship with the federal government, because it does not work. She cannot have it both ways.

I will briefly run across a couple of other subjects. The regional development commissions are a real concern to me. I believe that under the former government we had a fantastic scenario. We had good quality regional development commissions, good boards and good chief executive officers, of which the member for Bunbury was one; he was CEO of the South West Development Commission. We had blueprints and themes; we had it organised. We now have a situation in which most of members of the boards of the regional development commissions have left; the chairs have been replaced by people who are more friendly with the current government. Most of the CEOs have gone; we lost our CEO of the South West Development Commission over here, but he did an excellent blueprint. The South West Development Commission blueprint was very high quality, and I compliment the member for Bunbury on that.

Mr V.A. Catania: It's been scrapped now.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am not sure whether it is still in existence, but I believe that form of planning was fantastic. It is about talking to people who live in those places. The member for Bunbury lives in Bunbury, in the south west, and he knows what is important. He knows that the Busselton–Margaret River Regional Airport is important. He knows that the Bunbury waterfront is important. I thought that royalties for regions, the regional development trust, the Regional Development Council and the regional development commissions were a fantastic regional development scenario.

Another example I will give—I am sure the Minister for Tourism will be interested in this—is the SuperTowns funding, which is at times criticised by various parties. An example in Katanning, in my electorate, is the Premier Flour Mill—the Dôme—of which the Minister for Tourism is very well aware. The Premier Flour Mill was owned by the Shire of Katanning, which did not really want to maintain it. It was a real headache. The Liberal–National government came in and injected SuperTowns funding into the community. The amenity of the town improved, and as a result the Dôme group, led by Nigel Oakey, of whom the Minister for Tourism is well aware, came in with its investment, leveraged by the SuperTowns funding. That is a fantastic model that I am sure the Minister for Tourism will be looking at closely to derive some further tourism outcomes. The Shamrock Hotel in Northam, in the electorate of the member for Central Wheatbelt, and the Hordern Hotel in Narrogin, are two other examples of the Dôme group coming in, spending money and improving opportunities for regional towns. I urge the Minister for Tourism to support that. Inland tourism is a real opportunity. I think I have spoken to the minister about this before. It is not all about Broome, Bunbury or Busselton; is also about inland tourism, and there is a trail here that could be part of a great package. I look forward to the support of the minister on that one.

Talking about undermining, I want to talk about a couple of our local governments. The minister has come in and demanded back 20 per cent of the funding for particular projects. In the last few weeks, we have also lost the interest. This is part of that undermining scenario. Five years of planning has been done, we have the money, and it has been announced by the previous government, and what happens? “Sorry, I’ll have that back; I know what I am doing. I know what to do with that childcare centre.” We have the Challis set-up out in Armadale, so that is a better result for every situation than the five years of planning that has been done. I do not think the government can just step into that space after so many years of planning has been done.

Another area that I want to talk about is the independent living units. As part of the Regional Development Council, we did the “Ageing in the Bush” study, which identified a real deficit in independent living units. The over-75 age group would be increasing by 22 per cent, and the over-85 age group was going to be increasing by 100 per cent, so we needed to do something with that. We had a fantastic set-up, with \$45 million announced by the previous Minister for Regional Development. Those projects have now gone to a contestable grants funding round, so at least there is still some funding there, but it has put doubt into those packages. Now those councils are sitting there waiting, wondering whether they will be funded, or lose their federal matching funding. That is what I am talking about in undermining.

We have a fantastic situation with the community resource centres. They are working well, and it is a great network. Then, what happens? Cut first, and consult later. The minister has decided on, and put into the budget months ago, a 40 per cent funding reduction, and now people have been sent out from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development to consult. It is too late; the cut has been made, so why does the government bother with consulting? We have this two-tiered system, although sometimes Wandering and Boddington have been put into the wrong category. I really worry about this. The CRCs provide trainees with their first jobs, and that is fantastic, but a lot of those CRCs cannot now afford to put on those trainees.

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On an agricultural topic, the member for Warren–Blackwood spoke about regenerative agriculture. I find it quite bizarre that the minister was going around the other week, at Northam I believe, talking about compost—no artificial fertiliser, and no pesticides. I am sorry, but I think the 4 500 to 5 000 grain growers in Western Australia have a pretty good idea of how to grow a grain crop. If you want to grow canola, you must put insecticide on it, because otherwise it will not last five days. Canola needs sulphur and plenty of other minerals, and it needs fertiliser. With all due respect to the Minister for Agriculture and Food, I think she is straying outside her territory there. Our grain farmers actually know how to grow a crop. The farmers I deal with in Esperance are regarded as the highest technology and highest quality farmers almost in the world, and they know how to grow crops. It is stretching it a bit to have the minister out there talking about compost and those types of things. I have no idea where she has picked that up from. We had a fantastic system there; we had our ag grower groups from which the funding has been whipped away. The likes of Southern Dirt and the Facey Group were fantastic.

