

Mr Roger Cook; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Rita Saffioti; Dr Tony Buti; Dr Mike Nahan; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Paul Miles; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Chris Tallentire

Amendment to Question

Mr R.H. COOK: I therefore move to amend the question before the house. I move —

That the following words be added after “noted” —

and that this house notes the Barnett government’s disastrous summer of discontent including the Minister for Transport’s conflict-of-interest issues, education cuts, local government in chaos, the cancellation of late-night trains, rising unemployment and the first budget deficit in 15 years.

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Leader of the Opposition) [4.10 pm]: I rise to support this amendment moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I thought it was a great description. It has been a summer of discontent because it has been filled with people unhappy with the performance of the state government in so many areas. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition outlined some of those areas, and I will outline more. But bear this in mind: this is the first day of Parliament, so it is our first opportunity in a parliamentary sense to raise these issues, and raise them we will. We will tease each of them out in greater detail during the course of the parliamentary year. Today, I will provide a snapshot of the sorts of things we will be raising about the performance of this government, particularly over the last few months. I will put a bit of historical context around what has gone on over the last few months so that people understand what was supposed to be happening versus what is happening.

As published in *The West Australian* of 11 November 2013—16 months or so ago now—the Premier said this at the Liberal Party state conference —

“We did have a difficult few months,” Mr Barnett said. “It was a time when it seemed if something was going to go wrong, it went wrong.”

...

“Those times, those three or four months, difficult as they were, are now behind us.

... I think the Government is very much back on track, doing what it wants to do, doing what it should do in its second term.”

That was 11 November 2013, exhibit A, in *The West Australian*. The Premier is in a photograph with Julie Bishop, of all people. That line in the sand was drawn in November 2013.

Things did not get better. Members might remember we had a few Treasurers in the meantime. A few things happened as we went along, including a Treasurer who rampaged around the suburbs! The Premier then drew another line in the sand. On 9 August 2014, on Channel Nine, the Premier said —

We had a pretty rough 12 months and it seemed to me that if something could go wrong, it did go wrong. That period, I am confident, is behind us.

That was August of last year. The Premier put it all behind him—all the bad stuff had happened. Nothing more that was bad was going to happen; it was all behind him. Now here we are in February of 2015. Bear in mind that statement, the first one in November 2013, and the second one in August 2014. What has happened in the meantime? Let me go through a few things in the good times, after the line in the sand was drawn: Moody’s took away the state’s AAA credit rating; there was the shark cull backdown; the Premier outed a complainant in a child sex abuse matter in this house; and the Premier accused the two biggest mining companies in the state, perhaps in the world, of collusion and suggested they should be investigated by the European Union. We also had the Environmental Protection Authority conflicts-of-interest matter. Legislation was passed to validate approvals for billions of dollars’ worth of projects. We had the Pelago scandal involving donations, public investment and lost money, and we had the Osprey Village affair. Hundreds of millions of dollars was lost in that affair. We then had the ones that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition outlined, including the Minister for Transport’s murky private dealings, the education cuts and the local government fiasco, costing, I think, in the vicinity of \$40 million.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: The Treasurer thinks that is funny!

Mr M. McGOWAN: We asked the Treasurer the question and he will not answer it. He just laughs like a complete whacko!

There was the cancellation of late-night trains, rising unemployment and the first budget deficit in 15 years in Western Australia presided over by the former heavy from the Institute of Public Affairs—a \$1.3 billion budget

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deficit. These are the good times according to the Premier! These things are happening when things are on track according to the Premier. I want to go into one—we cannot avoid it; the opposition will be raising it a few times—the local government disaster of this government's making. I heard the Minister for Local Government's lines in question time today. He basically said that all of those councils —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.M. Britza): Leader of the Opposition, you can retract that statement—"lies".

Mr M. McGOWAN: Mr Acting Speaker, "lines"—"I heard his lines." Thank you for your valued contribution.

I heard the minister today. This is a point that is worth making: he said that all of those local governments that invested money in staff and engaging consultants, who worked on a process to amalgamate with their neighbours, that was their decision—that was nothing to do with the government! They submitted their proposals to the Local Government Advisory Board process; it was nothing to do with the government, so they bear the loss. Therein is the argument of the Minister for Local Government, as though it all just happened in a vacuum. They just did it of their own accord! What is it to do with the government?

I will read out what the Premier said to all those councils over a period. On 29 May 2013, with respect to local government amalgamation, the Premier said, "One way or another it's going to happen." In *Hansard* on 23 October 2014, the Premier said —

... the Liberal Party will do this—we will do it!

In *Hansard* on 21 October 2014, the Premier said —

It may not all happen overnight, but it will happen.

In *Hansard* on 22 October 2014, the Premier said —

... we are taking control of the process to get the result, and the result will be a reduction in Perth metropolitan councils from 30 to 16.

The Premier also said on that date —

It is 16 local authorities across Perth—done and dusted. The maps are there. That is what we are going to do.

When the government says that all councils acted of their own accord, the government was threatening them, one after another over the course of years, that irrespective of their views on these matters, irrespective of what their ratepayers thought, the government would forcibly amalgamate them. The government's line today—"line", Mr Acting Speaker—that somehow they all just did this without any involvement from the government is completely specious and false. It is a false argument, and everybody across Western Australia knows it. This government has created this fiasco. This government has created this massive loss of money and this massive amount of confusion. It is a shambles. As the Mayor of Bayswater, a former Liberal candidate, has said, it is a shambles. I have the quote here. It is a good one.

Mr F.A. Alban interjected.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Listen to this, member for Swan Hills.

Mr F.A. Alban interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I want silence, member for Swan Hills.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I quote the Mayor of the City of Bayswater —

The blame lies firmly with the Premier and his failure to provide strong leadership on this issue.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: He nails them!

Mr M. McGOWAN: Yes. He has done a great job.

So, the summer of discontent is here. The government has created this shambolic and disastrous situation, which has cost the taxpayers and ratepayers of this state tens of millions of dollars. The government is trying to blame the councils, when this is of the government's own doing. The minister made the decision to abolish the process for those councils. The minister says, "Oh, well, the process unravelled because of the referenda." Yes, it did, in relation to three amalgamations. However, in relation to all the other councils, the minister elected to abolish the process. That was the minister's decision. I endorse that decision. But that does not mean that the minister can run away from the fact that it was his creation, and that he is the one who has imposed these costs on ratepayers and communities across Perth. So, the summer of discontent is here.

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This is a tired government. This is a government led by a Premier who is out of touch and who regularly embarrasses this state on a range of issues. This Premier has led this state into its first deficit in 15 years. This Premier has lost this state's AAA credit rating. This Premier has driven debt to levels never before seen in Western Australia. This Premier and this government have done that. We will use the course of this year to outline all those issues, and we will continue to outline a better alternative for this state.

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park) [4.21 pm]: I, too, rise to support the amendment to the question. I note that today, the Deputy Premier made the point that *The Giants* was the largest free outdoor event ever held in Western Australia.

Mr F.A. Alban: And a good one!

Mr B.S. WYATT: I thank the member for Swan Hills. His interjection is timely. It was a good one. But it was not the best free outdoor event over the summer. The best free outdoor event was the Barnett government itself! By the end of the summer, I wheeled the kids and my picnic rug out the front, with the popcorn, and just watched the news every night. It was the best fringe show in town! People may go to the Perth International Arts Festival, but the government is not mainstream; it is more of a fringe event. It is interesting to watch the performance of this government. I am not sure whether it is tragedy, with the education cuts; whether it is comedy, and I cannot help but look at the Minister for Local Government; or whether it is drama, because the Minister for Transport gave us a bit of drama earlier this summer.

This is a repeat of the last summer of discontent when the Minister for Corrective Offices had a dangerous criminal walk his dog in the member for Cannington's electorate, only to have that criminal escape. We got the dog, but—I am not sure—did we ever find the criminal? No. I think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is right. Good government starts today—not last year, not the year before; and possibly tomorrow. Good government starts today.

Like everybody else, I enjoyed *The Giants*. I loved watching the three giants on Sunday morning. Come on, member for Swan Hills!

Mr F.A. Alban interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Member for Swan Hills, I loved watching the three giants on Sunday morning, along with my daughters. There was the diver, who was impressive. There was the little girl, and I must admit I was quite overwhelmed when the little girl walked past. There was also the third giant, who was there at the very beginning on Sunday morning. I watched him. I call him the fisherman. So, we had the fisherman, the diver and the little girl. That takes me back to last summer, when there was another debacle that cost millions and millions of taxpayers' dollars, and that third giant crept up and tried to ruin my Sunday morning out with my daughters, but unfortunately, he could not do so. So, I enjoyed the three giants.

What I enjoyed even more was the cobbled together media statements from last year that the Premier says is his Premier's Statement for 2015. The Premier printed off all his media statements and thought, "I will read all those out. There are a couple of areas on which I have not really spent much time, and I will mention those in passing during my speech." That is what I heard from the Premier today.

What is most interesting is that the Premier made no reference to the *Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement*. Do members remember the midyear review? In the last couple of years, the budget has been an irrelevant document. We need to look at the midyear review if we want to know what is happening. We had the fully funded, fully costed election campaign in March 2013. We then had the budget. The government brought in all its promises, and it blew the books. The 10-year debt projection, which the new Treasurer has since removed, showed that debt would get out to about \$50 billion, from memory. Then the state's AAA credit rating was lost, and the midyear review took it all out again in December 2013. What a nightmare. We then had the budget in May last year, and that was interesting for the five or 10 minutes that it was a relevant financial document. But the real action came in the midyear review. I did not hear the Premier once reflect on the spending side of his government when he talked about the \$1.3 billion deficit. That was the first deficit in—how long, member for West Swan?

Ms R. Saffioti: Fifteen years.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Yes, 15 years. This Premier, and the half-dozen Treasurers that he has had, has presided over two AAA credit rating losses—one from Moody's and one from Standard and Poor's—and written them off. State debt was initially capped at \$20 billion. We were told it would not go past \$20 billion. Christian Porter as Treasurer said that state debt would peak in 2014–15—this financial year—at \$24 billion, before it would commence to decline. State debt is now at \$31 billion, and continuing to grow. The Premier said in his statement—I wrote it down, because it was funny—that this year will be a year of consolidation. The Premier

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has rampaged through this state's finances over the last six years, and now he says that this will be a year of consolidation. The Premier did not reflect on the fact that in the period between the budget and the midyear review, projected spending nearly doubled from \$2.6 billion to about \$4.2 billion. The Premier did not reflect on the fact that six months ago, this place passed payroll tax cuts, and the midyear review increased payroll tax cuts—and the government calls itself a financial manager! I have said year after year that all we need is a consistent financial plan and strategy that is stuck to, whether it is around debt or whether it is around spending. The government has not managed to pull that off. To this day, the Premier stands there and blames the GST. I am sick of saying this, but I will say it again: there has never been a GST shock to the budget—never. Every budget year, the expected GST revenue comes in at pretty much exactly what Treasury told us when it was formulating the budget. There has never been a GST shock. Yes, GST revenue has declined. Yes, it is unfair. But grown-up government takes responsibility for its own revenue. Grown-up government does not spend the revenue it wished it had. Grown-up government budgets on the revenue it actually has. If the government had acted in that way, it would not find itself in the situation it finds itself in now, with the state's credit rating gone; state debt at \$31 billion and increasing; and a \$1.3 billion deficit. I do not know whether to laugh or cry.

Mr F.A. Alban: Which one would you cancel? Will you take that?

Mr B.S. WYATT: I will take that. Thank you, member for Swan Hills; you are a great example of what the Treasurer calls classification creep! I note that during the midyear review the Treasurer referred to it to justify his workforce renewal policy. The member for Swan Hills is a fine example of classification creep, which I understand refers to people who classify themselves up to a level at which they perhaps do not belong. I will tell the member for Swan Hills one thing I would not have done: I would not have said five years ago, "We are merging you local governments whether or not you like it", and then blown millions of dollars on it only to find myself in the position now of saying, "We're not going to merge any of you." What a failed, flawed example of not only policy development, but also implementation.

Mr F.A. Alban interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you. Just one warning, member for West Swan. I will call you next time.

Ms R. Saffioti: Swan Hills, you mean!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Swan Hills; I beg your pardon.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I will try to wind it up. I have spoken for too long as it is, but I want to conclude with one of the better Fringe World Festival scripts that I came across over the summer. I want to read out part of a script but not all of it. It is long, it is funny, it is punchy, and I want to read out a bit of it because it is an interesting script reflective of the great summer of Fringe that we have all enjoyed. Guess who wrote it? I will let members guess. It reads —

One of the key planks of New Labor, which Geoff Gallop and Alan Carpenter claim to be, is a new-found commitment to fiscal responsibility. Gone are the old tax-and-spend days, when governments wildly manipulated the fiscal levers of the economy only for it to end up buried under a mountain of public sector debt.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Shoosh! It goes on —

The New Labor mantra includes "live within their means", "balance the budget", "borrow only for capital" and "focus expenditure on frontline services—teachers, police, nurses and doctors". They have the mantra right. Unfortunately, the underlying reality differs markedly from their rhetoric.

This script goes on to comment on the \$2 billion surplus. Do members remember the \$2 billion surplus delivered by Treasurer Ripper? This is what the scriptwriter wrote —

In short, the \$2 billion surplus announced for last year was funded by \$2 billion in household debt. Take the debt-funded stamp duty revenue out and Mr Ripper's stream of past and future Budget surpluses turns into a river of deficit and debt.

Members will be surprised to know that it is the member for Riverton who back in those days was saying, "You can't include all the record revenue in your surplus; you've got to remove all that, and that is the reality." This is from a bloke who is presiding over a \$1.3 billion deficit in reality. This is the problem we have. It does not matter which Treasurer we have of the five, six or however many we have had. The problem we have always had is the Premier, and ultimately backbench members of the government who I suspect are subscribing to his

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 17 February 2015]

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Mr Roger Cook; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Rita Saffioti; Dr Tony Buti; Dr Mike Nahan; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Paul Miles; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Chris Tallentire

Kool-Aid—I would bet on that—except for the member for Hillarys who knows what is going on. Government members are drinking the Kool-Aid. They believe the rhetoric, “What won’t you do? What can’t we spend? People want it.” The Treasurer said, “We blew the budget because that’s what the people wanted us to do.” Quote, unquote—that is what he said. At some point or another this great tragedy of the state’s finances will have to be dealt with. I look forward when I eventually get to my substantive response to the Premier’s Statement to spending a bit more time on that. In the end, I think we know that it was not *The Giants* that were the fun this summer; it was the Fringe festival show of the Barnett government.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [4.33 pm]: I do enjoy a bit of champagne comedy, and I have to say that there was champagne comedy from the member for Victoria Park. He should have his own Fringe World show, and I wish he was speaking after me.

It has been a summer of chaos and discontent, and the Premier has tried in his speech today to reframe it by saying this will be a year of consolidation. Consolidation to the Premier is, “I’ve bankrupted the state. I’ve got no more money to spend.” That is what consolidation means. The Premier finally believes that maybe \$30 billion of debt is a little too much. The Premier finally believes that debt is a real issue and now it is a year of consolidation. The Premier talked about a stable government, again trying to reframe his government compared with those in other states. He talked about stability. Last year we saw the soap opera that was the former member for Vasse. How many Treasurers have we seen in six years? I have lost count. It is more than five and fewer than 10. I think it is about seven—seven Treasurers in six years! We saw a new Minister for Transport and his list of financial interests. As I said, I was astounded about not only the list of financial interests the minister has, but also that any minister of the Crown could sit there buying and selling shares while he was meant to be delivering improved public transport for the entire state. That is what I was concerned about. How could he run all his commercial interests when he was meant to be a minister of the state?

We had another summer of a government in complete disarray and we had the Premier today trying to reframe it. Each year he looks at the past, gets some polling advice—I suspect from Menzies House, or wherever now that the Liberal Party is moving—and tries to reframe what the government is talking about. The Premier was worried today about the diversification of the economy. Oh, my goodness! He has realised that he might need to diversify the economy. He is worried about training—after increasing costs for training by 515 per cent! He has read the polling, and his statement today was basically a list of media statements, again trying to reframe his government from, “I’m a doer, I’ll do everything” to “Now it is a year of consolidation.” It is a complete, moveable feast.

I want to talk about the local government fiasco. The Minister for Local Government was surprised that he was asked five questions today in question time. I think we are all surprised that he is still a minister and being asked any question in question time. What an absolute disgrace of a process! I have seen processes fail in my time but I have never seen something drag out year upon year into a sixth year and we still have no idea about what the future is for local government. Neither the Premier, the minister nor the Treasurer can give us the exact cost of how much local government reform has cost this state. The budget papers say that up to \$21 million of additional money has been allocated to the Department of Local Government and Communities over the past five years. That does not include existing costs being expended by the department. Then of course there are the costs of the councils. All up, we estimate that up to \$40 million has been expended on this shambolic, chaotic process—a process that again demonstrates that the Premier of the day cannot work with anyone. He cannot work with anyone to deliver change. He could not deliver for the north the Browse and Oakajee projects and he cannot even deliver local government reform.

We will be going into the matter of the Minister for Transport in upcoming days. The only person more shocked to be a minister than the Minister for Local Government is the Minister for Transport. That is because even the Peter Conran—commissioned report into the former Minister for Transport’s financial affairs shows that this person does not deserve to be in cabinet today. There have been conflicts upon conflicts, but who actually got the sack? It was a junior staff member. The minister stayed in the cabinet and a junior staff member was sacked.

Just to make sure that things have not changed and just so that people are aware that this minister still has not understood what he is meant to be doing as a minister, let us look at the late-night train fiasco that is occurring as we speak. I do not know who makes decisions in this government. Let us face it: in the week of *The Giants* and in the month of the Fringe World Festival, for the Minister for Transport to go out and say that no-one was using the late-night trains is an absolute failure on so many levels. It shows how out of touch he is. Those guys opposite might get invited to a few functions here and there and the ministers might attend functions, but they do not actually understand people, do they? They go out when the trains are packed and say, “The simple reality is that people didn’t use it; they didn’t have people on the trains.” I do not know what the government is looking at, but I see people on the trains. The Leader of the Opposition was out there on Saturday night and saw thousands

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of people on the trains. To say, “No-one is using the trains; we’re going to cut the service”, and then say, “Maybe we’ll retain it, I don’t know, maybe if people use it”, shows how pathetic the government’s policy process is. Honestly, I do not know how the government is being run—well, I think I do. The Premier is there making it up as the government goes along. The backbench just follows whatever. I must say it is one of the most loyal, if not crazy—I will not say that—brave may be the word. Courageous! It is courageous when backbenchers do not know what is coming and they are there following the leader who says, “We’ll cancel the trains this week; I don’t know. Vincent is going to be in, Vincent is going to be out; I don’t know.” The government is all over the place and I ask the Premier to think about some decisions before he goes out there. It is not about making decisions; it is about making the right decision. It is about making decisions that benefit the state for future generations; not just for tomorrow because, as I said, everyone is waking up to the Premier. Everyone has woken up to him and it is time that this backbench woke up to him too.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale) [4.41 pm]: I also rise to speak to the amendment before us, which talks about the disastrous summer of discontent presided over by the Barnett government. Of course, towards the end of last year we would have all gone to various school graduations. Just imagine if the government had not been so sneaky and deceitful and had announced the additional educational cuts before our graduations. I am not sure whether some of our Liberal Party colleagues would have got out of those high schools and primary schools in one piece. This government not only presided over \$220 million of educational cuts in the last couple of years, but also on the last day of the school year, when the principals had determined their timetables and their budgeting for 2015, what did the Minister for Education announce? Further cuts! Cuts to 184 schools. These are additional cuts to the \$220 million: Girrawheen Senior High School, around \$1 million additional cuts; Gilmore College, around half a million dollars; in my colleague the member for Gosnells’ electorate, Southern River College, around half a million dollars or just under —

Ms S.F. McGurk: John Curtin, \$400 000.

Dr A.D. BUTI: John Curtin, around \$400 000; Halls Creek District High School, around \$470 000. The Premier in his Premier’s Statement today talked about what his government is doing for Aboriginal people. He said the government is doing fantastic things for Aboriginal people, but in Halls Creek the high school with predominantly Indigenous people is losing an additional \$470 000-odd. In the *Halls Creek Herald* on 4 February 2015, Gerard Willett writes —

IT’S OFFICIAL \$471,000 CUT FROM HALLS CREEK DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL BUDGET

He ends the article by saying —

In the long run cuts like these will ultimately affect our childrens education in some way.

That is right. The educational cuts that this government has instigated are going to affect the long-term choices that all our students and all our young people face. The government can stand up today and the Premier can recite media releases, but the fact is that on the last day of the school term in 2014, Minister Collier announced further cuts than the \$220 million educational cuts. How deceitful, how sneaky can the government be, to announce those cuts? How can a school operate by having a million dollars, or \$500 000, taken out on the last day of term? There will be 184 schools even worse off than they were. This student-centred funding model is an absolute disaster. All the Treasurer ever does is laugh. Members opposite have presided over the local government debacle and we know that they are running 100 miles in reverse by telling their local ratepayers, their local constituents, there will be no boundary change. The government is a disgrace!

