

HIGH ROAD HOTEL, RIVERTON

Motion

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [11.36 am] — without notice: I move —

That the Legislative Council —

- (a) expresses its dismay that the community is set to lose the benefits and amenity of the High Road Hotel in Riverton;
- (b) while respecting the right of any commercial entity to pursue profit, invite Coles' management to also consider the responsibilities a major corporate entity has to the communities in which it operates; and
- (c) requests that Coles reconsider its plans to demolish the hotel.

The High Road Hotel, formally the Riverton Hotel, has served its community for donkeys' years, and served it well. It contains bars, a restaurant, beer gardens, motel units, a bottle shop with the widest range of stock we are ever likely to see, function rooms and a large performance venue. There used to be more of these places but they are disappearing. I recall that there used to be also a lot of family businesses run as local petrol stations. Remember them? They employed mechanics and maybe an apprentice out the back. We do not see too many of those these days.

Hon Peter Katsambanis: We had bowser attendants.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Most of us can operate bowsers.

There used to be locally produced current affairs programs on ABC TV. On *Stateline* WA on 21 April 2006, Dianne Bain reported on a disturbing trend in a story titled "Supermarket giants taking over hotels and pubs in WA". The essential concern contained in that story was that Coles and Woolworths, or their front companies, wanted to buy pubs on big lots that were perfect for large-scale liquor barns. We all know of Max Kay, an identity who has been working in Perth's entertainment scene for decades, who at the time was a Perth City Councillor and who said on the program —

If you consider a pub being very much a character thing every proprietor knows his clientele and he knows what kind of fare to offer them whether it be in food or whether it be in music. All these things will go by the wayside not in the immediate future but give it a year two years and it will be gone.

The Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs recently received a petition via the house about the High Road Hotel. I understand that the tabling member will have some observations to make in a moment. The organiser of the Saving High Road Committee, Mrs Tanya Woosnam, sent a letter to the committee, a document that it has made public. Incidentally, I might point out that she gave birth to another child on Tuesday. I think that is her third or fourth. From the Legislative Council, congratulations to Tanya. I will quote only part of the letter given the time available to me. She wrote —

Dear Simon,

...

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a response in support of petition No 79—provided and signed by members of the local community, in reference to the demolition of the High Road Hotel in Parkwood, to make way for a Coles Shopping Centre

The petition was signed by over 2500 people who agree that they will be losing an important part of the local area, many of whom were unaware that any such plans were going ahead until the petition was provided

...

Initially the community was of the understanding that Coles plans were to pull down part of the High Road and retain a section of the pub with the redevelopment, so that the community still had somewhere to go We have had the opportunity to meet with Coles representatives, and it seems these plans have been changed It is of the understanding the reason for their change is to have more car parking bays it is clear they had no intention of keeping the High Road

...

The High Road Pub is a local icon and has been for over 50 years It is a social hub that is used by a large number of the community for a range of reasons, be it sharing a beer with a friend, hosting various celebrations from birthday's, anniversary's, sporting club functions and to social events such as quiz

nights, local live music arts and even catering to events such as the AFL Grand Final, Melbourne Cup luncheons, Saint Patrick's Day and Australia Day Over the years patrons have made friends there, met their partners and generally enjoyed a good time in its relaxed atmosphere When the liquor licence was originally issued to the High Road Hotel (formerly Riverton Hotel), it was issued on the basis that a hotel would provide a certain amount of community amenity and cater to a variety of customers such as young adults, families, community and sports groups who hold functions there

The High Road Pub is the only local establishment in the area that offers a place for people to go after work to have a drink, relax and unwind There are no other pubs in the area, the closest being the Burrendah Tavern and Market City Tavern—which do not provide the same amenity as the High Road It is possible this loss will lead to a rise in drink driving as those afforded the luxury of having a local to walk, will have to seek other forms of transport to get to and from pubs

We have recently seen the demise and demolition of the Lynwood Arms in a neighbouring suburb and this seems to be a trend of late with liquor establishments in Perth being pulled down only for big business to move in and transform the land for their own gain It feels as if we are losing parts of history as well as available social hubs becoming a thing of the past I can tell you that such intended areas are paramount to the social wellbeing of the communities they stand amongst Not to mention areas available that are licenced and big enough to host related events We do not want to be left with a "booze barn" selling take-away liquor only, including further concerns that have been raised including increased traffic flow, pressure on small businesses etc