Then we see the minister also straying into local government amalgamations, which I find quite bizarre. She comes in from the outside edge and starts making comments about council amalgamations, and then the poor old member for Mandurah has to stand up and say that that is not on the agenda. Unfortunately, this is the sort of stuff that is happening. The regional sector is losing confidence, and rightly so. We know about the education scenario. I was here the other week and saw the unprovoked attack by the member for Armadale on the poor old member for Moore, and I had to come down to the chamber to defend him.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Tourism) [6.38 pm]: I am the lead speaker for the government, and I thank you for the call, Madam Acting Speaker (Ms S.E. Winton), because I intend using all of the remaining time in this evening's debate to counter the interesting contributions from the National Party. We must say that the National Party is back where it is comfortable—back where it belongs in opposition, as far from the treasury bench as it is possible to be. Ideally, by the next time we come around to a general election, we will see the demise of the National Party, and we will never see them with their snouts in the trough again. We will never again see them with their hands in the cookie jar, destroying the finances of this state, as they did during the eight and a half years of the shameful government in which the Liberal Party relied upon it for votes, and as a consequence the state has been saddled with forty thousand million dollars' worth of debt.

All we can say is, what a lamentable record. What a sad state of affairs. They are back where they belong and where they are comfortable, where their only refrain is to try to turn city against country and country folk against city folk, and try to create angst and anxiety in the regions. That is their *modus operandi*. That is what they do. When they are in government, they are irresponsible, damaging and dangerous to the finances of this state. In opposition, they have reverted to kind and are attacking the city. We see the neutered shadow of the Liberal Party reliant upon the National Party in government. The only way the Liberal Party can ever get back into government is to join together in the Liberal–National Party, which for all intents and purpose is what it is. Let us face it. One of the greatest jokes of the last decade has been the claim that there is not a Liberal–National Party in Western Australia and somehow they are two separate parties. The only way the Liberal and National Parties will ever return to the government benches is by collaborating. They are reliant upon each other. We have had a rat change sides. No-one else on this side is going to go to the other side of the chamber. No-one on this side is going to support the Nationals getting into government again, so the Nationals must rely on the Liberals. No-one on this side is going to support the Liberals, other than the Nationals, so the Liberals must rely on the Nationals. That means that the only thing standing between the survival of royalties for regions and its demise is the Labor Party. The single greatest advocate in Western Australia for royalties for regions is Minister MacTiernan. She is fighting in the other place and around this state for the retention of royalties for regions. The only thing that stands between the Liberal Party destroying royalties for regions and the survival of royalties for regions is the Labor Party and Minister MacTiernan, our champion of the regions.

Point of Order

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Madam Acting Speaker, clearly the Minister for Tourism is misleading the house in saying this government is going to keep royalties for regions when it is not.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms S.E. Winton): Thank you.

Debate Resumed

Mr P. PAPALIA: The only thing standing between the Liberal Party and the demise of royalties for regions is the Labor Party of Western Australia. WA Labor stands for royalties for regions. The Liberal Party in Western Australia wants to destroy royalties for regions. However, it cannot form government without the clowns in the National Party. The National Party knows that it will sell out to the Liberal Party if it survives that long. I am hoping that we will be in office long enough to see the demise of the National Party entirely—to see its disappearance—so that the treasury bench is never again subjected to the irresponsible and damaging behaviour that we saw in the eight and a half years of the Barnett government. The Liberal–National Party in government is a menace. Western Australians know that. We know that the people of Darling Range are fearful that the Liberal Party will return. I am hopeful that when they vote on Saturday, they will put their minds to who was

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handing out how-to-vote cards for the Liberal Party. It was the National Party! The Liberal–National Party in Western Australia has re-formed. It never went away, really. It was all a joke. It was a farce. It was just smoke and mirrors to avoid being —

Dr A.D. Buti: They were members of the Liberal Party!

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is right. We know what was happening just before the loss of government and who was being courted by the Liberal Party. The member for Warren–Blackwood, a well-known conservative Liberal, a Liberal by all but name for the moment, will perhaps be the first one to break ranks. Perhaps he will be the first one to go back to the Liberal Party. We will then see the gradual erosion of the Nationals during the remainder of our term in government. We know that before too long, the member for North West Central will be confronting a preselection challenge by a real National Party member. A real National Party member will view the opportunity to get preselection for a seat that has been occupied by a guy who got into Parliament as a Labor person and then sold out and joined the National Party. He is now handing out how-to-vote cards for the Liberal Party. If he is handing out how-to-vote cards for the Liberal Party, which does not support royalties for regions, his integrity has to be in question, if it was not already. I mean, seriously! We have to think that it will not be long before somebody up that way realises that the member for North West Central is out of town so much that there is an opportunity to get into the branch and be preselected.