Mr P.T. Miles interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The member for Wanneroo is miles away. Just forget about it, mate, you have never been in this place; your mind is always away, you never talk about anything sensible.

The Treasurer has laughed over the money spent on the local government amalgamation debacle. He is laughing over the fact that \$220 million has been ripped out of the public education system, and that 184 schools received additional cuts on the last day of the school year. How can that be a laughing matter, Treasurer? How that can be a laughing matter is beyond me.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Because it’s wrong.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Treasurer, I go to my local schools and they are telling me what they have to endure. For instance, under the student-centred funding model, if an Indigenous student who is receiving funding under Schools Plus leaves that school, that is \$55 000 taken out of that school.

Dr M.D. Nahan: The student left.

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Dr A.D. BUTI: The Treasurer, who does not really understand how the funding model works, will say, “Of course that money should follow the student.” The fact is that the school still needs to operate. If two students leave, that is over \$100 000 out of that school; that is one teacher. Is the Treasurer going to tell me because two students left, that school should now have one fewer teacher? Is that what he is telling me: if two students leave, that school should have \$100 000 less? Little does he know, because he does not know anything about reality, that a school in my electorate has a 40 per cent transient student population per year. So is the Treasurer telling me that based on the census, which is done only twice a year, if a student happens to enrol a day later, the school just has to suck it up? Bad luck that they might have 10 or 20 students more. Hard luck if there is a 40 per cent transient population. Maybe the people the Treasurer represents do not have this experience, but in some areas there is a massive transient student population, and his solution is to laugh. No wonder the budget is in a mess, because the Treasurer just sits there and laughs at the figures. The member for Victoria Park talked about a comedy show. I think that the Treasurer must have a comedy show on his laptop, because he is always laughing.

Ms R. Saffioti: He is nervous.

Dr A.D. BUTI: As my colleagues say, it is a nervous laugh. It is probably a nervous laugh. The Barnett government has decimated the public education system with cuts of over \$220 million and then, on the last day of the school term 2014, it announced additional cuts affecting 184 schools. Surely, the government knew those figures before the last day of term. Surely, it did not just arrive on the desk of the Minister for Education on the last day of term. You are sneaky, you are deceitful, you are dishonest and you will be condemned. You stand condemned and this motion should be agreed to by the house.

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton — Treasurer) [4.48 pm]: I would like to make a few comments and I just want to congratulate the Premier on his speech. It is obvious that he has the people on the opposite side a bit nervous, deservedly so. They came through to today and saw what happened in Queensland and before that in Victoria and Canberra and said, “All we have to do is just rabbit on and we will get into government in two years.” But that will not happen; members opposite have to do something and have to stand for something. The member for Victoria Park obviously spent the break reading past writings of mine again. Once more he is sitting there quoting what I wrote 10 years ago. I congratulate him on that. It is pretty useful; he is imbuing and gathering in the rhetoric and the stance of being a real fiscal conservative—the only one on the other side. He is playing that role, but does he have the ticker? Does he have the ticker to do it?

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Victoria Park!

Dr M.D. NAHAN: We sit here on this side and listen over and again to what these people say and they say that they want us to not incur debt, but build everything under the sun. Has the opposition ever come up with a single program other than Elizabeth Quay, which it promised in 2008? I think it was called “Dubai on the Swan” at that time and it was the only savings the opposition had. It also had Metronet. Do members remember the spaghetti junction of trains that were to go everywhere, the calculations for which the opposition could not add up? Every time opposition members speak, they want more and more spending on their electorates and everywhere else. In fact, last year the Leader of the Opposition criticised us for not getting iron ore prices right. Of course, he claimed he would get them right. He thought \$90 was a good price, but he got that one wrong. The next time the Leader of the Opposition gives us a lecture about iron ore prices, I will send it to my mates at the economic conference and they can put give it to the comedy festival.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members on my left, I protected you against any interruption. I want to hear the Treasurer. You need to listen to him just like I listened to you.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I will touch on a couple of things but will turn first to education. People are voting with their feet in their thousands by moving to the public system. We are the only state in the country in which the public system’s market share, the proportion of children in the public sector versus the private sector is increasing. The opposition thinks that is doom and gloom. It has told the public, students and parents that they do not know what they are doing and that the public system is a disaster, but they are coming to the public sector in droves. Why are they doing that? They are doing so because we have systematically improved all elements of schools. I refer to school buildings, the independent public schools scheme, the introduction of a new curriculum, the transition of year 7s, the fact that we have the highest paid teachers in the country and that there is a teacher in front of every classroom. Did all that exist when the Leader of the Opposition was the education minister? No!

Mr J.M. Francis: The teachers went on strike.

Mr Roger Cook; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Rita Saffioti; Dr Tony Buti; Dr Mike Nahan; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Paul Miles; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Chris Tallentire

Dr M.D. NAHAN: They went on strike! We have made a massive investment in the education system in the public sector and people are responding in their droves by the thousands, but the opposition sees that as a disaster. Last year, there was the “Give a Gonski” campaign. The opposition and their union mates had little flags and wore uniforms and they argued that we should join the Gonski system. Of course, under Gonski Western Australia would not have received additional money, because we are already paid over the odds per student. That is why New South Wales and Victoria got a big bundle of money and got swindled into it—there was no funding in it. We were not going to get any funding because we already spend 30 per cent more than the proposed target under Gonski. It was basically a move to student-centred funding, similar to the one we have implemented. The member for Armadale thinks that that is a disaster. It is identical to the Gonski model.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I am calling the member for Armadale. I have heard his interjections several times and he is being called for the second time.

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Albany, do you want to be called?

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I call the member for Albany for the first time. The member should not disrespect the Chair.

Point of Order

Dr A.D. BUTI: Mr Acting Speaker, can I please ask for your guidance? If a member on his feet directs a question to or makes a statement about another member, the general practice is to allow that member to respond. On precedent in this debate, the member for Swan Hills constantly interjected and now I am being called. Can we have some consistency?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.M. Britza): Yes, Absolutely. First of all, member for Armadale, I asked for your permission as to whether the member for Swan Hills could interject and you took it. The interjections from members of the opposition have been far greater. When you were on your feet, I tried to give you as much leeway as possible. You have interjected more than once. I asked the minister if he would take interjections and he said no. That is why I have done it. I have let you interject three times, but after the third interjection, I finally said that that is enough.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Can I ask another question? What capacity does a member have to defend himself if another member is directing something towards him?

The ACTING SPEAKER: That is not really a question. You have a right to do that when you get up to speak. I ask the minister to please conclude his remarks.

Debate Resumed

Dr M.D. NAHAN: A member opposite made the statement that there have been large cuts to the education system; indeed, we have repeatedly heard the opposition say that. There have been no cuts; the figure of \$200 million is fiction. What happened is that we moved to a student-centred funding model in which the funding goes to the student—the more students, the more money. We cut the allocations based on an estimate early last year. We asked the schools what they thought their enrolments were going to be and we gave an estimate of what they would get. Towards the end of the year, we did another cut. Some schools had a lower attendance rate than they had expected and so they got less money. Some schools got more money—the opposition has forgotten about those. The pool of money did not change—there was no cut to the pool, and the Leader of the Opposition knows that. Some schools do have variable attendance. Some schools’ enrolments are on a systemic decline, which is a real problem. South Fremantle Senior High School has been on a systematic decline—I do not know whether it is now—as has Hamilton Senior High School. We are trying to address that by refreshing the school, providing capital and putting more operating expenditure into the school. I might add that we are doing that in a safe Labor electorate; we are looking after the whole education system. That was never done under Labor. The idea that there have been massive cuts is false. Some schools are getting less funding because they have fewer students. Labor is asking that we put money into schools irrespective of the number students and irrespective of the special needs of the students. I go back to the point that the opposition can complain as much as it wants, but the truth is that Western Australian parents and teachers are voting with their feet in the thousands for the reforms that we have made in the education system. We will stand by our record. Members opposite can get a few journalists to regurgitate the \$200 million worth of cuts, but it is fiction.

Mr Roger Cook; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Rita Saffioti; Dr Tony Buti; Dr Mike Nahan; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Paul Miles; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Chris Tallentire

Another issue is rising unemployment. The opposition leader made a fundamental mistake not too long ago when he jumped on the latest monthly data and said that it was a disaster and that unemployment was stringing up. He said, "It is terrible! Look at what the Barnett government has done." The next month, the unemployment rate in Western Australia went up and then the unemployment rate went down. In fact, year on year the employment growth rate is 2.9 per cent, which is three times the rate of the nation as a whole. Jobs growth actually exceeds population growth. Opposition members are out there desperately grasping every little distorted data to be negative. The reality is that despite going through a major transition in the economy, Western Australia has the highest employment growth rate in the country, the lowest unemployment rate, the highest participation rate, the highest wage rates and the highest population growth rate, but the opposition sees that as negative. The Western Australian electorate does not and it sees it for what it is for. As for the *Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement*, we have been hit with a precipitous drop in iron ore royalties. The price dropped by 50 per cent, but volumes are up. The opposition argued that we should have foreseen this. Logically, we should have gone to Atlas Iron, Brockman Mining, FMG and everybody else—we should have predicted that—but that is Labor. It thinks it can do that—let it do it. I suppose we should have also predicted the drop in oil prices. No-one else did, but we should have been clairvoyant. What we should be rated and judged on—and we will be—is how we respond. Of course, they would have liked us, facing precipitous drops in revenue, to slam on the brakes, to lay people off and to stop projects. We did not. We continue with our capital works program and we continue with the delivery of health and education across the board. However, we are trimming our expenditure. The member for Victoria Park said that our expenditure went up by 4.4 per cent in the mid-term review, but that is because we are using \$120 million for voluntary redundancies. If that is taken out, it is the lowest expenditure growth in 10 years. The underlying wage rate growth is the lowest in the public sector in Western Australia in 10 years. It is half of what it was under the Labor Party.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for West Swan.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: We will be judged in two years' time not by what the Labor Party says; it does not count.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for West Swan!

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The Labor Party is just noise in the wind. We will be judged by how we respond to the drop in revenue and we will respond well. One of the major issues confronting us, which the former opposition leader responded to well, was the issue of GST revenue. Have we heard that mob opposite say anything? No, nothing. Do we know why? I suspect they are waiting for us not to achieve anything on it, and if we do, they will jump over the top saying, "Me, too!" They did not go to their Labor mates in Canberra and say, "Help us do something." Eric Ripper did. Eric Ripper went to Rudd and Gillard and demanded that they do something about it and help him. Julia Gillard as Prime Minister did not achieve anything, but Eric Ripper tried. He went and knocked on the door and said, "Do something."

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for West Swan, you are on two calls.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Eric Ripper came to us and said, "We will work with you." What have current Labor members done? Nothing. They are useless. We will work on and address this issue with the Liberal Party federally and resolve the misallocation of our revenue. It is not just the GST. All states, except New South Wales, have been living off Western Australia, particularly from iron ore, oil and gas royalties, for some time. We transfer \$20 billion a year in net revenue from this state to Canberra. We deserve not just our fair share, but a share to put into the fastest growing economy in the nation. We the Liberal Party will lead that debate. The Labor Party is not in it; it is irrelevant.

Late-night trains will be changed. With capital works, one of the biggest challenges we have in this state is that the construction phase of the mining sector is coming off.

Point of Order

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Could the Treasurer just repeat what he said about late-night trains being changed? Could he just restate that?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order, thank you, member for West Swan.

Debate Resumed

Mr Roger Cook; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Rita Saffioti; Dr Tony Buti; Dr Mike Nahan; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Paul Miles; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Chris Tallentire

Dr M.D. NAHAN: One of the biggest challenges we have in this state is that we have had a massive construction boom in the mining sector, with 65 000 to 70 000 people employed. That is coming off, not precipitously, but it is declining. The question is: where will those people find jobs? Some of them will fly in, fly out back to New Zealand, to replace and rebuild Christchurch, and some will go to New South Wales and other places. Some will come to Perth and the revamped regional centres to look for work. Where will they find work?

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Albany!

Dr M.D. NAHAN: One place they will find work is in the public-sector generated construction projects. The Labor Party condemns our construction build. When the Labor Party condemns and criticises us for borrowing for it, it condemns the project. There will be 28 000 jobs created by those projects.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Which ones?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Go through the list.

Mr W.J. Johnston: No, you tell me.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Go through the list, member for Cannington. If he looks out the window on his way to Parliament, he will be able to see them.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, order! Members on the opposition side, the member for West Swan has said she had difficulty hearing the Treasurer, so shall we all allow the Treasurer to conclude his remarks.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: There will be 28 000 construction jobs created by the public sector.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, I call you for the first time.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: There will be 28 000 jobs, many of them held by union people; many of them held by the people who put the Labor members in their seats—union jobs. Are Labor members denying those?

Mr P.C. Tinley: What are you talking about?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The members opposite are the Labor Party. Do I have to tell them? They are owned and staffed by union —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for West Swan.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: One of the things we have, which the Labor Party condemns, is a massive capital works program building stadiums, schools, hospitals and roads, which it is estimated is creating 28 000 additional jobs. The Labor Party is in denial of that fact, but the people out there are not. When they go by Elizabeth Quay, Perth Stadium, Perth City Link or the roads, they see people employed.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, I call you for a second time. You are persistently calling out.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: That is one reason that employment growth is so high and the unemployment rate in this state is so low.

Another issue we are addressing is the broadening of the economy; the Premier mentioned it. It would be nice, and we would not have to do so much, if we had not lost the Inpex project. The Labor Party does not like talking about that. There were 3 000 jobs that went to Darwin. It irks me to see that we have lost our fastest growth rate amongst the states and territories to the Northern Territory. That is because of the loss of Inpex. The Inpex project is increasing the gross domestic product of the Northern Territory by 20 per cent.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr Roger Cook; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Rita Saffioti; Dr Tony Buti; Dr Mike Nahan; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Paul Miles; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Chris Tallentire

Dr M.D. NAHAN: That is 3 000 jobs and a \$3.5 billion injection into the economy a year.

Mr A.P. Jacob: That is exactly correct.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: It is exactly correct. Labor members can believe what they want, but the people of Western Australia know. The Labor Party might be in denial, but we lost Inpex. The Inpex project would suit us very well now. It would be in full swing, but the gift that Labor gave the Northern Territory keeps giving to the Northern Territory year after year. It would have been really nice. I heard the former minister from this place and now federal member of Parliament Alannah MacTiernan rabbiting on about having engineering jobs. We had many debates last term on another issue; that is, we worked in a bipartisan manner for 20 years to get the North West Shelf trains built and designed here. We did it. The third train on the North West Shelf was built and designed here. The expectation was that the fourth train would be. When Labor was in government, it gave that away; it allowed it to go overseas.

Mr W.J. Johnston: That's not true.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: It did. That is exactly right.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Train four—not train three.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes, train four left.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Train four was done here and train five left.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: No. The reason is that Labor in power, under the pressure of Gary Gray, who worked for Woodside at the time, was convinced that it was too costly to work for Woodside.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The Treasurer has just made an allegation against a federal member of Parliament. He will have to substantiate that false allegation. I also point out that the member for Brand was not in the Parliament and I do not even believe he was working for Woodside at the time the member is discussing.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Cannington. Resume your seat, thank you, Treasurer, as I have not responded to the point of order. There is nothing in our standing orders about referring to federal members of Parliament, so that is not a point of order.

Debate Resumed

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Labor in government, even though it made a lot of noise about metal jobs and other things, allowed that project to go offshore and the team that was here to build the train dissipated; it left. When other projects like Pluto and Gorgon came, we had nothing to base it on. Alannah MacTiernan was a senior member of the government of the time. She participated in the choice and the decision not to force the train to be built here. That is a legacy that we will not be able to replace; it has gone.

Several members interjected.

Withdrawal of Remark

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Cannington, can you withdraw that remark, please.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I did not speak. I did not say anything, so I cannot withdraw anything.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Willagee.

Mr P.C. Tinley: Oh, you've got me—bingo!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please withdraw.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I withdraw.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am not canvassing the ruling, but I am interested to get guidance for the future. The minister can say things that are not true, but the member for Willagee has to withdraw the truth. I am trying to establish the parameters here.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, if you are perpetuating what was said—the comment from the member for Willagee that cast imputations on that person, the minister—I might have to actually ask you to withdraw as well.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: If I have said something that was inappropriate, I unreservedly withdraw.

Debate Resumed

Mr Roger Cook; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Rita Saffioti; Dr Tony Buti; Dr Mike Nahan; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Paul Miles; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Chris Tallentire

Dr M.D. NAHAN: This will be an important year for government in Western Australia. The Premier has mapped out a very detailed agenda. The real question is: what do members opposite stand for? We know what they stand for—more spending, and spending does require funding; no more funding sources; and more funding on education, even though we are spending record amounts. What do members opposite stand for? Is it the goods and services tax? It is not there. Is it broadening the economy? It is not there. What do they stand for? Nothing, nothing, nothing! They hope that this government will fall over. They will sit over there on the opposition benches and cast a small shadow and they will be relegated to another four years of oblivion. That is because members opposite stand for nothing. The Liberal–National government will get on and provide good government in Western Australia.

MR P.T. MILES (Wanneroo — Parliamentary Secretary) [5.12 pm]: I want to contribute a couple of minutes to the debate. In 2008 when I won the seat of Wanneroo there were a few issues around, one of which was that the previous Labor government had not funded schools in an appropriate way. I think the Leader of the Opposition was the Minister for Education at the time.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro, you are sailing close to the wind.

Mr P.T. MILES: One of the schools in the Wanneroo electorate at that time was Neerabup Primary School, which was actually half a school. It did not have a staffroom or amenities for staff, or a canteen. All it had was an administration block, one teaching block and 13 demountable classrooms, which were pretty disgusting. One of the first things the Liberal–National government did was to fund the completion of that school. It now has library facilities and all the associated equipment that should be in a school. The Liberal–National government not only did that, but also air-conditioned schools in the metropolitan area. The Liberal Party and the National Party funded that program and made sure that every new school built in WA will come with not only air conditioning, but also electronic whiteboards. The wet areas in schools are virtually halls; they are no longer simply wet areas but are carpeted, air-conditioned and fitted with TV screens and all the rest of it. We did that following our election to government in 2008. We also built two brand-new primary schools at a cost of \$16 million each, one in Tapping and one in Pearsall. Only last week or the week before, when children commenced school earlier this year, the Premier and the Minister for Education opened up a brand-new secondary college costing \$30 million. It is absolutely state of the art. If members opposite want to know what it is called, it is Joseph Banks Secondary College. The Liberal–National government built that school ahead of the completion date promised by the Labor Party in 2008, and already it has 450 students. People are taking their children out of private schools nearby to attend that school. I now get correspondence from private schools saying that this school is poaching their children. That goes to show that this government has been delivering on education over and above what the private sector has been able to do.

I consistently visit schools in my electorate and although some principals might say that they have lost a bit of funding for this and that, overall they understand the bigger picture and they deal with it. One of the other issues in schools is the chaplaincy service, which under this government has been well and truly picked up for funding. We know the funding was reduced slightly by the Feds before Christmas. This government picked up that funding shortfall. All the schools in my electorate that asked for funding for the chaplaincy service have received funding and they have youth care workers doing the chaplaincy work. The school chaplaincy program is highly sought after and required in some parts of my electorate. Teachers like going to schools in my electorate. They like the schools, which are all well and truly funded. Teachers do not have any issues from that point of view, which is great to see.

The other big issue that this government fixed in my electorate relates to the fact that when I came into office in 2008, one bus service ran down Wanneroo Road. We now have three bus services and buses run at 15-minute intervals. Many people now utilise those services to travel to the Joondalup bus and train station so they can make their connections to travel either further north to jobs at Clarkson, Ocean Keys, or into the city if they are working in an office. I am very excited that this year this government will be building the multistorey car park in Joondalup at Edgewater, because a lot of people in my electorate use that facility. It is an important facility that, again, is a commitment by this government that is being delivered. When we hear the negative comments put out by the opposition all the time, they do not resonate at all in my electorate. People are very happy that they elected a Liberal person in the seat of Wanneroo and that they do not still have a Labor person.

MR S.K. L'ESTRANGE (Churchlands) [5.17 pm]: Members, Labor is the summer, the autumn, the winter and the spring of discontent. This motion is appalling. It is appalling because it ignores the facts. It ignores the truth. Labor wants Western Australia to fail. Labor needs the Western Australian public to think all is doom and gloom. It wants the Western Australian public to think that this government has failed, is failing and is going

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nowhere. Why is that? It is pretty simple. It is because Labor members hate being in opposition. That is all this motion is. It is an absolute beat-up. It is a self-interested, self-focused, self-motivated beat-up—nothing more, nothing less. Members opposite want the Western Australian public to think that this government is not doing a good job so that they can sneak into power at some point in the future. That is all they are doing. They are actually offering nothing by way of improving the state. They are offering nothing by way of appealing to the Western Australian public with some really interesting and innovative policy suggestions. Labor is doing nothing. It is trying to sneak its way back into government. It was interesting listening to some of the members opposite. When I listened to the member for Rockingham, he said two things. He asked, “When will good government start in this state?”

Mr M. McGowan: No, I didn't say that.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Sorry, it was Roger Cook.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Albany, I will have to call you again. Member for Butler, order, please!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Sorry, it was Roger Cook. I retract that last statement and apologise.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Use the member's electorate, please, member for Churchlands.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: It was the member for Kwinana. The member for Kwinana asked when good government would start in this state. He said that this government has lost its way. I do not know where that member has been, because he has clearly not seen the hospitals being completed or the infrastructure and road projects that are underway or have been completed. He has clearly not seen the rail projects that we are embarking upon, in particular the sinking of the railway line in Perth. He has not seen the education reform that has taken place, and that is the absolute blueprint for best case education reform in this country. He has not seen the efforts being put into the arts and the way that the Western Australian people have come onboard in their droves with this government's efforts to put the arts front and centre as part of how we enjoy this state.

Then we heard the Leader of the Opposition focus on the projected \$1.3 billion deficit. He sort of quipped that we knew the goods and services tax would be a problem. The issue here is bipartisan: we have a vertical fiscal imbalance that is way out of control. The Premier and the Treasurer of this government have gone to the commonwealth government and said that this must be fixed. We simply cannot have a situation in which \$3 billion-plus in revenues each year is no longer there; it was there when Labor was in government but it did nothing with it. This is the “Labor of discontent”. All it was able to achieve in its term of government was discontent because it did not do anything. It did not motivate the people of Western Australia or strive for excellence in what it was doing. It did not build much. I do not know what it did. Now the Labor Party sits in opposition and tries to scare the Western Australian people. It thinks that the way back into government is to try to sneakily convince the Western Australian public that all is doom and gloom. But it is not doom and gloom; it is very positive.

We heard the shadow Treasurer—the wolf in sheep's clothing, the wolf of Harvest Terrace, that economic conservative. We remember him. The economic conservative was preaching the virtues of sound fiscal management. However, moving into the last election—we all recall it—Labor was going to push out to all the people that magnificent multicoloured spaghetti net even though it was \$1 billion underfunded. That was just one thing. Where else was the Labor Party going to take the Western Australian public? By the way, that project would never have worked. The Labor Party would have had to bulldoze houses all through North Perth and get them out of the way. It was an absolute joke! Members remember it.

Mr M. McGowan: That is MAX light rail.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: What did the Leader of the Opposition call it? No, this was Labor's spaghetti net. I remember seeing it. Labor tried to make it look like the London Underground, but it was aboveground. It was not underground.

Mr J.E. McGrath: Metronet.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: It was Metronet, but it looked like multicoloured spaghetti. This aspect that the Labor Party is fiscally conservative is a default argument that it goes to, but it has no proof. The Labor government also had an extra \$3 billion coming into its coffers each year that this government does not have. Again, the opposition is focusing on the negative and this notion that the Western Australian public is dumb. It thinks that it can kid them. While Labor Party was in government, it did nothing and this government

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does everything, but the Labor Party thinks it can kid the public into thinking it is doom and gloom. We know it is not.

Then we heard the member for West Swan. She said that this Premier cannot —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Albany, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: — work with anyone.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Churchlands! When the person in the Chair is speaking, you stop. Member for Albany and member for Warnbro, I call you to order for a second time.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The member for West Swan said that this Premier cannot work with anyone to deliver change. Again, that is another false statement. Clearly, that is not correct. Through the student-centred funding model and reforms, this Premier and cabinet have embarked on the greatest education reform that this nation has ever seen. The Department of Education is probably the biggest department in Western Australia and I think every kid turned up to school. I think they all had a teacher. I think the schools all had desks and seats and rooms available. I remember one of my schools in my electorate was a bit concerned that one of their buildings would not be built before Christmas. I went out there and knocked on the principal's door and I asked whether the building was up and running. She said that it was. I asked whether there were any issues. She said that the landscaping was not complete, but the kids were in the classroom and it was all on track. I asked whether she was happy. She said that she was and I said, "Fantastic." I have no doubt that those stories are replicated throughout the state of Western Australia.

The doom and gloom opposition is getting Labor Party members into our electorates and saying, "Quick, stir the pot. Get onto the P&Cs and tell them it is all doom and gloom. Tell them that this government's going to fail. Quick, get on to your local member and harass them to death." We said, "Everybody calm down and we will go and check the facts." That is what we did, and the facts were that everything was working and everything is fine. That is from a Premier and a cabinet and a Treasurer and a Minister for Education all working together with the department and all the administrators and the teachers to get the job done.

Mr P.B. Watson: You're so out of touch.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The member for Albany wants to talk about being out of touch. The member really needs to listen to some of these debates because the education argument is just one argument; there are many, many more.

The doomsayers over there said Elizabeth Quay would never work. When I go to the Floreat Ladies' Probus Club—there are about 60 members—the ladies say that they think that this will be terrific. I say that of course it will be terrific because their grandchildren will have jobs. This will keep industry and the big players in town on the Terrace. It will revitalise the city; it will connect the city with the river and give our state more jobs.

Mr W.J. Johnston: I hope you believe that.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The member for Cannington is another doomsayer. Look at him. He says that it is all doom and gloom. I do not know what the member for Cannington has managed to achieve in Cannington, but give it a crack. Have a go! He can just keep whingeing and complaining to try to sneak his way back into government, but the facts will speak for themselves.

The Premier went on to say that this is a year in which we will consolidate. The opposition sees that as a negative—surprise, surprise!—because it sees everything as a negative. That is not a negative. That is saying that we are building this state and we will consolidate what we are building and prepare for the next phase. That is a good strategic planning process. The opposition finds that hard to understand because all it wants to do is be negative.

I will conclude. The "Labor of discontent" has said that it will continue to be the bogeyman to the people of Western Australia. It will treat the Western Australian public as though they are naive and scared children. Members opposite—they are not. They will be a wake-up to the opposition because they are aspirational, hardworking, positive, industrious and focused and they want their children and this state to succeed. They see this government is doing that. That is why this ridiculous amendment the member for Kwinana has moved today will be voted down.

Mr Roger Cook; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Rita Saffioti; Dr Tony Buti; Dr Mike Nahan; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Paul Miles; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Chris Tallentire

MR N.W. MORTON (Forrestfield) [5.29 pm]: This afternoon I will keep brief my comments on this amendment before the house. I want to speak specifically about education and the reference to education cuts. I find myself feeling a little disappointed. I do not know why. I think I was expecting more from the opposition given that it has had a couple of months to do some homework and research. The contributions to date have been lacklustre—maybe with the exception of the member for Kwinana. I think over the holidays he probably sat down and did a bit of research, so I will give him a bit of credit. I found the rest of the contributions lacking. We hear members opposite rabbit on about education cuts. These are not cuts. It cannot be said that an increasing budget is a cut. That is not logical. Members opposite are so backward—if they were in power, poor old Hansard would probably be chiselling away at stone tablets!

There will be a record spend of \$4.58 billion in education this financial year, and that will continue to increase. That is a 61 per cent increase in public education funding since 2008. At the same time, there has been a 16 per cent increase in student numbers in the public system. That shows a large divergence between the amount of funding within schools and the increase in the student population at the same time. Students are receiving extra allocations with this student-centred funding model for things such as Aboriginality and remote locations across the state. We all know that it costs more to deliver things such as services and professional development in remote locations. Of course the state has factored that in. Schools in remote locations will receive extra allocations for students.

The socio-economic index is also a factor that is taken into consideration, and so it should be, as well as students for whom English is a second language. These are all positive things. I ask people to argue against the merits of a student-centred funding model that delivers extra funding per student for those kinds of allocations. It is a transparent funding model. Something I heard for years when I worked in education was the lack of understanding within schools, particularly within school administrations, on the way the Department of Education funded similar schools for example. Under this model the allocation is transparent, as it is based on student numbers and student needs. I do not think that can be argued.

Five hundred and fifty new teachers have been employed in the education system this year, which is a fantastic outcome. Some of my colleagues have already pointed out today that it should not go unnoted that this government has put a teacher in front of every student enrolled in a public school this year, and we have done it for years. That is something that the Labor Party failed to do when it was in power. Even worse, the current Leader of the Opposition was the Minister for Education at the time. I was a teacher during his reign as minister and I know how bad it was and how bad he was as the Minister for Education.

As I said, I will keep my comments brief. I want to touch on independent public schools. This is a fantastic reform in public education. This year, about 70 per cent of staff and students in the system will operate under IPS. That is an outstanding outcome for the system. The one-size-fits-all approach to funding and to schools is being done away with and this new system is being adopted. It is also being looked at federally as the model of best practice. I do not think that can be argued against as a reform in public education.

Thirty-seven new schools have been built in a rising population, and there were 29 new builds to accommodate year 7 students transitioning into high school. In the member for Churchlands' contribution, he spoke about school principals. Over the past couple of weeks I made a point of going out to schools in my electorate, particularly the high schools, to speak with the principals. These are their words, not mine, but I will repeat them: this year has been the smoothest start to a school year that they can remember. That is an unqualified statement from them. These are professional people who have worked for a number of years in the system. This is the smoothest start to a school year that they can remember. That is testament to the way that this government has undertaken reform. It is testament to the way this government prioritises funding in education and more so the needs of our students and our future leaders.

I also mention the introduction of child and parent centres. I spoke about it not being a cut but a reallocation. That is exactly what it is—it is a reallocation to early needs so that students can get the support needed before they get to high school. I have worked in high schools with 14 and 15-year-olds. There are fewer students in high school who require the remedies used in the early years. We all know that if children do not engage in the earlier years, there is a higher propensity for them to disengage once they reach high school. If a good government can accommodate that and look at early intervention —

Opposition members interjected.

Mr N.W. MORTON: I am starting to hear some squeals from members opposite, but I put the case: try to argue against intervention at an early level to meet the needs of our students—those who are most at risk and those who are the most vulnerable in our communities. This is what this Liberal–National government is delivering to Western Australian students.

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In finishing, there has been a record spend, teachers are in front of every classroom, we have the highest paid teachers in the country, and all this intervention at an earlier age is occurring so that we can have great young people and great citizens to contribute to Western Australia. I think that is good government and it is a good outcome for education.

Division

Amendment put and a division taken, the Deputy Speaker casting her vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (20)

Dr A.D. Buti	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr P. Papalia	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mr R.H. Cook	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr P.C. Tinley
Ms J. Farrer	Mr M. McGowan	Ms M.M. Quirk	Mr P.B. Watson
Ms J.M. Freeman	Ms S.F. McGurk	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr M.P. Murray	Ms R. Saffioti	Mr D.A. Templeman (<i>Teller</i>)

Noes (36)

Mr P. Abetz	Mr J.H.D. Day	Mr A.P. Jacob	Mr N.W. Morton
Mr F.A. Alban	Ms W.M. Duncan	Dr G.G. Jacobs	Dr M.D. Nahan
Mr C.J. Barnett	Ms E. Evangel	Mr S.K. L'Estrange	Mr D.C. Nalder
Mr I.C. Blayney	Mr J.M. Francis	Mr R.S. Love	Mr J. Norberger
Mr I.M. Britza	Mrs G.J. Godfrey	Mr W.R. Marmion	Mr D.T. Redman
Mr G.M. Castrilli	Mr B.J. Grylls	Mr J.E. McGrath	Mr A.J. Simpson
Mr V.A. Catania	Dr K.D. Hames	Ms L. Mettam	Mr M.H. Taylor
Mr M.J. Cowper	Mrs L.M. Harvey	Mr P.T. Miles	Mr T.K. Waldron
Ms M.J. Davies	Mr C.D. Hatton	Ms A.R. Mitchell	Mr A. Krsticevic (<i>Teller</i>)

Pair

Ms L.L. Baker

Mr R.F. Johnson

Amendment thus negatived.

Consideration Resumed

MR P.B. WATSON (Albany) [5.40 pm]: It gives me great pleasure today to respond to the Premier's Statement. However, I first want to thank the volunteer fire brigade members from Albany who helped to fight some of the fires. This list was given to me by Derek Jones from the City of Albany. The volunteers who assisted at Bullsbrook were Darren Prior, David Wettenhall and Gary Duncan from South Coast Brigade. The volunteers who assisted with the Boddington fires were Tash Korthuis, Heidi Smoker, Walter Van Dongen and Jonathon Colson from Highway Brigade; Shane Duncan, David Wettenhall, Christopher Myson, Tom Warner and Darren Prior from South Coast Brigade; Brian Green, Andy Roberts and Graham Briggs from King River Brigade; Peter Hart and Brian Hart from Redmond Brigade; and from Kalgan, Darryl Bradley, Matthew Akker, Graham Moncur, Graeme Wise, Graeme Poole, Tom Dinneen, Paul Trahair, Mitchell Cox, Kevin Bransby, Ray Hall and Tim Lowndes, who had two deployments. No request was made for the fires at Northcliffe.

I want to congratulate all our volunteer firefighters. They give up their time and put their lives on the line. In regional areas, we rely very much on volunteers. My wife and I have a shack at Windy Harbour. We have a lot of friends who are retired and live in Windy Harbour, and they could have lost everything in the fires. So, congratulations to everyone involved. It was a tremendous effort from many people not only in Western Australia, but also from over east. These people are the true heroes. We talk about knighting people but these people made a real team effort, and I congratulate them all.

I want to talk first about health services. There have been a few issues recently at Albany Health Campus. When the new health campus was being constructed, some of the residents who live nearby were concerned that not enough parking had been allocated for the new building. Despite assurances at the time, it has turned out that there is definitely not enough parking at the site. That has meant that for some time now, the residents of Andrews Street, which is next to the hospital, have had their quiet little street turned into a parking lot by workers at the hospital. The workers have been parking their cars bumper to bumper on both sides of the street, often blocking driveways, and on several occasions making it impossible for the residents to have their rubbish bins emptied. Despite the residents asking hospital management for help, nothing has been done to stop workers from parking in Andrews Street. I have had discussions with the City of Albany, and I am pleased that it has come up with a solution. The city intends to consult with residents, determine what parking restrictions should be put in place in Andrews Street, and put in place a parking plan for the area that the rangers will be able to

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enforce. That will mean that the residents will have their street to themselves again. It is a pity that with the construction of the new hospital, a little more thought was not put into planning for the parking, rather than putting it onto local government to find a solution, as often happens. However, I do not know what will happen to the people who park in that street. I went to Andrews Street the other day, and 20 cars were parked in that street. Those people will obviously park somewhere else, and that will create a problem in that area, until the hospital and the Department of Health make adequate parking available.

Last week, I was contacted by a constituent whose daughter had given birth at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women to a baby who was five weeks premature. After 17 days at King Edward, the hospital made an arrangement with the Royal Flying Doctor Service to have the baby transferred to Albany on a Wednesday. Everything was in place and set to go, and the mother was then told that the transfer could not go ahead because there was no available bed at Albany Health Campus. On the following Monday morning, the staff at King Edward contacted Albany Health Campus three times to find out whether a bed was available, and they got no response. It was then decided that mum and baby should be discharged and flown to Albany with the Royal Flying Doctor Service to be cared for with the help of a home nurse. However, when they contacted the hospital, the hospital said that the funding for the nursery had been cut. I know of another mother who had a similar experience at King Edward and was told that no bed would be available at Albany Health Campus for two weeks. When she asked why, she was told by the staff that the nursery at Albany Health Campus had been subject to funding cuts.

Another constituent, Mr Frank Clifton, has been forced to move to Perth to have dialysis because the Albany dialysis service has reached its capacity of six chairs. Frank has to undergo dialysis three times a week, for five hours at a time. That means that he is away from his family, and that is getting him down, because he has a very close bond with his family and grandchildren. His wife passed away suddenly two years ago, so we can understand that being away from his family is placing an undue strain on him. He missed having Christmas with his family this year, and he missed celebrating his sixtieth birthday with his family last year, because he was having treatment in Perth. On top of this, Frank is staying in a place with no air-conditioning and is having a hard time coping with the heat, and that is making the situation even harder for him. His daughter, Eileen, has been told by the staff at Albany Health Campus that two more nurses are available for the dialysis unit, but they cannot start because there is no funding for them. Eileen and her brother are sorely missing their dad and are waiting for the expansion of the dialysis unit so that Frank can come back to Albany and undergo his dialysis there permanently.

They also asked me this question: why has the government got its priorities so wrong? It is not just Frank's children who are asking this question. A lot of my constituents are asking this question. It is seniors who are struggling to keep up with increasing government charges and the cutting of concessions. It is parents who are seeing the damage being done to our local schools by the \$2.15 million in funding cuts, and how P&Cs are now expected to be a major source of funding for the school, and principals now need to be more like corporate business managers than educators. It is parents whose kids are starting technical and further education this year, and young people who are undergoing an apprenticeship, who have seen TAFE fees skyrocket by up to 515 per cent over the last two years. They know that we need to keep TAFE fees affordable to ensure that people can get the skills they need for a better job or to start their working life. However, the question they all ask me is: why has the government got its priorities so wrong? It is easy for them to see what the priorities of this government are. The priorities of this government are things like Hale House, to accommodate the Premier and his army of highly paid spin doctors, and monuments like Elizabeth Quay. The priorities of this government are on wasting \$21 million to force local governments to merge, only for the Premier to get absolutely nowhere and then, as he puts it, run up the white flag; and to pay the multinational company Serco \$118.8 million to run a hospital that had no patients, and then hand Serco another \$16.7 million because of the continual delays and bungled management of the new Fiona Stanley Hospital.

The concerned parents at Little Grove Primary School contacted me on Monday to say they have lost their academic extension program, they will not be replacing the specialist music teacher when she is on leave, and they will not have a swimming carnival and an athletic carnival this year. There have also been cuts to the hours of education assistants, and to front office staff numbers. The member for Forrestfield said earlier that we need to provide extra facilities for people with special needs and people who have anger management problems. I am on the board of three schools in Albany. The areas that we have had to cut are assistants, special needs, remedial writing and reading, and anger management courses. Therefore, although the government may be promoting and making some things easier, it is making other things a lot harder. A parent from Albany Primary School emailed me to say that the school has lost its 30-plus year annual school production and cancelled the year 5 camp, along with what she describes as other important educational factors. Albany Primary School has held this production every year. It is performed at the Albany Entertainment Centre, and it is sold out for all three nights. These

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young people go along there and perform, and what it does for their confidence is just amazing. The funding for that production will be cut in the future, and I do not think it can come back under the current system. A parent at Flinders Park Primary School is concerned that a preprimary child is in a mixed class with kindergarten kids. She cannot understand how a class can operate with kids in their first year of schooling being taught together with kids in their second year who know about school and are eager to learn. Albany Senior High School is teaching a mixed class of years 11 and 12. I have been approached by a teacher who is teaching a class in that situation. He has had his year 12 students come to him and say, "We want to stay back after school. We feel that we are getting left behind." These are young kids who are studying to achieve the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank. They are kids who really want to do well at school but the poor old teacher has year 11s on one side and year 12s on the other. The year 11s are at a very important stage, as they will be going up to year 12 next year and studying to achieve the ATAR. The whole future of the year 12s depends on what happens in year 12. This teacher, who has been teaching for more than 30 years, is saying that it is just not on. In country areas students have no access to revision classes; they have to go to Perth. Perth children have access to revision classes but not children in country areas. There is no personal development for teachers in Albany; they have to go to Perth and of course have to be away from home and pay for a lot of it. There is no geography course at Albany Senior High School—the biggest school in Albany—and there is no economics course. The school is trying to but has been unable to get economics taught there.

This government has said that this education reform will improve everything for people. I had to laugh at some people on the other side who said, "Well, in my school everyone is happy." Members in very conservative seats will obviously hear from people what they want to hear. However, they would hear something very different if they went out to every school in their electorate. I have been to every school in my electorate and to all the parents and citizens associations. Not one school is happy. Do members know what a lot of people in Albany are doing? They are sending their kids to private schools. I was talking to a parent at the airport before I came to Perth for Parliament. He said, "You know, I reckon that the state government just wants to unload all the kids into the private system." We have some very good private schools in Albany, and I know about the growth of Great Southern Grammar School in Albany. It is a great school with great teachers and kids are going there in droves. Members opposite are saying that everyone is going to the public system, but it is just not happening in my electorate.

Getting off the track a bit, on Saturday night I caught up with my first running coach, John Gilmour. We talk about giving people awards. I am glad the Premier is in the chamber today. Johnny Gilmour is 95 years old and a Changi survivor. He said that there were 950 in his battalion and there are only seven left. Premier, four days a week this man goes out and coaches young kids. Every morning he gets up and runs for an hour around his backyard—as he said, much slower than previously. He has world records, although he did not take up running himself until a later age. However, when we talk about awards being handed out, I look at this man and say that he really deserves an award.