Dr A.D. Buti: You know that by handing out how-to-vote cards for the Liberal Party, he was supporting that One Nation be put ahead of the Labor Party?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Of course he was. We know that.

Mr V.A. Catania: It was to put Labor last.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The question, of course, is which One Nation candidate are we talking about? Is it the one who used to be in the Pauline Hanson One Nation Party, or is it the one who left last week and is now running against the current candidate? Is it the guy who is running for the Queensland Pauline Hanson One Nation Party? Is that the person whom the Liberal and National Parties in Western Australia are preferencing? Possibly. Who knows? No-one really understands what is going on on the other side of the chamber.

I do need to address some of the points that were made, or some of the claims that were made—not points. I recognise I may have strayed a little, Madam Acting Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER: You have.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I recognise that. I now come back to some of the claims and some of the falsehoods that were peddled on the other side of the chamber. Some interesting observations were made by the member for Warren–Blackwood. He seems to obsess about Carnegie. He seems to obsess about a research and development project that was committed to by the now government when in opposition. We kept that promise. We established a research and development project in Albany. Anyone would have thought, based on all the claims made before the election by the Liberal–National Party candidates, that they cared about Albany, which was clearly not true, that a research and development project —

Dr A.D. Buti: A brilliant idea.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, a brilliant idea. Who would criticise that? It is unbelievable that someone claimed that it was outrageous. Was it \$18 million? I am trying to remember the allocation. The Minister for Mines and Petroleum might be able to remind me. I cannot remember, but it is under \$20 million. Someone who was responsible in government criticised that and said, “Where is the business case?” He made the claim that it is outrageous that we would spend money on a research and development project without a business case. This is someone who was responsible in government for a project valued at \$520 million that resulted in a road and a drain in Kununurra, and that did not have a business case, and the drain leaked! That was \$320 million of state money and \$200 million of federal money. What could the member for Kimberley have done for Aboriginal education in the Kimberley with half a billion dollars? What could have been done for Aboriginal kids attending school in the Kimberley with half a billion dollars? What could have been done for training in the Kimberley with half a billion dollars? What could have been done for remote Aboriginal housing in the Kimberley with half a billion dollars? How many permanent jobs could have been created if half a billion dollars had not been spent on that road and drain? Does anyone know? Let us guess. How many different justifications were given by the National Party for this project? The National Party said it would be the food bowl of the nation. It would provide biofuels. How many times were bags of rice put on our seats in this chamber? For how many years in a row did we get bags of rice and were told that rice was the crop that would underpin the Ord?

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: They sent it to New Guinea! I know, minister! When the minister and I sat on the other side of the chamber, we had a lot of conversations about this. Then it was sugar cane and then we were going to have a mill. Interestingly, the claim was made at the time—this is emperor Brendon Grylls, the former member for Pilbara and visionary for the north—that there would be a sugar mill that would employ 400 people. How many

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people do members reckon a modern sugar mill built anywhere in the world with modern technology is going to employ? That was just the first thing to question. There was not much questioning going on. There was in this place; in between falling over laughing, the member for Cannington and I did ask a few questions. Apart from that, not many other questions were asked by some of the media outlets that we have heard about this evening. Anything that was said was accepted as truth. During the last eight and a half years of that outrageous, appalling, irresponsible government, we learnt not to believe anything the National Party of Western Australia says.

Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Do not mention the Ponzi schemes! Do not mention foreign nationals who may have invested in said Ponzi schemes at the behest of the National Party of Western Australia and who were encouraged to do so because a minister of the Crown was standing next to the Ponzi scheme peddler and encouraging such investment. Do not mention the Ponzi schemes because that would be embarrassing. Do not talk about that. Do not talk about the wasteful, damaging behaviour of that irresponsible government, which has now resulted in embarrassment at an international level. People probably would be rightly questioning whether Western Australia is a legitimate place to invest.

Some of the observations about tourism that were made by members opposite were extraordinary. I welcome the discussion around tourism. I quite happily acknowledge that the McGowan government has elevated tourism to be a point of discussion in the public domain that has never before been seen in Western Australia. We have elevated tourism to be a priority sector for investment by the Western Australian government in a responsible fashion.