I now refer to liquor licensing. I have three glaring examples of how applications for a liquor licence in Albany, which would enhance our tourism sector and provide jobs, are often opposed by the police—just for the sake of opposing them. This opposition prolongs the life of an application more than necessary and only frustrates applicants by having them fight through more red tape. In 2011, the proprietor of Albany Rats Bar in Middleton Beach made an application for a small bar licence. Middleton Beach is the premier tourist precinct of Albany and also has the vast majority of tourism beds in Albany, with the former Esplanade Hotel site still waiting to be redeveloped. The area is crying out for something like this. The premises are only small with the capacity for 52 people all seated. It showcases premium local wines in addition to local products on a tapas menu. The proprietor described it in the application as a small intimate boutique bar operation with a focus on a low-volume, high-yield business for the quiet enjoyment of food and wine by small groups of people. The only objection to the application was a notice of intervention by the Commissioner of Police on the ground that if the particular application were granted and conditions were not imposed, public disorder or disturbances would result. Although the police cited a number of offences that had been recorded in the Middleton Beach area, no assessment was provided to show that these offences were alcohol related.

The second example from just last year is of the proprietors of Due South Tavern and Restaurant who made an application for a tavern licence for their premises to be built on the Albany waterfront precinct, which would provide a much-needed amenity for the area. No other location in Albany is able to provide a fully licensed venue right on the waterfront looking out on to Princess Royal Harbour with a quality restaurant featuring local wines and regional produce. According to the applicants, food would be at the centre of the venue's offering, with breakfast and dinner menus as well as a substantial bar menu from 11.00 am. There is also a small bottle shop within the venue that provides a retail opportunity for local wine labels that may struggle to secure shelf space in the outlets of major liquor stores. It is an essential outlet for the showcase and sale of regional wines

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that does not exist anywhere in Albany or in the great southern. Objections were raised by the Executive Director of Public Health and the Commissioner of Police. Again, the police sought to intervene in the application on the ground that if it were granted and conditions were not imposed, public disorder or disturbance would be likely to result. This time the number of offences in Albany was cited, and the number recorded as alcohol related is 9.5 in 2012, 11.9 in 2013 and 7.7 to the end of August 2014.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P.B. WATSON: These are not significantly different numbers from the proportions in similar parts of the state. After much time responding to the objection, the application was granted with some regional conditions, but only just in time for the venue to start ordering stock prior to the scheduled opening the week before the Anzac commemorations in November. I must admit that I worked very hard with Barry Sargeant to get the application through. I think he gets frustrated himself sometimes because he has to make a decision, and when the Commissioner of Police makes an objection, he has to take that into account. However, I am glad that we were able to sort something out so that everyone was happy. The director of Liquor Licensing stated in his decision for approval that he considers the Due South Tavern is ideally located to add vibrancy to the Albany waterfront and that the high-quality fit-out, combined with a lower risk manner of trade, creates a potential for the premises to become an iconic venue for Albany.

The third example is the best one for showing how ridiculous this process can be. Last year the proprietors of Garrison Restaurant at the National Anzac Centre made an application for a special facility licence. The applicants sought the licence for their restaurant premises to a maximum of 75 people and had packaged liquor in former products originating only from the great southern region. The restaurant provides a high-quality food and beverage experience at the National Anzac Centre to meet the expectations of national and international visitors and is integral to the tourism experience. Letters of support in a submission by the National Anzac Centre confirms that the National Anzac Centre represents the Australian and Western Australian governments' significant investment in the commemoration of the Anzac legend and Australia's role in the First World War; and by the City of Albany that the National Anzac Centre is the most significant investment in tourism infrastructure in the past decade that will form the cornerstone of the city's tourism marketing destination for the foreseeable future.

I must congratulate everyone involved in the National Anzac Centre. Members who have not seen this tremendous centre should take the opportunity to go along and see it.

The clock is ticking over, Madam Deputy Speaker. I will continue my comments straight after the suspension.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm

Before the break, I was talking about the licensing of the National Anzac Centre. Once again, the police intervened and said that if the application was granted and the conditions were not imposed, public disorder or nuisance would likely result. How anyone could come to that conclusion for a fine-dining restaurant in such a unique location in Albany is beyond me. The applicants decided to accept the conditions imposed by the police, which were publicised in a story on the front page of *The West Australian*, rather than delay approval of the application.

I have just had tea with friends—Greg Harvey, who has just celebrated his 50th birthday; his wife, Dee; and, their son, Jett. Welcome to the chamber tonight. I hope they enjoyed their meal!

In the last 12 months, some people in my electorate have been very prominent in the Premier's Australia Day Active Citizenship Awards. In the under 25s category, young Katie McAllister showed great leadership in her work to create and launch the Shout Out! Great Southern Speech and Debating Eisteddfod, which is a two-day region-wide speech and drama forum for all schools, complete with a specialist adjudicator. Katie also introduced an interschool speech and debating competition.

The Premier's Australia Day Active Citizenship Award went to Dawn Chadwick. Dawn has made a fantastic contribution to the community of Wellstead, one of my furthestmost constituencies, through her involvement with St John Ambulance, the volunteer fire brigade and the Wellstead Progress Association. Dawn travels to Albany one day a week to fill-in because of the shortage of volunteers for the St John Ambulance centre. She is also a committee member of the Great Southern Health Centre.

The active citizenship award for a community group for an event went to Albany Light Opera Company's "Let's Shine" variety concert. The annual "Let's Shine" variety concert helps to promote inclusion, friendship, team building and breaks down the barriers faced on a daily basis by community members who live with a disability. Importantly, the support of community members with a disability goes beyond this annual event because performers are encouraged to participate at social functions, other shows and theatre clean-up.

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Congratulations to Keith Bradbury, who was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his services to conservation and the environment. Keith has been at the leading edge of conservation work in Western Australia for nearly 40 years. He has worked with local community groups, consulted ministers and was also the coordinator of the Peel Harvey Catchment Group. In 2002 he helped form the Gondwana Link, which was an ambitious program with the aim of connecting remnant bushland and restoring degraded farmland so that a continuous arc of bushland would stretch more than 1 000 kilometres from the tall karri forest on the tip of the south west to the dry woodlands of the Nullarbor Plain. It nearly joins along the southern corridor and will help preserve the biological richness of the region. This is a fantastic outcome for all those people who have been part of the Gondwana Link.

Christine Robinson was recently recognised for her outstanding work as a volunteer for St John Ambulance spanning almost 20 years. During that time she has attended 2 800 call-outs. Christine rose to the rank of advanced ambulance care officer, which is the highest level a volunteer can reach.

The Albany Rifle Club has done itself proud by securing the rights to host the prestigious WA Rifle Association Queen's Prize meeting this year. When the Swanbourne range closed to club rifle shooters at the end of last year, and with a new range yet to be constructed at Pinjar, the annual Queen's Prize shoot had to find a new venue or not go ahead. The Albany Rifle Club made a successful submission to WARA to hold the event in Albany over the September long weekend. The club is honoured to have been chosen for what is the biggest event in the state, which runs over five days and involves up to 200 shooters competing. The club has produced many champion shooters in its long history, including club captain Gary Carlsen, who won the Queen's Prize in 2010.

The Albany Junior Cricket Association pulled off a remarkable country week triumph at the weekend stealing the A-section title from the grasp of Busselton–Margaret River on the final day of the tournament at Charles Veryard Reserve.

I congratulate everyone involved in *The Giants*, especially my wife, because her book *Lighthouse Girl* was the inspiration for the girl giant—not that she made much money out of it, but these things happen with authors! In amongst all of this, a tremendous event was inspired by a book. But what did the state government do over the weekend? It cancelled this year's Western Australian Premier's Book Award. Western Australia has aspiring writers who have been inspired by the book and inspired by *The Giants*. Two million dollars was spent on *The Giants*, which is tremendous, but under cover the state government snuck out a press release that the Premier's award for books would be done biennially: "Writers shouldn't do anything this year, but save themselves for next year." The awards are a great opportunity because people are inspired to write great stories such as *Lighthouse Girl* and *Light Horse Boy*. There are so many good writers in Western Australia, but they will not be encouraged by this penny-pinching government. How much will it save by cancelling the event? In 2010 it reviewed the scope and structure of the event, but it has now canned the event for a year during a most important time.

[Quorum formed.]

Mr P.B. WATSON: On another issue, four panelbeater workshop owners in Albany came to see me. Apprentices in the panelbeating industry are given correspondence lessons as part of their training requirements and are sent to Central Perth TAFE for two weeks of work release to undertake exams on those lessons. The proprietors of three panelbeating shops in Albany came to me. They were angry and upset because they have been told that there will be no more correspondence lessons; rather, apprentices will have to go to Perth for two separate blocks of three weeks' work release, which means they will have to pay for six weeks' accommodation and make at least four trips to Perth and back—or up to 12 trips if they have sporting or family commitments on the weekends. They are angry because the system worked well before the changes and now they have to pay extra travel and accommodation costs. No training books will be issued to apprentices unless they sign up to the new system. The panelbeating workshop owners want to know who will cover the insurance when the apprentices travel to Perth. Will it be added to their workers' compensation premiums or will they be covered by Central TAFE? They are angry because there was no consultation with industry. It discriminates against regional apprentices; indeed, where is the National Party on this issue? It is a disadvantage to the employment of apprentices directly; indeed, more employers may well find that it is easier to go through a group training provider, which involves apprentices moving around from workshop to workshop, with no long-term commitment by the employer.

Talking about royalties for regions, I am disappointed. I must congratulate the member for Pilbara. I really supported the member on royalties for regions when it came out, but I feel like it has been watered down. A lot of things needed in country areas at the moment are not getting done; there is that extra percentage that we are not getting in regional areas. One other thing I would like to mention is that we had two members of state

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Parliament in Albany: Hon Col Holt has left Albany, and I hear that next week Hon Robyn McSweeney is going to leave. I love to have these people down there; they are nice people, but they are all deserting Albany. They are deserting the regions. I do not know where they have gone to—I do not know where their offices are—but they are deserting my constituents. My constituents should have a government representative in their town. If members are in government, they should be there looking after their constituents. We had people who live in Morley —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr N.W. Morton): Members! I am trying to listen to the member for Albany.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I am speaking sense and the member knows it.

Royalties for regions was great and I support it. It has been watered down, and the Liberal and National Parties are deserting the people. People in Albany did vote for some of the Liberal and National guys, but they never got in.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro) [7.11 pm]: Before I focus on the Premier's Statement, I just want to join other members in thanking and congratulating the volunteers and professional firefighters who did such a sterling job over the break. In particular, members will be aware that there was a very dangerous and threatening fire in Baldivis that, fortunately, did not claim significant property damage, lives, houses or anything of that nature, thanks to the efforts of those people. There was also a fire in Wellard, which was very fierce and threatened the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, which would have been a tragedy had that not been contained and defeated by those volunteers. I would like to thank firefighters all across the state, particularly those around the Rockingham and Kwinana area, who did a sterling service over the break and thank goodness they were there.

I would also like to take a moment to join the member for Albany in acknowledging his better half, who is present in the chamber this evening, and join him in condemning the government for the shameful and cowardly manner in which it announced the cuts to the Premier's Book Awards. Slipping the message out there at the weekend—when all the attention of everyone in the state, particularly in the field of arts, was focused on that tremendous event that was *The Giants*—that the government will cut such an important contribution to supporting artists in the state was just extraordinary. To think that the government might get away with that is laughable; it will not get away with it. The opposition will make sure everyone knows about it and we will continue to notify people.

I want to focus particularly on a couple of paragraphs in the Premier's Statement and a commitment that he made to the family of the young Aboriginal woman who died in a lockup in the Pilbara last year. When the Premier was confronted at the front of Parliament by a protest about that, he made a commitment to the family of that young woman, which he referred to in his speech this afternoon. I want to remind the Premier of his commitment. I ask the Premier to consider a little more what might be causing the challenge that he has referred to regarding the disproportional representation of Aboriginal people, particularly Aboriginal women, in our prison system. In the Premier's Statement, which I quote, he said —

In October last year, I made a commitment to try to reduce both the number of Aboriginal deaths in custody and the over-representation of Aboriginal people in our prison system. The government has worked over the summer and is continuing to consult widely on options that will be considered this year.

The point I would like to make to the Premier is that this is not happening in isolation and this is not the first he has heard of this problem. It was a tragedy. The death of this young woman was an appalling incident—a tremendous loss for her family, but just shocking for the state. To think that we allowed somebody to be imprisoned in a lockup over the weekend for the purposes of cutting out or wiping clean a fine of such a relatively trivial amount and then she lost her life in the course of that process, and that that occurred in 2014, is just extraordinary. It should be very disturbing for Western Australia. In fact, I think it should be more disturbing than it has been. I do not believe it had anywhere near the response and coverage in Western Australia that it had elsewhere in the nation. There was more coverage of this incident in east coast newspapers and media than there was here in Western Australia. I have to place on record that I think *The West Australian's* reluctance to cover this incident in the sort of depth that was given to it in papers such as *The Australian* and other media outlets, online in particular but also the ABC and the *Guardian*, was disturbing. I felt let down by *The West Australian*; it is our state daily newspaper and it has a tremendous record, particularly in recent times, of standing up for social justice issues. I feel that it has not given to this particular incident anywhere near the focus that it deserves. That is disappointing. I hope it refocuses and realigns its attention in coming months,

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because we in this state cannot afford to ignore the injustice in our prison system and the injustice with which a very small proportion of the state's population is treated.

It has now been acknowledged for a long time—decades, sadly—that Aboriginal Western Australians are incarcerated at a far higher rate than anybody in the country. Particularly in Western Australia, Aboriginal people are disproportionately represented in our prison population. It has been 40 per cent for some decades. It was not always; it was not that long ago that it was about 30 per cent, but Aboriginal people have represented 40 per cent of our prison population for many, many years. The disturbing thing about that, apart from the crazy fact that it is so high when Aboriginal people represent only around 3.6 per cent of the population, is that the prison population has exploded. We do have a crisis in our prison system. There are far too many Western Australians in prison for minor offences including things such as fine defaulting. It is wrong to suggest that this is something that crept up on the Premier and he found out about it for the first time when Miss Dhu died. That is just plain wrong. When the Premier went to the election in 2013, he did as conservative governments are wont to do and flicked the switch to law and order. I found it disturbing to hear him do it again today in the Premier's Statement. I know that he does it every year so it is almost habit, but I thought in light of Miss Dhu's death there might have been some reflection and consideration of that process of regurgitating a line about being tough on crime. Doing so on such a repetitive basis, without any demonstration of the potential benefits to be had from the laws that the government is introducing, makes it difficult for the population of the state to consider whether what the government proposes will work and what the cost–benefit will be in people's lives and in economic terms. The government undermines the opportunity for people to actually think and consider things in a reasonable fashion. The Minister for Police does it, the Premier does it and the government did it at the last election. Government members did that at the last election in a shameful attempt to divert attention away from other fields of endeavour in which they were not performing very well. It was identified at that time by *The West Australian*, so I commend *The West Australian* for taking up that sort of challenge in the past. I think it has let us down in the last year or so. During the election campaign in 2013, Amanda Banks drew the attention of the public to the fact that it had been a pretty shameful attempt to create a law and order auction, as is so often the case and, sadly, appears to still be the case. She pointed out —

As part of the pledge to “keep criminals off our streets”, the united team of Premier Colin Barnett, Police Minister Liza Harvey and Attorney-General Michael Mischin also committed to doubling the mandatory minimum jail term for three-strike burglars.

I do not care about the aggravated burglary part of the law that the government is introducing—very slowly. It was promised as the number one priority two years ago, and it has not seen the light of day in this place other than the second reading speech. Frankly, I am not that disturbed by the first part of the legislation, because the truth, as opposed to what the police minister told the public of Western Australia, is that the judiciary in Western Australia is imposing exactly the right sentences that the legislation enables for that type of offence. There is no evidence to suggest that the judiciary failed to comply with the laws under which it has been sentencing people who have committed violent aggravated burglaries, so the claims that were made during the election campaign were just plain false and embarrassing for a minister of the Crown to pursue. I do not have any great concern with that part of the law, because those people will effectively go to prison for the same period as they already have been. There will be no change for them. A relatively small number of people will be affected by the legislation because the real part of the legislation that will have an impact is the three-strikes burglary changes that have been tacked onto the end. When the Minister for Police talks about the law, she talks only about the aggravated burglary part; she never talks about the three-strikes part and she does not talk about the consequences.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: I always talk about that. That's not the truth.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I welcome the fact that the minister will take on the debate in this place, because we will engage in the debate. Be prepared, minister. The minister cannot just walk away from this one; she will have to sit there during the consideration in detail stage and explain some facts. For instance, the two claims that she has made were false. They have been proven false by the shadow Attorney General, and he will gladly engage in the debate, as will others in this chamber who are far more learned in the law than I am. The minister will not just be able to dismiss it as she does in front of a number of cameras to get a cheap few-second grab on the television. That is not what this is going to be like; this is going to be a demand for real facts. In the event that the minister is wrong and that what she is arguing is false, she will be exposed. All I am saying is: please be prepared in that regard.

I also tell the minister now—I would like her to be prepared in this regard—that she should be prepared to justify the monetary cost of what she is proposing. She should not come into this place and say that she is incapable of saying exactly how many people she anticipates will be added to the prison muster as a consequence of this law,

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because I know that the department projects it. I know that the projections it reported in this place last year were under-projected. They were a very conservative estimate. Even with that conservative estimate, the Department of Corrective Services projected that within three years, above and beyond the growth in the prison muster would be added. I note that in the 12 months just gone, the growth in the prison muster exceeded the growth from the two previous years combined. Hundreds of extra people went into the prison system, and the minister has no idea why that happened. The law that the minister is going to introduce will add to the prison population, by her very conservative estimate, 200 additional adults above and beyond the current trend, and 60 juveniles. It costs the taxpayer \$110 000 a year to incarcerate an adult and \$220 000 a year to incarcerate a juvenile, or probably more by now. That will add \$93 million to the recurrent account, and the government does not have it in its budget. I do not mind if the minister says that she will introduce this great law and it will have this brilliant benefit to the people of Western Australia because some juveniles who are in company with each other and almost always do multiple break-ins on one day will be sentenced in a different manner, but they will be going to prison at a higher rate and an extra 60 juveniles and an extra 200 adults will be added to the system. However, I think there will be many more in reality.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: Have you actually looked at the legislation?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am talking to the minister about what she has said about this legislation. These figures came from the minister.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: I think you need to look at it.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister needs to understand what I am saying to her. The Department of Corrective Services has provided those statistics. I want the minister to justify where the money that will need to be added to the budget will come from. What will be cut to fund the additional 200 adults and 60 juveniles? It will not involve the minister going in front of the television cameras and saying, "This is easy. I'll just pass the law. I'm tough." Where will they go? How many of them will be women? Will they go to Bandyup Women's Prison? The Minister for Corrective Services already has another plan; he has a plan right now.

Mr F.M. Logan: You're picking up her tab.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes. The Minister for Police is writing the bill, but the Minister for Corrective Services is picking up the cheque. He is writing the cheques, but he does not have the money and he does not have the capacity in his prison system. I think it is a bad idea to convert part of Hakea Prison into a women's prison to take the overflow from Bandyup at a cost of a very conservative \$20 million. I do not think that will work. I think Wandoo Reintegration Facility should be turned into a women's prison. That aside, that is a cost that the Minister for Corrective Services does not have the money for in his budget, and the Minister for Police is going to impose another cost on him.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: It's a government policy. It's not his money and my money; it's taxpayers' money.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is the monetary explanation I expect. That is the economic argument. They are the statistics and facts that I expect the minister to deliver—where that money will come from and confirmation of the projections. I hope that I hear from the minister that there will be money in the forward estimates to cover those additional costs so that the Minister for Corrective Services does not have to cut his programs to fund the additional prisoners who will need to be kept. Then, on the other side of the justification, I want to hear her argument for why this law will result in a better outcome, because there is no evidence that the current law is resulting in any impact on those people. I do not believe that changing the sentencing rules for those people the minister is talking about will deter them in any way. There is no evidence that they have been deterred by the laws that have been introduced and have been employed for a number of years. I want to hear from her whether she has done research that confirms that if this sentencing law is changed, there will be a consequence in the form of a reduction in reoffending amongst those offenders, or is it just so that the government can trumpet itself as somehow being tough, even though, embarrassingly, two years down the track after the Premier committed to do this at the last election as the number one, most urgent priority when it got into government, nothing has happened. It is almost as embarrassing as the bikie legislation.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P. PAPALIA: It was striking the other day when the Attorney General was being interviewed about the incredibly fluffy and vacuous front page that *The West Australian* ran on bikie legislation. Having failed to employ the bikie legislation that has been in force in Western Australia for three years now, and which was trumpeted as the most aggressive and tough law in the country by the then Attorney General, this Attorney General said, "I've had a think about it. I'm watching what's happening in other states and we might go for another tough law. We haven't used the current tough law. We don't know whether the current tough law

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works but we might go for another tough law because that'll get us a front page in *The West Australian*." It seems to be avoiding any scrutiny of the claims and they are being printed as though they have some sort of substance. There is absolutely no substance to any of the claims that have been made by the government about law and order.

Is Western Australia not the amphetamines capital of the country? We are the amphetamines capital of the country thanks to the Barnett government. Did we become that under the Barnett government? Yes, we did. Are we the car theft capital of the country? I think we are. Did we become the car theft capital of the country under the Barnett government? Yes, I think we did. Are we the violent-offences-against-individuals crime capital of the country, minister? I think we might be. I think we might have become that under the Barnett government. Is anyone in Western Australia of the view that the Barnett government has actually done anything in the field of law and order other than to impose more red tape and laws on the state? Has there been any evidence of life becoming easier, safer and more comfortable under the Barnett government as a consequence of what the Barnett government has done in this space for anyone to be able to assess? No, there is not. If there is, the only evidence would suggest that the government has failed. Are we the domestic violence capital of Australia? I think we might be.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: No, we are not.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am talking about rates per head of population. I will tell the minister what we are. We are one of the few places in this nation that locks up fine defaulters solely for fine default. That is what we are. Well done on that; congratulations. Is that deterring fine defaulters from committing the offence in the first place? Let me see, there might be some evidence on that; there probably is. I would say that if for every single year since the Barnett government took office the amount of debt owed on the Fines Enforcement Registry has increased, then it is failing. I would suggest that for every single year that the number of people who are failing to pay their fines has not diminished, then it is probably failing. The Premier promised the family of the young woman who died in prison in lockup as a consequence of not paying a fine that he would seriously look at why Aboriginal people are incarcerated at such disproportionate levels. I think he made that solemn promise; I actually believe the Premier on that. The Premier cannot say that in one page of his speech and then over the next page flip the switch to his law and order agenda and say things like, "In keeping with this, the first piece of legislation to be debated in this house this year", which is what he said two years ago, "we will create maximum mandatory sentences for serious physical or sexual offences committed during a home burglary." That is fine. "It will also deal with loopholes in the existing three-strikes law", and that is what I want to focus on. I have been talking to the Minister for Police about it. It is fine if we do that, as long as as much scrutiny is applied to the consequences of new laws as we give to the consequences of commitments to build stadiums. Where is the money coming from? What are the overall costs? What are the implications elsewhere? What is going to be missed out on as a consequence to that? Is there a better alternative? All of those things that we say about a building should be applied to the government's laws in this field of endeavour, in the law and order field. That is the same sort of scrutiny. It should not be possible for a police minister, a Premier or an Attorney General to step in front of a camera and say, "We are going to introduce this really tough new law" unless they can say how many people they anticipate will be affected by it, how that law will diminish the current rate of that crime being committed, whether it will have a positive or a negative impact, if it is going to have a cost implication—and in this one it is, it is going to be \$93 million recurrent after the third year. Where is that money coming from? If it is going to have a capital implication—for instance in this case it will, because by that time we will need to build another prison to accommodate the extra growth—where is that coming from? The government should be applying the same standards as it does to the stadium to legislation that has potentially deep and significant impacts on the social fabric of Western Australia but also on the economics of Western Australia and the state budget. The government should not be able to get away with it, and journalists should hold it to task and ask that question. The first question they should ask should be, "Minister, it has been said that the judiciary has not been complying with the current laws and is letting people off with lighter sentences." Then, in return, the next question that should be asked is, "Exactly when did that occur; what case; and can any evidence be provided?"

Mrs L.M. Harvey: I believe I said that about the judiciary when sentencing is consistent with community expectations around some of these offences. That is what I said.

Mr P. PAPALIA: In fairness, I am not sure whether that is the only thing the minister said, though, and it may not have been her. There have been statements, fair enough.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: But that is definitely what I said.

Mr P. PAPALIA: There have been statements, minister, and not necessarily from her, but I cannot recall exactly whether it was or not, but undeniably by ministers in her government, criticising the judiciary for not adhering to the sentencing options and suggesting that they were giving them lighter-than-appropriate sentences. There is no

Extract from Hansard

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evidence to support that. If the minister has evidence, I am looking forward to consideration in detail because I really want to see that. I want to see that investigated by the people from this side of the house. Fortunately, the government is doing this particular legislation two years out. It should have been four years in accordance with the promise at the election, but the government is doing it two years out from the election so there is opportunity for scrutiny. There is opportunity to say what its implications will be, what the cost will be and what the potential benefits will be. If there are not benefits, then the government needs to address that. If there is a potentially better alternative, then it needs to be considered. So, when the Premier made that promise to the Dhu family and the people on the steps of Parliament, I believe that he honestly felt that he was going to try and do what he could. It needs to be understood that under this government, the number of Aboriginal people imprisoned in Western Australia has soared. It stayed at 40 per cent of the adult prison population, but the number of people in the prison population has increased by about 43 per cent. The number of Aboriginal people in prison is massively more than it was in 2008. They are not getting worse. As evidenced by the paper released in November; the number of people who are in prison for relatively trivial stuff is pretty significant. I know it was dismissed as a small overall number of days of incarceration, but the truth is that for a couple of years in the last four years, one in every three women who went through the doors was there because they could not pay fines.

I do not think we have looked closely enough at options outside of prison. From memory *The Australian* newspaper reported that in the financial year 2012–13 Victoria locked up 47 people for fine default alone. In the financial year 2012–13 Western Australia locked up more than 1 100. That should disturb us. It also should be seen as an opportunity; that is something we could do immediately. We could change the regulation, because it is not even legislation and the corrective services minister knows this. There was a change made by the Attorney General in 2009 to the method of supervision of people in the community on community service orders for fine defaulting, and that is easy to change. The minister could change that tomorrow with a stroke of a pen. I think that is an opportunity, Premier. Rather than view it as an enormous challenge, that is one thing we could do tomorrow. I tell members that the evidence suggests that imprisoning fine defaulters has not diminished their offending and has not conveyed any great message to those people, because they go in on a Friday and come out on a Monday and have a clean slate. They can go and do it again, but all we do is impose a huge cost on the system and we overburden the system with the administrative process. It is probably also forgotten that we expose relatively minor offenders to some serious criminals inside the prison system. It could be quite easily argued that we are accelerating their path towards a criminal career because we are putting people who might be vulnerable in contact with potential drug dealers and the like. I think, as an immediate first step, we could change the rules governing fine defaulters in the community under community service orders. At the moment they are not paying anything off. They are not learning anything and it is costing us a lot—\$2.1 million a year.

The other thing that I think we should be doing, and I would hope that is what the team is doing in the Premier's office now—although I would suggest it should be an independent authority—is assess all the legislation and regulation around fine defaulters in our system. Some resources should be given to the Law Reform Commission, because we have stripped it of resources, and ask it, as an independent process, to analyse what might be done, what currently is happening, where it is not working and what might be done. There are options around the country. The rest of Australia does not seem to be locking up anywhere near as many Aboriginal fine defaulters as is the case in Western Australia. It is a really sad fact, as indicated in the government's statistics in the paper to which I referred, that at the same time as one in three women in prison are there for fine defaults alone, 60 per cent of them are Aboriginal. Put that in the context of Miss Dhu's death and the statistics are stark. It would not be difficult to change that statistic, because it is only a regulation. If the law for fine defaulters being able to serve concurrent sentences and clearing fines concurrently is not working and it is an attraction for people, why has it not been changed? That is why an independent authority such as the Law Reform Commission needs to analyse that and look at whether the regulation is not working and whether something different is needed. Things could be changed right now. What is the worst thing that could happen if things went back to the way they were in 2008? Would the same number of people be in prison as there were then, which was, I think, 194?

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee) [7.42 pm]: It is great to be here for another year. It is really good to see all the familiar faces, that no-one has fallen by the wayside and that there have been no casualties. It is good to see that all members made it through the Christmas break. My Christmas break was tremendously enjoyable and restful. I was back in the Parliament at about 9.30 this morning and after about half an hour I felt as though I had never left! I have had a wine tonight, so all is complete, as though I had never left in 2014! But, as is traditional, to kick off the year we come back to debate the Premier's Statement. We particularly enjoyed hearing what the Premier had to say and, despite the veneer he would like to give it, his statement was more a dissertation on what went wrong than what went right.

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My issue with the Premier's Statement is not what has happened, but what the government is going to do, and that particularly concerns me. One interesting part of the Premier Statement referred to the diversification of the economy and his acknowledgement that the nature and circumstances of the resources sector has changed—that is the \$100 billion-plus section of Western Australia's economy and what has been the long-term driver of the national economy. It is a bit odd that after nearly six years of government, he is now talking about diversifying the economy. I would have thought that when the coffers were full, when the boom time was here, when the money was flowing through, that that was the very time to invest in a future economy that could not be imagined at the time. I understand that bureaucracies are distracted by the here and now. As I keep saying to the business community and anybody else in the community who wants to understand where the state is going, if they want to influence government decisions, they need talk to the government. It is really simple. But if they want to influence government policy, they should talk to the opposition because the opposition develops the big ideas that will take us further into the future and deliver continued sustained growth of jobs and opportunities for Western Australians.

For that to happen we have to acknowledge that change occurs and that our region is changing. We hear about that vicariously via different indicators and at different moments in time. The rise of China is the obvious one, but China often overshadows what is happening in the growing middle powers of Asia and the ASEAN region generally. This has significant implications for Western Australia, and I particularly fear that it may be a little too late for the Premier to be the innovation Premier—the one who will drive the opportunities for future Western Australia beyond the resources sector. The simple fact is that this government has underinvested in both the knowledge economy and the skilled services sector by at least a factor of 10 on previous efforts. Take science as an example. Who is the minister responsible for the science portfolio? I am sure someone can help me out! I think it might be the Premier who has responsibility for the science portfolio. Base-line funding in the science sector—that is, the gross indicator of what is or is not happening in that sector—has declined from a staggering \$13 million to \$11 million to barely getting a mention in the last budget. So motivated was the chair of the government's then Technology and Industry Advisory Council, Chas Morgan, whom the Minister for Science has never met, he decided to decamp and move to London. He was clearly looking for better opportunities. That was a sad indictment of where this government wants to see this economy go beyond the boom in the resources sector.

It is important to say, as the Premier and others have said in this chamber on several occasions, that this is not a traditional boom: it is an ellipse in terms of growth. The characteristic of this boom has been an iron ore price cycle boom that had blown out to \$160 per tonne—a price never contemplated possible above the historical mean of \$70. That price cycle is only one characteristic typical of the previous boom–bust cycles of the resources sector in Western Australia through the 1970s and 1980s. The difference with this boom is that it is also a production boom. It has seen a doubling and tripling of the output of the iron ore bulk commodity of Western Australia, as the installed capacity of both the two major iron ore companies and the next tier of minors—that is, Fortescue Metals Group et cetera—have taken the output to nearly a billion tonnes of iron ore a year. It is a phenomenal undertaking, but it also underscores the value of those global companies in brownfield investment and leveraging up capital into infrastructure that has already been installed and ensuring that they extract every return on their capital for investment over the long period that they have been in the Pilbara, and long may they continue.

As I said in my opening line, it is a shadow of what is happening in the rest of Asia. There is massive growth in middle Asian powers with significant implications for Western Australia if we get it right and significant implications for Western Australia if we get it wrong. One thing to remember about Western Australia and our Asian connections is that we are culturally not aligned. Except for the Indigenous Australians who had a connection with the archipelagic area of Indonesia over 20 000 years ago that so many of the records show, we have had very limited natural cultural connections with Asia. In fact, some of the words in the northern Aboriginal tribes' dialect derive from Javanese words such as amok—that is, run amok et cetera. It is very interesting when we look at those connections. They are tenuous at best; certainly, for post-settlement Western Australia, our connections with Asia are not natural. They are certainly economic, as I said, with China, but if we do not get it right, the implications for Australia generally and Western Australia are not insignificant.

We are, in global terms, a small business. We are only 2.5 million people sitting out in the Indian Ocean rim and Western Australia, in global terms, is nothing but a small business. In fact, we are the corner store for countries like China to pick up a bit of iron ore on the way home. Growing reserves of gas and contributions to the global energy market will also lift us to a level of global supply in those areas which is going to be the envy of the world, but the fact is that the 2.5 million-and-a-bit people sitting here on the western side of Australia as Australia's sole representation in the Indian Ocean will pale into insignificance when compared with the rise of

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Australia's nearest neighbour. We hear a lot about the Asian century, but the 2010 Gillard government white paper on the Asian century by and large went unheralded in a lot of ways.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It was a pretty ordinary bit of work, if you read it; I did.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I did, thank you, Premier. It was a start, and I would like to see the response of the government of Western Australia to the Asian century white paper. In fact, why do we not commit to doing our own white paper?

Mr C.J. Barnett: I did respond to it.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: In a media statement? That is hardly the paragon of intellectual rigour to unpack the value of that for Western Australia. I will tell the Premier who did, though. Murdoch University had a very good red-hot go and produced a report that was virtually a proxy response to the Asian white paper on behalf of Western Australia. The various groups at the university did a fantastic job. The Asian Studies Centre at Murdoch University should be very proud of what it contributed to Western Australia's opportunities. In fact, the paper presents almost a blueprint. It lacks the level of detail needed for a substantive public policy in this area, but it goes a long way towards identifying where we should be putting our emphasis as a small economy in terms of our influence and our capacity to move the dial on some of these things.

In fact, the term "Asian century" does not really unpack this issue. If we look at what is happening, we could almost call it the Indo-Pacific century, which acknowledges China and the rise of United States strategic and geopolitical interests in the Indian Ocean rim as it moves towards what it calls the pivot strategy. As the US reorients its defence and economic interests into our region, we will be particularly important in a range of ways. The immediate response is that we will have a defence presence, but there is far more that we offer in the US pivot strategy than simply as a basing facility.

The Indian Ocean rim also acknowledges Africa, which I note that the Premier has already been on to as a location, destination or target market for a range of things. It is a good opportunity, but not nearly as good as the opportunity of emerging markets in our Asian neighbours as we take the opportunity to service the growing disposable income of their middle class. Of course, Africa is worth a mention, certainly in the areas that we can influence. I note the Western Australian government's memorandum of understanding with east Africa to provide Department of Mines and Petroleum and other government support to assist those countries in developing and extracting best value from their natural resources. In our lifetime, the population of Africa will reach one billion. The maps and atlases that we look at do not fairly represent the size of the continent. We can fit the area of the entire European continent, the United States, Australia, China and India within the land mass of the continent of Africa. It is a massive place.

The world we live in is changing. The technological evolution in the past 10 years alone has been more of a revolution. In 1995 only one per cent of the world's population had an internet connection. Today it is 40 per cent and growing at an almost exponential rate. That has massive implications for the way commerce is conducted and the way we interact both culturally and diplomatically.

The Department of Planning's own predictions and Curtin University's latest predictions are that Perth as a city will grow to a population of as much as four million in the decade 2040–2050, in the middle of this century. The time of our children, or of our grandchildren, depending where we are in our lives, will see this city reach a population of 3.5 million to four million people. That is a massive local economy. One of the characteristics of our economy that has changed since the price boom cycles of the 1970s and 1980s is the growth of the population and the self-sustaining economy that that creates. A city of 1.2 million people is starting to provide not only its own self-sustaining economy but also the opportunity for what is called a creative city—that is, the intersection of networks that in itself generates ideas and opportunity.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I will not hold you up, but I will just make an observation on a couple of points that you quite properly made. Probably the greatest force towards diversification is population growth.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Yes, Premier, agreed; as long as it is well resourced. I am talking here about skills and training fitting in with opportunities. We all acknowledge the decline of traditional industries—the smokestack industries—to a large extent in Victoria, and the decline of the manufacturing sector and the choices of global companies to opt out of Australia. We have also seen it in a minor way in our own little economy, particularly during the boom—the lack of local content that was available or able to be taken up by our own enterprises in Western Australia in those traditional or "muscle" industries as they call them. We must diversify the base stock. A skilled services sector and knowledge economy does not need great wads of rail or ports. It needs a soft approach—that is, the human pieces of it.

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What are the opportunities? We do not have to go any further than three hours to our north, in the Indonesian archipelago with its thousands of islands and millions of people. Indonesia currently has a population of 250 million. Estimates see a population of 350 million to 400 million by the middle of the century. It is the fourth or fifth most populous country in the world, after China, India, the United States and Nigeria. At some point, Indonesia's economy will become larger than Australia's, and will become the fourth largest in the world. Here is the problem, if we do not get it right now. If we do not have a 20, 30 or 50-year view of how we intend to develop the opportunities for our children and their children, as well as a relative decline of wealth we will see a decline in the standard of living in Australia and particularly in Western Australia. Indonesia will need only a slight variation in its gross domestic product to have a massive impact on a per capita basis. We may see ourselves slide out of the G20 as result of those sorts of growth numbers. Again, this assumes political stability in countries like Indonesia and continuous growth. The assumption is that countries like Indonesia are willing to undertake the economic reforms and deregulatory programs necessary for their economies to grow. Where is Western Australia orienting itself to take advantage of those opportunities? Where are we?

For example, although I know a lot of these tariffs have a cultural basis, there is a 250 per cent wine tariff wall in place in Indonesia at the moment. If a future Indonesian president has the mandate and the capacity to undertake deregulation or regulatory reform that sees a decline in that tariff wall, where are the Western Australian wine producers? Where are the opportunities for the agribusinesses?

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Indonesia potentially has the world's fourth-largest economy, if it keeps its economic growth story going and attends to some of its installed systemic problems. Some reports are talking about an economic growth of more than five per cent per annum, which is a massive number, although it comes from a low base. Indonesian gross domestic product growth will be three times greater than Australia's by 2050. These are big numbers, and that is just our near neighbour. The opportunities are there for our agribusiness and wine sector, but there is also the added bonus of political stability. If Indonesia can get it right, it will be dragging hundreds of millions of people out of poverty, educating them and delivering them a better quality of life. Not only does this assure the stability of our near neighbour, it also creates a new Indonesian middle class that demands a wide variety of goods and services that Western Australia could be well placed to deliver. What capacity do we have to engage with Indonesia? More importantly, what capacity do we have to take advantage of the opportunity of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations as a whole? One prediction is that in ASEAN's 10 member states the collective middle class has grown from 25 per cent of the total ASEAN population to nearly 75 per cent. That is a massive number; it has gone from one-quarter of the total population of ASEAN's 10 members, to 75 per cent of their total populations. That is hundreds and millions of people with real disposable income.

We have heard many times over in this chamber that Perth is the closest capital city to Jakarta outside of Darwin, and that we have the best opportunities. It beggars belief that the closure of our trade office in Jakarta was contemplated by this government. I am glad to say that, through the various inputs of local interest groups, that was reversed. I went to Jakarta early last year, courtesy of the member for Cannington's efforts to pull together a visit, and it struck me that our trade office in Jakarta is less than optimal. I can understand that the decision was made to close it because of its outputs. We cannot have two people occupying an office in Jakarta and think we are going to impact an economy the size of Indonesia's; it has to be very selective, strategic and well led. Two people sitting an office in Jakarta end up being, in my view, nothing more than a travel office for ministerial visits and other parliamentary visits. It is useless to anyone and does not deliver any great opportunities. There has been criticism of the state government having trade representation in South-East Asia; the very real answer to that is that it is about relationships. I should not single out Asian culture: all cultures require a clear understanding of each other and a level of trust to be developed that requires a whole-of-government effort to underscore the importance of the symbolism that we care and that we are keen to participate in the opportunities as they come up. There has also been criticism that the trade office is a duplication of the national effort under the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Austrade et cetera. That is not true; DFAT has a charter of economic diplomacy that requires or encourages state participation and engagement and orientation with the national effort. In other words, it is important to leverage up the relationships with our embassies and our diplomatic missions in these countries—Indonesia, for example—and trade offices so that we can take up the opportunities as they present. The building of those relationships is as important as engaging directly with the target country. It is a question of strategy and prioritisation—something this and previous governments, I must admit, have lacked. There must be a whole-of-government Asian engagement strategy that has the very clear objective at its centre of delivering jobs for Western Australians.

I turn now to some of the enabling activities that a government could undertake and lead in to assist our kids and their kids in understanding the rise of Asia. It is about how we develop Asian literacy. I am not talking about just languages; I am talking about general exposure to Asian culture and history. Unfortunately, the evidence tends to

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suggest that across the nation we have been less than successful in doing that. Since 2004, six Australian universities have closed their Indonesian language programs, for example, which is sad. There has been a 40 per cent drop over the past decade in the number of Australian students studying Indonesian at our universities. The national figures are that at the primary and secondary level there are about 190 000 students studying Bahasa Indonesia. In 2009, fewer students were studying Bahasa Indonesia in year 12 than in 1972. Despite the population increase, we have gone backwards in delivering what is widely regarded as a reasonably easy language. It is not tonal, unlike Vietnamese, Chinese or Thai; it is relatively easy to pick up—even I could pick up a few words.