Nothing was done about regional airfares for eight and a half years. Half a billion dollars was spent on a road and a drain, but nothing was done about airfares for the people of Kununurra or Broome in that entire time. It was not mentioned. It was not even acknowledged that the previous government sat on its hands while those fares went through the roof. Those people whom members opposite claim, occasionally, to represent suffered from those prices and so did the tourism industry in the regions. It is extraordinary that members opposite would have the barefaced gall to get the 16-year-old in their electorate office to get out their texta and draw that sign that they held up today. That is an incredible claim, after having done nothing and wasting such outrageous amounts of taxpayers' money in the two complete terms of the previous government and the extra six months. They did nothing to help regional people with those outrageous, soaring airfares. The member for Roe should be ashamed of himself. He is a nice bloke, but he made observations about tourism and airfares, knowing full well that the McGowan Labor government got Rex airlines to give those local airfares to the people in Esperance and promote it as a tourism destination. That is embarrassing. Sitting next to the member for Roe is the member for North West Central. Here is an interesting thing that I am going to share with members. What do members think the statistics showed about Exmouth? These are the statistics that members opposite are berating and deriding me over. What do members think they showed about Exmouth and the coral coast? What do members think the outcomes were? Entirely under the McGowan government —

A government member: It's gone up.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It has gone up all right, member. There has been growth of 36 per cent for the coral coast. Which site was one of only two destinations to benefit from the McGowan government's funding of the \$5.7 million stopover campaign by Qantas to urge London travellers to stop over?

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Which was one of only two destinations? It was Exmouth.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Why did it happen? It happened because of the \$69 deal. I think I am going to have to stop taking interjections. I do not think Hansard can hear; it is getting loud. There are \$69 return airfares, thanks to the McGowan government's deal with Qantas after it campaigned for a stopover on the way through. The last time I talked to Alan Joyce, he indicated that something like 15 per cent of people travelling through were stopping, and they were not stopping for one or two days; they were stopping for five or more, and they were getting out to Exmouth and Broome, because those are the only two destinations that got the cheap flights. The member opposite does not know his electorate and it is not surprising because he does not live there. He can get a cheap flight if he travels from London. What we have done for him is we have got an airline that is on the global distribution system to fly to Monkey Mia. Why would that be important? It is because, under the McGowan government, which focuses on tourism, a person travelling from anywhere around the world, whether it be London, New York, Sydney or wherever, will be able to book their bags straight through Perth Airport. They will change over to Rex aircraft, which is on the GDS, and, as a consequence, they will not have to check their bags out and rush through to another system. They will be able to book their bags all the way through. That could not happen when it was Skippers under the previous government because it was not on the GDS. We brought to the government a focus on elevating tourism. When we were looking at those regulated flight routes, one of the considerations was tourism, which has now been elevated.

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I know that the member for Roe was doing it at the behest of others, because he is a good bloke and there is not a nasty bone in his body. By the way, I absolutely support Nigel. The member knows that I support Dôme Coffees Australia Pty Ltd and its historic work on cultural tourism offerings around the state. The member knows that I support that and I commend it. It is a magnificent initiative. More power to him, and we will do whatever we can to assist. He knows that, because he was at the sundowner in my office last Friday to talk about tourism. I commend that flour mill. I have not been there, but I have seen on his computer the magnificent work that has been done. I understand there is one in Port Hedland as well. He has some great ideas and some great initiatives. More power to him. We will do whatever we can to assist, as we are with some of his other developments right now.

I have to address the motion, and I have been doing that all the way along. As I said at the outset, there is no greater advocate for, or defender of the faith with, royalties for regions than Hon Alannah MacTiernan, MLC. Who could deny that? She is out there fighting every day to ensure that good projects and small businesses in the regions get support, that innovative approaches are shared across the regions, that people are promoted and encouraged in their efforts, that the economy is built and that Aboriginal investment and businesses are endorsed and supported by royalties for regions, as they always should have been. It should not be something new, but it is. There is a focus on the rest of Western Australia, not just a small elite group that was close to the National Party. Now the rest of regional Western Australia is being recognised and supported by royalties for regions. That is a good thing. It is appropriate that great outcomes are being funded and supported and that the McGowan Labor government is defending royalties for regions against the Liberal Party and the National Party, because if they ever again have to form government—perish the thought—they will have to do so together. They cannot do it on their own. Everyone knows that. They are the only parties that are willing to join together. That is the only way they will ever form government.

It is a travesty that members of the National Party would come into this place and move this motion, noting that Hon Alannah MacTiernan has been doing a wonderful job. She is defending live export. The federal Nationals and Liberals want to shut it down. On the other side of the country, Sussan Ley wants to shut it down. They do not sell sheep overseas. No-one outside of WA cares. The government of Western Australia is standing up for that industry. Everything Alannah is doing is trying to defend it and support it. It will die if it does not meet the highest possible animal welfare standards, and farmers should understand that. Their best friend is Alannah MacTiernan, not anyone on that side of the house. Only Alannah MacTiernan and the McGowan government can save that industry by ensuring that it meets the highest possible animal welfare standards. It must do that. That is the only thing that can save it.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

House adjourned at 7.00 pm