When we drill down into the state statistics for 2013, of the 15 000 students attending year 12 public schools, only 1 400 were doing an Australian tertiary admission rank-level language. Of those, only 272 students were doing an Asian language. Of the 272, more than half spoke that Asian language at home. We are woefully underdoing our language studies. Looking at more recent numbers in language studies in our secondary schools, across the state—this is public and private and we are talking about stage 2 or 3—we had more students undertaking European languages than Asian languages by a serious number that I will produce for members right now. Only 772 students across the state—public and private—sat a Western Australian Certificate of Education language exam. My 2013 figures covered only public schools. Of those 772 students, 275 sat an Asian language exam, which is kind of sad. It really is underdoing what we need to do. Historically, languages in our primary, secondary and tertiary sectors have been government-led, and things such as the Colombo Plan mark II are good examples of how they emphasise things such as Asian literacy; it is really unfortunate. Of the 2014 figures, 772 students sat a language exam, which is only five per cent of total year 12 student population cent. Only 1.8 per cent of the total student population sat an Asian language exam. Those figures underscore the work to be done if we value Asian languages as being an opportunity, or precursor, if you like, to understanding our region. We have to do it in a targeted way.

I look in my own electorate for reasons more kids are studying a European language than an Asian language. Why have we not emphasised the value of Asian languages to our own state's future? There are two parts to it. Of course there is the cultural aspect; the majority of the Western Australian population is made up of people with European heritage. That leads on to the second point, which is that we have a far greater depth and breadth of capacity in European language teaching than in Asian language teaching. One of the primary schools in my electorate dropped Indonesian from the curriculum and when I went to investigate and find out why, the simple answer was that it could not get the quality of teacher it needed to deliver the curriculum. It is as simple as that; the quality and capacity of the teaching profession—not to single it out as being the villain in this whole play—to deliver those languages is not there. That is to deliver it at not only a primary or secondary level, but also from kindergarten to year 12. The continuity and quality of European language teaching from K-12 outstrips Asian language teaching enormously. There is a valuable opportunity for any government that is willing to undertake the work required to invest in the profession of language teachers. That may well be by including a stopgap measure of professional importation of that skills gap while the teaching profession and colleges that produce our teaching fraternity attend to it over a longer period of time. It will take 10 years or more to organically grow the number of quality Asian language teachers to make a real difference. I am not talking about doing it on a small scale—not a pilot, not some sort of trial and not some sort of experiment; we need to deliver a massive change in the teaching of Asian languages across the whole sector, both public and private. We need to do it by straight public funding—I understand that would be yet another impost on our budget—and we should certainly be looking for smarter ways to reorientate some of the capital to invest in that sort of strategy. But we also want an immediate impact. We have hired police officers and nurses from overseas to fill in the gap; why would not we do it with language teachers? There are some very good quality teachers out there who would really enjoy the opportunity to deliver in a quality education system such as Western Australia's.

There we have it. That is only one idea, identifying one gap that could create a massive opportunity to diversify our economy. We do not know where the economy will go. All we do know is that if we invest in the right things at the right point in the cycle, we will enable people to take the entrepreneurial step to find the opportunities and the solutions, because they will be driven by self-interest, if you like, to ensure that they have a job and that they enjoy a quality of life that somehow mirrors what we have enjoyed thanks to what our parents created for us.

I urge the Premier to have a look at the idea he has outlined. It has taken him a long time to enunciate the diversification of the economy in the Premier's Statement. I really look forward to him progressing these ideas and bringing them to the Parliament in the next budget, not necessarily through legislation, to create opportunities for Western Australians.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale) [8.11 pm]: I also rise to contribute my response to the Premier's Statement. I have a number of issues I wish to articulate during my contribution.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 17 February 2015]

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Mr Roger Cook; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Rita Saffioti; Dr Tony Buti; Dr Mike Nahan; Acting Speaker; Deputy Speaker; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Paul Miles; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Chris Tallentire

I will start off with a quick note on education; I do not intend to add much more to what I spoke about earlier today, but there seems to be a disconnect between what members on this side of the house are seeing and hearing when they visit schools in their electorates, and what members on the other side see and hear when they visit schools in their electorates. I sit on the boards and school management committees of at least five of the schools in my electorate, and I am not gilding the lily when I tell members that those schools are doing things very tough under the funding cuts imposed by this government. Of course, members opposite can argue, as they always do, that there has been an injection of funding into the education system because there are more schools and more buildings. Obviously, there has been an increase in that sort of funding, but a major problem with the funding is that schools actually need to service those buildings. One of the major problems that I articulated earlier today, which the Treasurer sought to laugh off, is the very real problem of transient, or moveable, student populations. Under the student-centred funding model, when a student leaves a school, the money travels with the student. The government may say that that is fair, but when one student leaves and it results in \$55 000 leaving with that student, it is an incredible amount of money for a school to lose. All that needs to happen is for two students to leave, and that is one teacher. I will leave that for now; I am sure we will debate that matter as the year goes on, but there is a definite disconnect between what this side of the house is hearing and what the other side is choosing to hear.

I would like now to move on to the issue of employment and training. During the boom years we had an influx of people seeking work in Western Australia and coming to live in Western Australia. That is what happens naturally when there is a boom economy, especially in the resources industry. But as we know, the boom has slowed down, especially with regard to employment, and there are now many, many people who once had highly paid jobs but no longer have those jobs. One of my constituents, Jeff Wells, wrote to the Premier to outline his case. Jeff is a 44-year-old male who worked as a heavy plant mechanic on a fly in, fly out roster until he was retrenched. He still has a mortgage to pay, and he wrote to the Premier, who forwarded his letter to the Minister for Training and Workforce Development. He asked the government what it intended to do about the oversupply of workers, particularly in the once very buoyant mining industry. What policies does the government have? The Premier talked today about employment being very important as this government moves forward, but what policies does this government actually have in place to address this admittedly very complex issue?

One policy it should not have is to increase TAFE fees. Jeff Wells, who is now unemployed, had contemplated going back to TAFE to upgrade and broaden his skills to increase his employment opportunities, but he cannot do that because he is unemployed. He has not even sought Centrelink payments, but no-one on Centrelink payments would be able to afford the outrageous increases in TAFE fees. For some courses, TAFE fees have gone up by 500 per cent. How can any government justify such an increase? We have a tightening employment market and many people have lost their jobs. Some of them wish to upskill or to be retrained, but they cannot afford these incredible increases in TAFE fees. It is an absolute disgrace. Members opposite might try to argue that they go to their local schools and they are all hunky-dory and everything is fine, but they are going to have a hard time claiming that everything is hunky-dory at their local TAFE. Members opposite should go to a TAFE registration day and see the pain that they are inflicting on people who want to attend TAFE. How can the government justify a fee increase in some courses of up to 500 per cent? The other problem is that people studying many of these courses will come out at the lower end of the employment scale, so they are going to have incredible debt and the income they will receive will make it difficult to justify their upskilling themselves in the first place. The government is not only inflicting personal hardship on a number of individuals, but also causing harm to the economy. We all know that the ability of a workforce to upskill itself and to retrain is important in a dynamic economic market, and what is this government doing? It is penalising or prohibiting people from being retrained. It is an absolute disgrace from the point of view of justice and equity, and it is incredibly dangerous for the economic future of this state because of the absolute destruction of the economy as we move forward.

It is a shame that the Minister for Police is not here because the next issue I want to bring up, which was also raised by the member for Warnbro, is family or domestic violence. I prefer to use the term “family violence”, which includes all violence within a family situation. The police minister is not solely responsible for the issue of family violence—it crosses a number of portfolios—but the police minister has been in this house on previous occasions and stated that if the changes to the police force regarding domestic or family violence that the government has made are not working, she will look at alternatives. The police minister and this government must look at alternatives. It would be nice if the police minister and other ministers were proactive on this issue, but the police minister only ever talks about family violence when I or another opposition member raises the issue. She has never addressed the issue other than in response to a question from, or in debate with, members on this side of the house. As I said, the police minister is not the only person responsible for the issue of family

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violence but she is, of course, a major player, as is the Attorney General. A report by the Law Reform Commission on family violence was handed down last year in which a number of law reform initiatives were recommended; we are still waiting on the government and the Attorney General to bring legislation regarding family violence before both the upper house and this house.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Abetz): Members, can we keep our voices down, please?

Dr A.D. BUTI: As we know, family violence is an incredibly important issue, and it is a shame that some people on the other side do not consider it a serious subject. There is a crisis in this state. From the financial year 2009–10 to the period 2013–14, there has been a 76.9 per cent increase—basically 77 per cent—in reportable domestic violence assaults. Of course, that is partly because people are now more inclined to report domestic assaults, which is great, and there has been an improvement in the culture of the police force, but that does not explain the total reason for the jump. It is a phenomenal jump and there is a crisis. There is no doubt that family violence is a gender-based crime. In an agency annual report hearing of the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, the Minister for Police provided an answer on the breakdown of domestic assaults. In the 2009–10 financial year, 74.9 per cent of domestic assault victims were females, so no-one can say it is not a gender-based crime. In 2010–11, 75.6 per cent of victims were female.

[Quorum formed.]

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is a shame that people can walk out of the chamber when we are talking about the incredibly important subject of domestic violence.

As I was saying, there has been a 77 per cent increase in the rate of reportable domestic violence in the last five years of this government's term. That is why the member for Carine's colleagues should be in this place listening. Under the member's watch it has increased 77 per cent.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: This is an interesting issue. I am not responding to interjections. Can the member just let me talk on this issue? Maybe I will respond during other parts of my speech. As I stated, it is a gender-based crime. In 2009–10, 74.9 per cent of victims were female; in 2010–11, 75.6 per cent; in 2011–12, 73.4 per cent; in 2012–13, 73.1 per cent; and in 2013–14, 73.3 per cent. In 2009–10, 10.6 per cent of victims were children; in 2010–11, 11 per cent; in 2011–12, 10.3 per cent; in 2012–13, 11.1 per cent; and in 2013–14, 9.1 per cent. Basically, every year from 2009–10 to 2013–14, 80 to 85 per cent of victims of family violence were females or children. That represents a crisis; we have a crisis. I understand that it is not an easy issue to deal with but I have to say that this government is not doing enough to deal with it. We understand that we will never get the rate down to zero, but what has this government done? Before the last election, the government promised it would impose GPS tracking devices on offenders who breach violence restraining orders. It has still not done that. To its credit, the government instituted the Law Reform Commission inquiry, which presented a report last year containing some very sensible recommendations, but we are still waiting for legislation. It is complex legislation, but we have no idea of the schedule for the implementation of any legislation. Remember, specialised police domestic violence units were removed from police stations such as Armadale, in my electorate, which has one of the highest rates of domestic family violence in the metropolitan area. The police minister said that the changes she made were the way to go but if they were not working, she would implement other measures. We await those measures. I understand that domestic violence is not just a police issue, but the police play a very important part in dealing with it. We have a crisis in family violence. The government likes to go on about law and order. Can there be any more important law and order issue than family violence when it has increased at the rate of 77 per cent in the last five years? What other crime in Western Australia has increased by 77 per cent in five years? We talk about imposing stiffer penalties or bringing in harsher legislation to deal with other crimes, but what are we doing about family violence? It is a pernicious, vicious crime that affects not only the victim, but also their family. It has an incredible effect on the economy. A 2009 KPMG report found that family violence costs the nation \$13.6 billion a year. That report further stated that if family violence is not successfully addressed, the figure will increase by \$2 billion in a decade. I see that as a national emergency, and in Western Australia, a state emergency—a crisis that this state government has shown no capacity or willingness to address.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr A.D. BUTI: I now move onto another subject. I am sure any member who viewed the *Four Corners* special last night on greyhound racing would be extremely disturbed by it. As I am sure people realise, last night the ABC *Four Corners* special revealed some absolutely shocking examples of animal cruelty—some of the most shocking examples we could imagine of animal cruelty. In that *Four Corners* special, appalling revelations were made of using live animals as bait to train racing greyhounds. Rabbits, possums and baby piglets were torn apart

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by bloodthirsty greyhounds. The people involved in that practice should be sought out and have the full force of the law come down on them. It is illegal. The full force of the law should come down on people engaged in that sort of behaviour. What a despicable practice for those animals to be torn apart. Also, training the greyhounds in such a manner is an incredibly cruel act. We have been told that the practice does not occur in WA, but I think it is incumbent on this state government—who is now the Minister for Racing and Gaming?

Mr A.J. Simpson: Col Holt.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The Minister for Racing and Gaming should initiate his own inquiry to ensure that the practice that was revealed last night on the *Four Corners* program is not practised in Western Australia. I urge cabinet and the Minister for Racing and Gaming's National Party colleagues to urge the Minister for Racing and Gaming to engage his own inquiry to ensure that the practice that was revealed on last night's *Four Corners* program is not practised in Western Australia.

Mr D.T. Redman: I agree. You'd want to have confidence that that's not happening here, wouldn't you?

Dr A.D. BUTI: One would; that is exactly right, minister. We are told that it is not happening here, but we want to make sure that it is not. It is a despicable practice, all for the sake of generating money—that is all it is. The full force of the law should come down on those involved in that issue.

I wish to turn to an issue that does not directly relate to the activities of members in this house but I think it is important nevertheless because it affects the body politic of Australian politics. I refer to the attack on the president on the Australian Human Rights Commission, Professor Gillian Triggs. As members may know, the Australian Human Rights Commission, under the presidency of Professor Gillian Triggs, released its report entitled "The Forgotten Children: National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention 2014". The treatment handed out to Professor Triggs by the federal government and its supporters in the media is nothing short of disgraceful. The report is an indictment on the body politics of Australia; it is an indictment on the Australian Labor Party and it is an indictment on the national Liberal Party. It is also an indictment on the Rudd-Gillard government and it is an indictment on the Abbott government. The report is evidence-based and primarily relies on interviews with 1 129 children and parents in detention centres across mainland Australia and Christmas Island. The report resulted in the obvious conclusion that prolonged detention damages children—I do not think that is a startling revelation. Forget about whether the present government's policies are working to stop people from coming to Australia; indeed, members opposite argue that it has stopped the boats, which is a good measure et cetera. But the issue is the fact is that there are still children in detention. Yes, the government may be working to reduce the number of children in detention; indeed, it has been successful in reducing the number. But the fact is that the report refers to the damages suffered by children. The current federal government has a responsibility for those children. The previous Labor government should be marked down for the way it treated children in detention—no doubt—but the current government has to address the issue. It is no good attacking the author of the report. Gillian Triggs is a well-respected legal academic who has held positions on international bodies in the United Kingdom. She was also a former dean of Sydney Law School. The Prime Minister attacked her; I doubt that he read the report but he attacked her. A litany of conservative media supporters also attacked president Triggs. I particularly refer to an article written by the infamous Piers Akerman, which is an absolute disgrace. The article appeared in *The Daily Telegraph* on 13 February. I thought about not referring to this article because it is so despicable, but it is important. The article reads in part —

HUMAN Rights Commission president Gillian Triggs is the last person to lecture anyone on the human rights of children. But that's exactly what her commission's politically inspired report into children in immigration detention attempts to do.

Last August Triggs, a darling of hypocritical Labor luvvies, was the subject of a fawning profile by Sydney Morning Herald feature writer Tim Elliott.

The article took a lot of material from an article in a Sydney magazine a year earlier in April 2013. The Piers Akerman article continues —

What makes it so pertinent today is Triggs' description of her own treatment of one of her children, daughter Victoria, who was born in 1984 with a profound chromosomal disorder known as Edwards syndrome.

"Victoria was as severely retarded as anyone who is still alive can be," she told her interviewer.

"Her condition usually results in the death of the baby before or shortly after birth. In fact, the doctors kept saying, 'Just leave her in the corner and she'll die.' So, it sounds terrible, but I'd look at Victoria

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and think, 'Well, you're going to die, so I'm not going to invest too much in you.' But she didn't die. She had this inner rod of determination, and she simply refused to die."

When Victoria was about six months of age, Triggs and her then partner took her home from hospital and with the assistance of the Uniting Church, found a family who took over her primary care until her death at the age of 21.

Triggs said the arrangement bothered her but rationalised it thus: "Yes, because you have a child and you expect to look after her. But in the end I simply made the judgment that I would rather put my time into my other children and family, because I also never believed she would live to that age."

Had an appointee of a conservative government made such a statement, he or she would unquestionably have been hounded relentlessly by the ABC and the Fairfax press.

What a despicable piece of journalism. The way that Gillian Triggs dealt with her child with a disability is completely irrelevant to her report on children in detention centres—completely irrelevant. I am not condoning her judgement or action, but unless Mr Akerman has a child with a disability, he should not dare pass judgement. The only reason he wrote the article was to discredit Professor Triggs and to do the work of the Abbott government—that is an absolute disgrace. I believe that the government should criticise Mr Akerman for his despicable character assassination and for bringing up what would have been an incredibly painful period in Professor Trigg's life, which has no relevance to the evidence-based report—none whatsoever.

I turn to an interesting matter closer to my electorate. I got this from today's *Inside Cover*. It refers to a day of discovery and asks, "What is the first word that pops into your head when someone says "Armadale"? Chances are it is not complimentary, which is a crying shame for the people who believe in the suburb." It refers to a photographic competition that the council is running. The member for Darling Range and I might enter it to see who takes a better photograph. The prize money offered to the winner by the Armadale shopping centre is \$5 000. We might be able to split the proceedings. The issue I raise is the perception of Armadale held by some people, which feeds into the view that members on the other side of the house have about the schools they visit vis-a-vis the schools that we on this side of the house visit. The member for Darling Range will be aware of Champion Lakes, as will be the former Minister for Sport and Recreation. Champion Lakes Regatta Centre is one of only two rowing centres in Australia that is certified as meeting international standards. The Public Schools Association of Western Australia now holds its rowing competition at Champion Lakes rather than on the Canning River, and why not? It is an international rowing course. I hear that some people are disappointed that they have to travel out to Armadale. What is even worse are some of the derogatory remarks that some people associate with some of these schools —

Mr I.C. Blayney: Name names.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I will not name names because —

Mr I.C. Blayney: My kids row at one of those schools and I have never heard any derogatory comments.

Dr A.D. BUTI: So does my kid.

Mr I.C. Blayney: I have never heard any derogatory comments; I have only ever heard praise for that course and for that area.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The member may have heard praise. I go down there every weekend. He may have been down there last Saturday. I was there.

Mr I.C. Blayney: I was in my electorate.

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is good. I was in my electorate, which encompasses Champion Lakes. Derogatory remarks have been made and it is shameful. I am not saying that they are made by everyone. It is absolutely shameful for people to make derogatory remarks, not about the course. How could they make a derogatory remark about an international rowing course? Derogatory remarks are made about the area and the people. It just should not happen.

I used to be on the board of the Armadale Redevelopment Authority. Today we were talking about the Perth International Arts Festival. In 2004, the Armadale Redevelopment Authority partly sponsored PIAF for three years—2004, 2005 and 2006. As part of that sponsorship, PIAF had to hold some festival functions in the City of Armadale. They were basically held in the Araluen area and I think there were some street performances in Armadale. After three years we were willing to continue our sponsorship but PIAF decided that it did not have anything appropriate for our area. It is about time some of the people who live in areas closer to the leafy suburbs and the Swan River open their eyes to what is happening in other metropolitan areas.

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MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn) [8.42 pm]: I rise to add a few comments to the discussion on the Premier's Statement. The first issue I would like to address relates to today's release by the Minister for Transport of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee's report on Western Australia's freight rail network. I raise it here tonight because I do not think we will have another opportunity, given that the inquiry has now concluded, to comment on the government's response to the committee's report. I wish to take this opportunity tonight during the Premier's Statement to put some comments on the record about the government's much-awaited response to what has been a very well received report.

Firstly, I congratulate all my fellow members on that committee from all sides—the Liberal Party, the National Party and obviously my Labor colleague the member for Willagee—for their contributions to the inquiry into the freight rail network. I also congratulate them for their honesty, bravery and willingness, particularly that of government MPs, including the National Party MP, to table information that had been held back by the Public Transport Authority and Brookfield Rail for over a decade from the general public and, more importantly, from the farmers and the farming community of Western Australia. I think the gutsiness and bravery shown by my fellow members of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee should be recognised and applauded. It was certainly recognised by the farming community and farming organisations in Western Australia. Therefore, like them, I waited with bated breath for the government's response to the committee report. Unfortunately, I am bitterly disappointed by the government's response. It responded to the 22 recommendations and 35 findings of the report but in doing so has basically said that it acknowledges what the report said, it does not agree with what the report said and it is not doing anything about it. That is basically the government's response to the recommendations and findings of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee's inquiry into the freight rail network of Western Australia. If we read the government's response to the findings and recommendations of the committee, we can virtually hear the CEO of the PTA combing through its pages because they virtually align with the statements made by Reece Waldock, the CEO of the PTA, and the submissions from the PTA to the Economics and Industry Standing Committee's inquiry into the grain freight rail network. That is disappointing. In terms of a serious response to the inquiry's findings and recommendations, the content is a disgrace. It is more disappointing that we can hear Reece Waldock pulling the strings and dismissing out of hand the work that has been done by the committee. That is what we can take from this response. We do not see any commentary from Minister Nalder about the very serious recommendations that came out and the serious allegations and findings that were put forward in that grain freight rail network inquiry. That is really disappointing.

I have a feeling that the minister looked at the report but I do not think he really read it from cover to cover. I think he might have looked at the executive summary and the recommendations. He may have browsed through the findings and then gone back to the Public Transport Authority and asked it to draft a response to the parliamentary inquiry. I bet he did that without changing a word of the response that was drafted by the Public Transport Authority. In virtually every recommendation and finding in which the committee called for the government to take firmer action with Brookfield over the management of the lease between the PTA and Brookfield Rail that would benefit the farmers of Western Australia, that would make the lease more transparent and that would encourage third party users on the tier 3 rail network, the response from the government—that is, the PTA—was, "We have got no responsibility; you have to go back to the Economic Regulation Authority." The ERA made the final call on that, and we cannot do anything about it. When it comes to the way that the PTA has managed the lease since, effectively, the privatisation of the freight rail network in 2000, and the criticism of that lease, the government's response to the inquiry—members can read that as PTA's response—was: "But that was the way that the lease was drafted. This is a free-market approach to the use of that rail network." The opposition has criticised the government Public Transport Authority for its light-touch approach to the management of the lease, but their view is that is because the lease requires a light touch and that the beneficiary of the lease, Brookfield, is entitled to the benefits and use of the rail network. Therefore, their interpretation of that provision, which is standard in virtually all contracts, is that there has to be a light touch over the management of the lease. That is the issue that farmers, farming organisations and users of the rail network have criticised over and over again. Ultimately, behind the lease, the state government owns the infrastructure. The lease allows Brookfield to run and manage the rail network. The organisation with oversight, the PTA, is failing in its duties to properly manage the lease. That is the criticism that came through to the Economics and Industry Standing Committee inquiry, and the government's response to that, really a response from the Public Transport Authority, was: "So what. That is the way the lease was structured, and it is the way that we will continue to do business." I think the farming community will be appalled at the government's response. As fellow members of the committee who are in the chamber tonight know, the farming community has been waiting for the government's response with a lot of trepidation and concern. I think they will be bitterly disappointed that, basically, it is business as usual—the lease is the lease is the lease, and we are doing nothing about it. When it

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comes to third party access to the network and the possibility of the tier 3 rail reopening, as far as the PTA and the government are concerned, that is up to negotiations between Brookfield and Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd and whatever comes out of the Economic Regulation Authority determination in that area. That is effectively what they are saying in this response.

Their response does not show leadership and it does not accept that the agreement may need to be amended to force Brookfield to allow third parties further access to the network and to open up the tier 3 rail network to benefit the state, the farming community, and the economy of Western Australia. There was no leadership shown on that whatsoever. When the inquiry recommended further amendments to the lease, the response was: "We cannot do that. Remember, the lease is by agreement between the PTA and Brookfield, and we cannot change things unless Brookfield agrees." That is effectively what this response is saying. But the PTA was quite happy to amend the lease when it came to the closure of the shared tier 3 network; it went out of its way to work with Brookfield to close the tier 3 rail network. Most importantly, at least from the opposition's point of view, is that part of the deal to close the tier 3 rail network involved the PTA doing a deal with Brookfield to profit-share on the tier 1 and tier 2 rail networks at the expense of closing down tier 3. The worst part is that the PTA did not inform the minister about the deal for months. As the Acting Speaker knows, I called on the Minister for Transport in this place to sack the chief executive officer of the PTA for doing that. The minister's own department went behind his back, and probably previous ministers, and did a deal with Brookfield, the operator of the freight rail network, and entered a profit-sharing arrangement with it as part of an arrangement for the closure of the critical tier 3 rail network in Western Australia, but it failed to tell the minister. Could members imagine that happening in any private sector organisation? Imagine if that was Rio Tinto: imagine if the CEO of Rio Tinto had gone off and done a deal with another company and failed to tell the board. That issue was identified later following the release of the inquiry's report, and it was not addressed by the government in its response. I accept that. It was not a part of the inquiry. I accept that the minister has no responsibility to address that point in his written response, but he could have addressed that point in his tabling of the response in the house today. He could have addressed that point, but he failed to do so. It is a critical point that goes to the minister's capability and strength as the Minister for Transport. I want to put on the record that the government's response to the very good work undertaken by the Economics and Industry Standing Committee on WA's freight rail network is appalling—just appalling. It is weak and shows no leadership, and it will be roundly condemned by the farming community and farming organisations in Western Australia; and so it should!

The other issue I would like to turn my attention to is local government reform.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Just to remind members, I will take them back to 2009 and a meeting of council mayors and, I think, CEOs in Exmouth, which I think was part of a Western Australian Local Government Association meeting, and where the initial Barnett government Minister for Local Government, the member for Bunbury, very clearly put to the assembled throng of mayors and CEOs that he expected reform and the amalgamation of local governments. He said that if they could not get act together on amalgamations, he would force them to do so. That was the start of a long, drawn-out war between the Western Australian metropolitan councils and the state government. That was the opening salvo from the state government to metropolitan local government sector in Western Australia.

For the Premier to stand in the house today and shift the blame for local government reform failure and the shambles—the Premier's words—onto the councils themselves is nothing short of disgraceful. That is what the Premier did. Today he made it very clear that he believes the whole process collapsed because councils themselves could not get their acts together and that it had nothing to do with the state government. Do members remember what both the Minister for Local Government and Premier said? Councils themselves wanted the amalgamation processes, it was just that they could not get their act together and they were unable to reform themselves. They were the words of the Premier. That is not true! The opening salvo in the war between the state government and metropolitan councils in Western Australia was fired by the member for Bunbury, as the then Minister for Local Government, at the Western Australian Local Government Association conference in Exmouth in 2009, when he said, "Amalgamate or I will force you to." That approach was adopted by every successive Minister for Local Government, including the current Minister for Local Government.

As a result of that meeting in Exmouth, the state government went through the first reform process and required councils to come up with their own submissions and reports on how the amalgamation process would go forward. They were required to undertake that process. It was not an opt-out process; they were required to do it. Therefore, expenditure was undertaken by local government across metropolitan Perth. That expenditure was on the basis that it was a requirement of the state government and the minister that councils create submissions and

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put forward ideas and processes for amalgamation, under the threat that if they did not do it, the state government would do it for them. That went on for quite a number of years, and basically got nowhere.

Eventually, the member for Bunbury, the Minister for Local Government at the time, pulled the whole process off the table because it was going nowhere and asked the former vice chancellor of UWA, Mr Alan Robson, to look at the process of metropolitan amalgamation and undertake a report on which the state government could then move forward on the amalgamation process for metropolitan councils. That was known as the Robson report. We still do not know how much the Robson report cost. As members saw in the house today, neither the Minister for Local Government, the Premier nor the Treasurer would be drawn on the total cost of this shambolic local government reform process. The opposition has estimated that it is around \$21 million. It could be as high as \$40 million. At the end of the day, we will find out regardless how long it takes. We will find out how much this whole process has cost the taxpayers of Western Australia and we will make that public. However, members should remember that for local government, where the Premier has made it very clear that there will be no compensation to local governments because apparently they brought this process on themselves and they spent money on doorknocking and letterboxing to oppose things, the first reform process initiated following the Exmouth WALGA meeting was required by the Minister for Local Government. Councils had no choice. They had to prepare those submissions and reports. Further, Alan Robson himself required and expected councils to put submissions to him for his report as well. That was a further cost to local councils.

The Robson report with respect to the City of Cockburn—I have highlighted this through the thousands of petitions I have tabled in this house—came down with a recommendation that stated that as one of the most sustainable councils in the whole of Australia, and with its capacity to grow to up to 150 000 ratepayers, the City of Cockburn should stand alone and not be affected by any boundary change or amalgamation. The Robson report said that the City of Cockburn has the capacity to stand alone as a viable, well-run, well-funded council. It also said many other things about amalgamations in other council areas.

What happened to the Robson report? It was thrown in the bin. We never heard of it again. No action was taken by the government on the Robson report. The minister changes, the Robson report is in the bin and we are off on another process—another completely different process. The new and current minister proposed that there would be boundary changes and there would be amalgamations—a mixture of the two. The minister produced his own map and created the Local Government Advisory Board to oversee the process of reviewing the boundaries of existing metropolitan councils. Once again, the minister required that all councils in the metropolitan area make submissions to that process. His words were: if you do not provide a submission, I will make the decision for you. They were the words of the minister. The same team—the Premier and the Minister for Local Government—said that councils wanted this and that any costs borne by councils are their own fault and we are not paying for them. I remind members again of what the current Minister for Local Government said at the start of the third process foisted on metropolitan local councils: if there is no submission to the local government advisory process, I will make the decision for you. If that is not a threat, I do not know what it is. If that is not a threat to force amalgamation and force eradication of certain councils, I do not know what it is. It is the same approach taken by this government, as I said, from the inaugural meeting of the state government and WALGA in Exmouth in 2009. Nothing has changed. It is all about threatening metropolitan councils to amalgamate and change their boundaries.

Those submissions were duly entered into and created. I know that the City of Cockburn's submission, first of all, was for amalgamation with Kwinana. It then responded to the map proposed by the minister whereby the City of Cockburn lost the suburbs of Hamilton Hill, Coolbellup and Leeming, Jandakot Airport—and more—and that its submissions to counter that proposal, and then its submissions to work with the government to try to get some compromise on its proposal, took an extensive amount of time and a huge amount of money.

I remind the house of one further point about the government's approach to this. Remember that the government wanted to amend the Local Government Act to remove the Dadour provisions that would allow the government to force amalgamations. Do members remember that?

Mr D.J. Kelly: That was plan A.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That was plan A. The minister and the Premier were saying today that councils wanted the amalgamations. This is the same team that wanted to amend the Local Government Act to remove the Dadour provisions but found that its own party would not even support that. The member for South Perth, Hon Simon O'Brien, Hon Nigel Hallett, the member for Hillarys and others were opposed to it in the party room, so the Premier withdrew the proposal before it could come to a vote in the party room, because he knew he would lose. That is the real history of this whole shambolic reform process—one that seems to have been forgotten today when the Premier was reporting on it.

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I will come back to the impact on local councils. Cockburn did not put up banners flying from the back of aeroplanes, but it did hold a protest outside Parliament House and did, through me, submit thousands of signatures on petitions. I also raised the matter by way of grievances, matters of public interest and private members' motions. That council is still up for \$3 million in costs for this whole reform process—for work that had to be undertaken by the council on three separate occasions, as required by the state government. That is how much it has cost Cockburn council. It was not flags, bunting or DL flyers; it was simply the process of responding to the state government. Cockburn should be paid that money back.

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean) [9.12 pm]: I rise to make some comments in response to the Premier's Statement, and the first issue I want to deal with is the shambles that has befallen the local government process. My electorate of Bassendean includes the Town of Bassendean, sections of the City of Bayswater, and sections of the City of Swan. There has been some very robust criticism of this process from this side of the chamber, but members of the government are often prone to simply saying that it is just the other side criticising the government, because that is what we do. Rather than repeat that, I thought I would start with a press release from the City of Bayswater. The City of Bayswater very enthusiastically embraced the process, and its mayor, Sylvan Albert, was a supporter of the process. As we can see from this media release, he is dismayed at how the process has ended, and the appalling way that the government has handled it. It is interesting to note that Mayor Albert was in fact the failed Liberal candidate at the last election for the seat of Maylands. He cannot be called just another Labor stooge, standing up and criticising the government—far from it. The press release, dated 17 February 2015, is headed "City Slams Reform Shambles". It reads —

City of Bayswater Mayor Sylvan Albert has slammed the Premier's cancellation of local government reform boundary changes and says the State Government's handling of the initiative has been shambolic.

"The blame lies firmly with the Premier and his failure to provide strong leadership on this issue.

"With clear direction and the right mechanisms —

I will repeat that—the right mechanisms —

reform could have been achieved."

The City of Bayswater has supported the principles of reform since 2008 and believes that it would have delivered better, more customer focussed services for the community, achieved economies of scale and improved strategic planning.

He is definitely a supporter of the process. The release continues —

Since 2008, the City estimates that the State Government's reform process has cost over \$1 million.

"This decision by the Premier has cost our ratepayers money and we expect our community to be reimbursed," Mayor Albert says.

"The Premier has overseen a process that has taken six years to get to this point and what an incredible waste of time and money it has been.

"Our community—families, mums, dads and seniors—should not have to foot the cost of this."

Mayor Albert says the Premier's claim that local governments were not instructed to spend money on reform as pure media spin, "It sounds like a message developed by his media advisors."

"Given the tight timetable and lodging of Governor's Orders, the sector had no choice, but to spend the money or chaos would have ensued come 1 July 2015.

"The Premier's approach in seeking to blame local government just won't wash."

Here is a Liberal Party member, whom the party saw fit to endorse for the seat of Maylands at the last election, and who is now the Mayor of the City of Bayswater, and he is basically agreeing with almost every criticism that has come from this side of the house. The process is a shambles. It has cost the City of Bayswater more than \$1 million. The city believes it should be compensated, and the Premier's argument that this money spent by the City of Bayswater was money that it chose to spend, not money that the government forced it to spend, is a complete fabrication. The Mayor of Bayswater knows that the city was put in a position in which it had to engage in the process and spend that money.

If members opposite want to give the Premier a pat on the back and tell him he is doing a great job and that all this criticism is just Labor noise, they should listen to one of their party colleagues, the Mayor of the City of Bayswater.

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Mr D.A. Templeman: Your deputy mayor said the same, didn't he?

Mr D.J. KELLY: The member for Mandurah just mentioned the Deputy Mayor of the Town of Bassendean. That is in fact correct. I was just going on to read from an open letter written by Councillor Mike Lewis, Deputy Mayor of the Town of Bassendean. Members will realise from the first paragraph that he cannot be called some Labor stooge. The letter begins —

Being a small business owner and lifelong Liberal supporter I am bitterly disappointed in the insipid level of representation the eastern metropolitan member councils have received from our Liberal representatives.

That is fairly strong stuff. The letter continues —

The communities of councils from the eastern metropolitan area comprising of the Town of Bassendean, City of Bayswater, City of Belmont, Shire of Kalamunda, Shire of Mundaring and the City of Swan have all been denied their democratic right to a referendum and a say on the future of their communities.

Our three Liberal representatives —

He is referring here to upper house members —

have been too busy pursuing their ministerial aspirations rather than standing up to the Premier Cohn Barnett and demanding the communities that they represent are treated with the same equality as those communities in the Western Suburbs.

We are all too aware that the Minister Hon Helen Morton MLC believes that the Town of Bassendean is a basket case.

I think he is referring to a comment she made in the upper house some months ago. The letter continues —

Perhaps that is why our community doesn't deserve a vote and a say on our future in Minister Morton's opinion.

The Premier describes the Hon Alyssa Hayden MLC as a "live wire" it's a shame that she doesn't show those same "live wire" attributes when it comes to standing up for her communities democratic rights.

All too often I have heard the Hon Donna Faragher MLC state how proud she is to have grown up in Ashfield it's a shame that pride doesn't inspire her to ensure her home town community has their democratic rights adhered to.

He goes on to say —

The Premier and the Minister for Local Government are showing there ignorant belligerence to the local government communities of Bassendean, Bayswater, Belmont —

Member for Belmont, take note —

Kalamunda, Mundaring and Swan by their gutless action in not allowing these communities the chance afforded to other communities in Perth who said an emphatic no over the weekend to the railroading of their communities.

I urge you to grab a bit guts and allow all the local communities of Perth to have their say about their future.

Make it right, because you and your government are looking more and more every day like an arrogant out of touch government who do not care about the communities you purportedly represent.

Yours concerned

Cr Mike Lewis
Deputy Mayor
Town of Bassendean

Members opposite can say the criticism is ill-founded and that it is just a bunch of Labor stooges doing what they always do—criticise a Liberal government—but those are two examples of strong words from its own supporters. The way this government has handled the local government amalgamation issue—I will not use "reform" because I think it has been a joke; it does not deserve that word—has been appalling and it stands condemned for it.

I will move on to something else the government has made a hash of—that is, Midland Health Campus. The campus was intended to be a 100 per cent public hospital to service the eastern suburbs when Swan District

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Hospital was replaced. It was planned by the previous state Labor government as part of the Reid review. It was half-funded by federal Labor. When this government was elected in 2008, the only significant decision it made was to privatise it. It was put out to tender, and the government awarded the contract to St John of God Health Care. I have nothing against St John of God Health Care. I have dealt with it for many years and it runs very satisfactory private hospitals. But the problem the government has, apart from the general principle of privatisation, in giving a public hospital to this organisation is that because of its religious beliefs it will not do a whole batch of work that would ordinarily be performed in a public hospital. Reproductive medicine, terminations, vasectomies and the provision of contraceptive advice are things it will not do. When St John of God tendered for this work, it made it clear that it would not do that work. That should have run up the red flag and meant that it was not a suitable applicant. Instead of doing that, this government's health minister gave it a clear run through. He said, "All right, if you don't want to do all that work, we'll just amend the contract"—I think it is now called "restrictive services" or something—"We won't ask you to do that, and we'll accept your tender anyway." The Minister for Health has just walked through the door. We are just talking about the fiasco at Midland Health Campus.

Dr K.D. Hames: I know exactly what you are talking about because I have been listening to you in my room. What hogwash it is —

Mr D.J. KELLY: That is right; I am glad the Minister for Health has come in.

Dr K.D. Hames: — and I came in to say how you are distorting the truth, as usual!

Mr D.J. KELLY: The minister gave that contract to St John of God Health Care. St John of God Health Care now has the contract to run Midland Health Campus. I would be very interested, at some point, for the minister to tell me any of this that I have wrong.

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I did not say I would take interjections.

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

Mr D.J. KELLY: At the appropriate time I would like to hear from the minister, but I am not going to take his interjections.

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not want to take interjections, so if you could just ask him to desist.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed, member for Bassendean.

Mr D.J. KELLY: The minister gave the contract to St John of God Health Care, and it will not perform a number of procedures.

In this house the Premier has said he is not happy with that arrangement. He said that if it had been brought to his attention, he would have dealt with it otherwise. I do not excuse the Premier for that at all; this contract came to cabinet, so the Premier was either asleep or he is not being completely up-front. When this contract came to cabinet, he should have voiced his objections and the contract should have been stopped at that point. We are now in a farcical situation of the public having spent in excess of \$350 million on a brand-new hospital in Midland, but it cannot be used to perform those procedures. The government initially said it would pay an additional amount of money to build a separate clinic on the site. That proposal fell over because, as the government says, it could not get someone to run it; I suspect one of problems was that St John of God made it difficult for any provider to operate on that site because it would not give the private provider access to car parks or road entrances or anything like that.

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

Mr D.J. KELLY: He is the minister, but still he interjects.

That fell over. Plan C now is that the public purse is going to pay to refurbish an existing clinic in Midland where people will have to go for that range of services. It has been reported that we are going to pay \$1.2 million to refurbish a private clinic up to the standards of a public hospital because we cannot use the \$350 million brand-new hospital that we have already paid for because of a decision of this minister and this government.

I have spoken to many people in the eastern suburbs who cannot believe that the government has done this. The only people who have spoken to me in support of this arrangement are those who do not believe that people

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should be able to get access to terminations, vasectomies or contraceptive advice in a public hospital. They have a philosophical objection to it. Fortunately, that is not the law of the land, and people have a right to access those medical services in a public hospital. Everybody else scratches their head and says, “Why on earth would a government enter into such a contract that creates such complications from a medical perspective?” That is putting aside the finance perspective. Somebody who goes into Midland hospital expecting to get advice on, for example, contraception or birth control will be told, “We don’t do that; you’re going to have to go to your GP or to another clinic”, will find that completely bizarre in a modern society.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr D.J. KELLY: I will use the example of a 16-year-old coming into emergency while having a miscarriage, and as part of being treated she seeks advice as to what she can do to make sure that that does not happen to her again. If that happened at Fiona Stanley or Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, she would be given that contraceptive advice there, on the spot, as part of being treated for that unfortunate miscarriage. At Midland Health Campus she will not be given that advice because St John of God does not give out contraceptive advice. That 16-year-old who has presented with a miscarriage and sought advice as to how she may not get into that circumstance again is told to go to the clinic down the road or to her GP. What happens if she does not do that—because that is what happens sometimes—and in 12 months’ time, she presents again with another unwanted, unplanned pregnancy? I say to the Minister for Health that continuity of care for that woman has been compromised because he has put a gap between the care she needs and where she can get it. The minister needs to take responsibility for that. He did not have to do that. He had the choice of giving this contract to another healthcare provider, either the Department of Health or another provider, that would make available the whole range of services. Unwanted pregnancies are a big issue in the eastern suburbs, but the minister has made the decision that at the Midland Health Campus—a \$360 million public health facility—contraceptive advice will be compromised because the provider he chose believes it to be unethical. The Minister for Health and every government member will have to take responsibility for the outcomes of just one example of what may occur.

I want to deal with a few other issues affecting my electorate. There is a very good community group in my electorate called Blue Sky Community Group. For decades it has provided very good financial planning advice to people in my electorate who have fallen upon hard times. Up until last Christmas, it provided emergency food vouchers and financial counselling, and it did it well. At Christmas it was advised that the \$50 000 per year it received from the federal government for emergency food relief was to end. The \$100 vouchers that it provided every year to more than 400 families in my electorate were to come to an end because of federal government cutbacks. It was then told in January that it would lose \$90 000 of federal government funding that in part paid for two financial counsellors who provided financial advice to people in my electorate.

It is hard to imagine two crueller cuts in a suburb like Lockridge—removing emergency food relief and removing financial counselling services—but that is what the new federal social services minister, Scott Morrison, did to Blue Sky. I know that members opposite will say, “Oh, that’s federal government; what can we do?” If I can put it this way, the Premier was head of the Tony Abbott cheer squad here in Western Australia. He said that a Tony Abbott government would look after Western Australia. This is a clear example of Tony Abbott abandoning the people in my electorate who are really doing it tough. As far as I am aware, the state government has said nothing to the federal government about these funding cuts. I have written to the relevant state minister, who I think is Hon Helen Morton, and to Scott Morrison, asking for these funds to be reintroduced. I have since heard that Blue Sky has been given an additional one month’s funding for emergency food relief, and that a decision on the funding for financial counselling will be laid over until the May budget. I can only urge members opposite to lobby Tony Abbott to reverse these changes. Members opposite wanted him as Prime Minister. The withdrawal of these sorts of services from our suburbs will only lead to people being more desperate, more likely to lose their homes, and more likely to be unable to pay their power and water bills—the bills that the state government put up so dramatically. I urge members opposite to do what they can to lobby the federal government to reinstate this funding. I really marvel at the people at Blue Sky; day after day, they deal with people who are at their wit’s end. These funding cuts have been a real kick in the guts for them, but I want to pay tribute to the people at Blue Sky for the work they do. I just hope that members opposite are prepared to stand up for them as well.

I want to also talk about the service that is provided by Stand By Me Youth Services in Beechboro. Last year it received Lotterywest funding for an after-school education support program in which students came in after school and were given something to eat and assistance with their homework, and there was a youth worker on hand to deal with a range of issues that might be impacting upon them in their lives. That program interacted with up to 50 young kids each month and cost \$15 000 a year to run, using existing staff, and by all accounts it

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was highly successful. Some of these kids would otherwise have been on the streets after school with no food in their stomachs, looking for something to do. Stand By Me was led to believe that, given that the program apparently met the relevant criteria, the state Department of Education would provide funding for the program this year. It has now been told that that funding will not be forthcoming because of education funding restraints.

This is a \$15 000 program. Stand By Me believes that it can continue running it until 30 June, but if funding is not forthcoming from the education department, the program will have to be discontinued. We spend millions of dollars on policing and graffiti removal and the like; these types of programs are a great way of ensuring that our kids get a decent start in life and a decent education. It will be so counter-productive if that program is lost. I had the pleasure of meeting some of the members of the local policing team in the Beechboro area a few weeks ago at a forum that I organised. This program run by Stand By Me is exactly the sort of program that will make the local policing team's job so much easier. I say to members opposite, the Premier, and the Minister for Education, look at this program; it is well worth funding, and I urge the government to do so.

I am pleased that the Minister for Environment is funding the rebuild of the Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary in Bayswater. It is a man-made sanctuary that needed work done, and I am pleased that the Minister for Environment is spending some money on it. However, I urge him to go a couple of kilometres up the river and look at the state of the wetlands at Ashfield Flats in my electorate. The erosion of the Swan River at that location is at crisis point; there are trees falling into the river because of the erosion. The adjacent wetlands is a Bush Forever site, but the landowner has no management plan to protect it. The landowner is, in fact, the Western Australian Planning Commission. The state government is letting a Bush Forever site, one of the few remaining wetlands adjacent to the Swan River, degrade to a point at which it could disappear as an environmental asset. I say to Minister Jacob, take a look at this wetland. He has spent money on things such as retaining walls in South Perth. That may be very important expenditure for the amenity of the river in a place such as South Perth but can he please look at the state of the riverbank and the wetlands at Ashfield? If we are truly going to protect the Swan River, we must care for those wetlands. We have two great local groups, the Bassendean Preservation Group and AshfieldCAN. The volunteers there have spent many hours working on the wetlands. They need the support of the state government, as the landowner, to do the right thing.

Finally, I reiterate Labor's opposition to the latest version of the state government's shark cull program. The government now has what is called a serious threat policy, whereby it has already attempted to use drum lines to catch sharks that it believes pose a serious threat. A serious threat can be as minor as a tagged shark being detected by a beacon off our coast on a number of occasions in a short period. This serious threat policy has no scientific basis. Labor will not support killing sharks when there is clearly no benefit from it. It will not make our beaches safer; it is a waste of resources; and, clearly, the science does not support it. I ask the Premier to do something sensible and put the serious threat policy behind him and follow the science, not the headlines.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [9.41 pm]: I listened closely to the Premier's Statement earlier today. I have not seen *Hansard* but I listened closely and I heard all kinds of mixed messages, especially in relation to my environment portfolio area. On the one hand, the Premier was keen to talk about our scientific wealth and about what he said was arguably our greatest asset—our natural heritage. He said that greater effort would be put towards biodiversity conservation as a scientific initiative, and that sounds good. I also heard in the Premier's Statement several comments about how the Environmental Protection Act needed reforming; how we needed to rid ourselves of red tape; how the clearing permit system needed further "refinement"—I think was the term he used—and that there needed to be further reforms to the Mining Act and cutting red tape so that approval times can become shorter. I do not believe that is something the industry necessarily wants. It wants good quality assessment and good quality regulation in which there is clarity of purpose. I believe those opposite have been taken in by this notion that any form of regulation that can be deemed to be red tape is bad and this slogan of "red tape" is something they cling to and use as an excuse for the elimination of important regulatory measures.

During the break, I was able to get down to the Ravensthorpe, Esperance and Albany areas. Part of my motivation for going down there, not just because it is a wonderful part of the state, was a report I had seen about the Shires of Esperance and Ravensthorpe putting a submission to cabinet for the release of unallocated crown land mostly in the Shires of Ravensthorpe and Esperance. When I heard this, I was extremely surprised because I recall how, back in the early 1980s, it was realised that the agricultural potential of much of that unallocated crown land was not great. There are two major factors: high rainfall variability and unsatisfactory soil types, which relates to salinity issues. Back in the early 1980s, when people were asking whether we could release more land, a sensible decision was made to not go that far north from the south coast. We talk about the clearing line and we need look only at a satellite map to see that quite productive strip of agricultural land along the south coast, but it does not extend far inland. I was therefore very concerned to hear that the Shire of Esperance in particular was keen to get the unallocated crown land sold for agriculture. I had useful meetings with the shire

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 17 February 2015]

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and others. I will go through some of my observations from those meetings and explain where I think the shire's motivation came from.

Before venturing too far out, I was able to have a meeting with Winthrop Professor Stephen Hopper, who is well known to the house, and who was the head of Kew Gardens for a number of years. He is certainly one of the world's most eminent botanists. The point he made to me was, "Why would you ever contemplate destroying the unique and irreplaceable?" That is how, from a botanical perspective, he sees the floristic value of so much of that land currently deemed to be unallocated crown land. Professor Hopper has researched many areas and is, of course, one of our most notable academics. I note that one of his current areas of scientific research is particularly fascinating; it relates to the collaborative cross-cultural knowledge systems of biodiversity—Noongar and western science. This is an issue of how we consider and look after the land on the south coast. It is all very well for someone like me to look upon it as having great biodiversity significance but what about the first people of this country? What significance did they see in this land and how did they view it? It was quite a revelation to me to hear that just as we have got various natural zones and different ecological provinces meeting, we also have a meeting point of different Aboriginal groupings. They, naturally, used the natural environment as a way of signposting whose territory was whose. Where there is that boundary, we would see any number of signposts, perhaps indicating that this is their territory and not someone else's but perhaps more interestingly, indicating, "This is our area; we're saltwater people; these are some of the stories from our saltwater country; and you're inland people; these are some of the stories from your area." It was a communication frontier that we would see. This is what is going through part of the currently unallocated crown land referred to as the Great Western Woodlands. It has incredible Indigenous cultural heritage values as well as biodiversity values. That was quite a striking revelation to me and that is something I want to learn a lot more about. I was disappointed that it was not discussed when people were talking about the potential for a release of land in this area. I do not believe the native title aspect has been properly considered either. What really galls me is that the Minister for Agriculture and Food and the Minister for Environment received the presentation at the cabinet meeting that the Shire of Esperance made a presentation to. By all accounts, they did not express a view on the proposal for the release of the unallocated crown land. I find that especially disappointing because I think the Shire of Esperance is building up a head of steam. It has been told that because it is getting royalties for regions money under the SuperTowns scheme, it has to be able to tick a box to show that it is looking at economic development and it is desperate to find ways to develop the town of Esperance in particular.

The shire wants young people to come back to Esperance, find a career and develop their lives around Esperance. It believes that agriculture is the best option for economic development in Esperance. The problem is that the shire has not been getting the best information. At that cabinet meeting with the Shire of Esperance, it was deprived of further information. Surely the Minister for Agriculture and Food would have been in a position to present information to the Shires of Esperance and Ravensthorpe about the soil types of the area, indicating the lack of suitability for agricultural practice. Surely the Minister for Environment would have been able to tell the shires that their project would impact on the Great Western Woodlands, an area for which a growing body of scientific research highlights the environmental significance. As I indicated before, there would be all sorts of issues around Indigenous heritage as well. It is disappointing that departmental information was not presented to the Shire of Esperance. As a result, I think it is still hoping that things can go on. It is prepared to listen to external advice and it is particularly keen to hear of local support. My concern is that that local support needs to be well informed.

In passing, I note that I have some documents that date back from the days when Doug Shave was Minister for Lands. I have records of act of grace payments that were made to people who acquired land in that last land release. To put this into perspective, people are saying that this land release could be as big as 200 000 hectares. That is an absolutely massive amount of land; it is a huge area. Some of the parcels of land that were released in the 1980s proved to be totally unsuccessful as farms. These farms are in the very same area that we are talking about potentially releasing land. Because the land was found to be so unsuitable, the then Minister for Lands saw fit to put a submission to cabinet on 30 November 2000. In one case cabinet approved an act of grace payment for an amount of \$500 000 because the land was not suitable for agriculture. Why on earth would the Minister for Agriculture and Food not have said to the Shire of Esperance that people in his department have looked at this area and they have said that it is not suitable for agriculture? Why would he not tell them that right up-front? Instead, when the Minister for Environment was asked by media outlets what he thought of the potential release of land down there, his glib response was that there is no proposal before government as yet. It is all very well to talk about things as a defined proposal in the sense of a proposal as it is defined under the Environmental Protection Act, but what about giving people the right information at a very early concept stage?

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I think it is only fair to inform people and I think it is a good way to treat them—to give them the information up-front.

I had the opportunity to meet with an Esperance Nyoongar man, Doc Reynolds, who runs a business called Kepa Kurl. He took me to see some of the Indigenous values of the area. It was fascinating to see a piece of rock art depicting a whale, suggesting, as I was saying before, that the people who created this particular petroglyph were trying to communicate with inland people what they see in their saltwater country. It is fascinating stuff. These are the sorts of values that we really need to highlight in that part of the state. I go back to the comments made by the Shire of Esperance that it is desperate for economic development opportunities. It thinks that broadacre agriculture is its best bet. That is what it really wants to go for. I was sitting with the shire president, Malcolm Heasman, a very pleasant gentleman; vice president Victoria Brown; and the CEO, Matthew Scott. We had a very nice session at a little cafe looking out at the Recherche Archipelago. We have that magnificent spread of islands and a diversity of activities there. I have been over to Woody Island on different occasions. There are incredible tourism opportunities there. We have other things to do with Indigenous heritage and other cultural heritage features. There is, of course, Cape Le Grand National Park and Cape Arid National Park, and people can climb up Frenchman Peak. There are any number of things, including the beautiful opportunities at Lucky Bay. It is an area that is so well endowed. The renewable energy options there are absolutely fabulous. There is so much potential in the area that I am disappointed that some of the community's leaders see that agriculture is the main way forward. I think they need to review that. Certainly, when I was at Mt Ridley, I could see the Indigenous heritage riches that are so much a part of that landscape, and they relate so well to the biodiversity. What a fabulous learning that would be. When I was driving back to Perth, I went along Cascade Road. That is another area that they are intent on opening up. It goes from Esperance through to Lake King. Again, there is this floristic diversity, a richness and an amazing diversity of plants. Because of the harshness of the landscape and the high variability of the little rainfall that falls down there, this incredible evolution has taken place. I have grave concerns about the land release proposal.

I am much encouraged, though, that people at the University of Western Australia are talking about the potential for this area to be listed as a World Heritage area. They are talking about listing the kwongan of the south west of Australia. I think this is a discussion that we should all be involved in. It is something that the Western Australian community should be really excited about. They make it plain that this World Heritage listing would not conflict in any way with existing industry such as mining, agriculture or forestry; it is principally about the land that is already in the conservation estate. They believe the area has the attributes that would justify a World Heritage listing. We are talking about a huge area of serial sites. The overall area extends from the Shark Bay area right across to Esperance and further east. We are not talking about every hectare there; we are talking about the sites that are already a part of the conservation estate. I applaud those who are talking about this World Heritage listing. I think it is something that the broader community will find extremely interesting. It will have a great educative value, as well as a huge tourism potential. There is no doubt that when people visit World Heritage sites, they see maps indicating other World Heritage sites and it attracts their attention and inspires them to visit other World Heritage sites around the world.

I want to turn to more local environmental issues. I thank the Minister for Environment for staying to this point in the evening. The minister put out an opinion piece about busting the myths about the health of our rivers. Quite rightly, at the time he was talking about some of the nutrient-filtering systems. Like him, I think those systems are great initiatives, but they are not the solution. At times it could be said that they are a bit of a bandaid. We have to attack the cause, not just the symptoms. Yes, we are going to need more in the way of those nutrient-filtering systems.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: When I heard about this, I thought: what are some of the causes? It drew me to review some of the latest advertisements in Monday's *The West Australian* and the various emails I get about land clearing initiatives. The minister especially referred to the Ellen Brook catchment, and there was a report on the ABC by Andrew O'Connor about Ellen Brook. There are some wonderful people working at Ellen Brook who do their very best on nutrient reduction and stripping out the nitrogen and phosphorus. I believe that they, like me, were dismayed when they saw a clearing proposal for 73 hectares in the Ellen Brook catchment put forward by the ABN Group—that is, the Alcock Browne-Neaves Group. They are builders; they are not agricultural people, but amazingly, the proposal they put through was assessed against the 10 clearing principles and it was found to be not at variance to only three of those 10 principles. It was at variance with four of the principles and maybe at variance with three of the principles. I do not know how this proposal ever got through. I was informed by the people at the Chittering Landcare Centre and the Ellen Brockman Integrated Catchment Group that they were told about this proposal back in the middle of the year and they heard about the decision by the government to issue a clearing permit on 29 December 2014. They were more or less on holidays then, as many people are at

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that time, and so they only had 21 days to get in their appeal and they missed it by seven days. Handing out what I would say is a very dodgy proposal and assessment approval such as this one on 29 December when people's attention might be elsewhere just smacks of something gone wrong. I am relieved though, minister, to hear that this is currently under appeal. Somebody did get an appeal in on time, so the minister will be able to show what his new understanding of these issues relating to the importance of native vegetation in the catchment is. I have driven out to that site and had a look at it. I grant the minister that some of the bush is a bit scrappy, but some of it is really good. How on earth the minister's department said that 73 hectares could be knocked over is totally beyond me. It suggests that the minister has something seriously wrong with that assessment process going on there. I just wonder whether people do not feel bullied when they see the name ABN Developments. I know some very charming people at ABN, very good people, but I just wonder what sort of second-guessing goes on that leads to a proposal of this kind being approved. I will put in a question on notice at some point to find out how many other times the minister or his department have issued a permit on the basis of a report containing so many at-variance or maybe-at-variance variance responses. I doubt there is another one. I mean, I hope there are no others as egregious as this one, but that remains to be seen.

However, the issue that the minister talked about was the importance of agriculture and he said he would not want to phase out the highly water soluble fertilisers because he understood them to be essential to agriculture. But on some of these Bassendean sands, if the minister talks to people in the agricultural sector, they will tell him they are totally unsuited to agriculture. There will be no great economic from agriculture on these sands. All it will do is have people put on nutrients that will just wash through. Then, of course, there will be an issue about water and they will need some form of irrigation, but I am told there is no water available, so there is an example of the minister's department not checking on water availability. The department issued a clearing permit and then I suppose that the proponents will find out after they have done the clearing that there is no water for their activity anyway. I suppose when it is ABN, we have to wonder whether this is really all just a ploy to get the land for some form of development. That must be manipulating the system. This land is currently zoned rural and the application is for rural activities that reflect a colour-coded town planning scheme—no reflection of the land capability at all—but it is an unsuitable manoeuvre all round. The minister really has to do some work when it comes to that issue. If the Premier was speaking with any degree of accuracy in his Premier's Statement earlier today, the thought of further snipping away at the land-clearing assessment process and the Environmental Protection Act is very, very worrying indeed.

I have to touch on the issue of climate change. We seem to be constantly getting reports from eminent scientists telling us that their original projections, if anything, were not as pointed or as serious as what we are experiencing. The latest projection from the Australian Academy of Science is contained in a booklet entitled "The Science of Climate Change: Questions and Answers". Members might like to give this booklet to constituents who are still unclear on this issue. One of its key points is that 2014 was the hottest year on record and that 14 of the warmest years on record have occurred during the first 15 years of this century. The consequences of that are enormous. I note the Minister for Emergency Services' comments over the last few weeks about the Northcliffe fires and about what amount of prescribed burning would have helped when there was canopy-to-canopy burning. Are we seeing an increase in the amount of canopy-to-canopy fires? We really need to discuss all of these things. I do not believe that there is enough openness in government. I recall when Judy Edwards was environment minister and I remember a very large public forum that was held over a couple of days at which some very useful discussion took place about fire practices including the use of prescribed burning. It must be 10 years since that event and we need to hold another event so that we can get the very best of public knowledge together and assess how dramatically things have changed.

I now want to talk about how we respond to climate change and about how Western Australians can make their contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. There seems to be an absolute policy vacuum on this issue. Of course, at one stage greenhouse gas emissions was a federal government issue. During that time we in this Parliament were able to not have to worry about introducing policies or putting on assessments and projects for some form of greenhouse gas mitigation because the federal government's emissions trading scheme was going to deal with that. But that system was removed and a growing number of projects are coming through that will not be covered by anything. The Minister for Environment must address that policy vacuum. For example, Chevron's Wheatstone project was all signed up for the ETS, and Chevron was prepared to bear the costs associated with the ETS—but then the ETS collapsed and the minister said, "No, I'm not going to reissue any state form of mitigation." That is terrible. There is nothing. Chevron has had a free kick.

Minister Marmion's approval statement said that at the very least—bear in mind that this project has 10 million tonnes of CO₂ associated with it per year—of the 10 million tonnes, the 2.3 million tonnes that comes from the reservoir, from below the seabed, when the gas comes out of the ground should be covered by a state-based

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scheme at the very least. Let me suggest that at the very least 2.3 million tonnes is the absolute minimum. If that is multiplied out, how many millions of dollars were Chevron prepared to pay? Whatever sequestration rate was taken, perhaps we are talking in the order of \$50 million if it were \$20 a tonne of CO₂, or something like that. Chevron was prepared to pay somewhere around \$50 million and this government has just given it a windfall by saying that it does not have to pay. What about future projects? That is the policy vacuum question the government has to deal with. I understand that the Environmental Protection Authority has reported to the government on this issue, and we need to know what it says. That is another issue that we will be returning to.

Problems in the environment portfolio are of great significance, but, indeed, problems in my electorate are also of a magnitude that is causing real concern to my constituents. I am afraid that the worst example is in the education portfolio, and it concerns the very severe cuts in funding to Southern River College. The Minister for Education has attempted to dismiss various questions by journalists as their failure to understand how the student-centred funding model works. One cannot escape the fact that Southern River College in my electorate has received a dramatic cut to its funding. The school received a funding cut of \$495 000 that was communicated to it only on the last day of term 2014. The minister still says that this is because the government is implementing a student-centred funding model. Southern River College has seen a dramatic increase in student enrolments. It has gone from around 500 to 600 students to over 1 000 students. It is becoming a school of choice. It is a school that is going places. I will declare a personal interest: I am on the school board. The school is doing really well. There has been a dramatic increase in the school population, but the Minister for Education is still pretending that that warrants a decrease in the school's overall budget. It just does not make sense.

Finally, another issue of concern to my electorate, which is very disappointing and sad to hear about, is the further graffiti attacks on the Masjid Ibrahim, sometimes known as the Southern River mosque. The masjid is just outside my electorate, in the member for Southern River's electorate, but it is a place of worship for many people in my electorate. We have seen some horrible events over the last few months. If these attacks are the start of a series of hate crimes, we have a very serious problem in our community. To calm a volatile situation, I wonder why those who want to satirise do not begin by satirising their own culture before satirising other cultures.

There are many issues of concern to people in the Gosnells electorate. We hear the Premier's words in his statement and realise that much of his talk about opening up the state is driven by media spin. I refer to the example of the unallocated crown land that may yet be released.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr J.H.D. Day (Leader of the House)**.