Coles acquired the Riverton Hotel, as it was then known, the week before the *Stateline* story back in April 2006. Frankly, I think the place has been well run ever since. I ought to know as I have lived around the corner for 30 plus years. On many occasions I have visited the premises to engage with constituents and others, and I can vouch for that. It is that rarity of things—a neighbourhood pub that is within walking distance. Even on the way home, it is still within walking distance. It is not that much further. It is not a boozier-type pub; it is a decent family-oriented place where people go as family units with little kids. They have family functions there. We will probably hear a bit more about that later. I think the place has been well run by Coles. The bottle shop I mentioned is a later addition by Coles. The hotel public areas have all been refurbished and enhanced more than once. The place is well patronised on all days.

What has been happening? In 2013, after a rezoning was initiated to make it possible, a proposal was dealt with at the joint development assessment panel level, at Coles' initiative, to demolish the existing motel and bottle shop and to demolish the TAB building, which is also on site across the way, and relocate it into a part of the hotel. It was proposed that alterations would be made to the hotel, including demolishing the beer gardens and other parts, and a new Coles supermarket would be built on site. This is what Tanya Woosnam referred to in her submission to the committee. All in all, it seemed like a win-win all around. It was a reasonable development. It is a pity to see beer gardens go, if people like that sort of thing, and plenty of patrons do. This is what the owner of the property wanted to do and it was done with due regard to the needs of all concerned. That all went through. A year later, towards the end of 2014, a new proposal was put in to amend the one that had already been approved. The key elements that then took over were basically to demolish the hotel in its entirety, retain the TAB in its current position and replace the hotel site with some parking bays. I am not surprised that people are most concerned, upset and disappointed with that outcome, and so am I. That is the disappointment that I want to express today on the eve of the likely demolition of that hotel.

The Coles organisation has 270 businesses in WA alone. I wonder whether the head honcho at Coles, whoever it is—it seems impossible to track him down—will ever visit, at least in passing, each one of those businesses. Probably not. Coles has 88 liquor licences in the Perth metropolitan area. It has acquired six hotels in the past 10 years, one of which has been converted into a liquor store. This scenario is perhaps not that unfamiliar to members. They have seen it happen in their own localities. I have mentioned that it just happens that I have knowledge of these particular premises because I live a couple of streets away. But it gives me an ability to give members some testimony about how these premises have served the community and how it would be good if they went on to serve the community. In my quiet little street, although small—it has only a few houses in it—I have seen more than one generation of families in the houses around me walk past while I am out in the yard doing a bit of gardening. We say hello. Perhaps they are casually but smartly dressed. A young mum is getting a bit of an outing. She has a toddler and a pram with a new infant in it. They say, "Hi, Simon. We're just off up the Rivo", where they are probably going to meet friends, perhaps have a meal, perhaps enjoy a Sunday afternoon hour or two in the beer garden and then walk the comfortable distance home before the next phase in a pub's daily routine on a Saturday or Sunday takes over with a band coming on and all the rest of it. Not once in those 30 years have any of my neighbours gone past and said, "G'day, Simon. We're just off up to Coles" or Woolworths. They do not do that. We should understand that these things matter to my constituents.

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Let me make a couple of things clear in closing, and I want to make it quite clear. Coles, like any commercial entity, has a right to expand its business and to pursue profits for the benefit of its shareholders. Indeed, its executives and its board have a responsibility to facilitate that as well. It is entitled to build more and more supermarkets if it wants to. Did members know that in the City of Canning there are five Woolworths supermarkets—there were in 2006 when I last saw a survey—and only three Coles supermarkets. What a terrible imbalance that needs to be redressed! If Coles wants to go on building supermarkets, Coles is entitled to do that. Coles is entitled to buy property. If Coles is the owner of a pub, Coles may demolish it and build car parking bays if it wants to. It has the right to do that, and it can. Let me make something else clear. My community is getting fed up to the back teeth with major corporations that ultimately justify their actions by saying because they can, and with those who make decisions in boardrooms in Melbourne that affect our community without a moment's thought for that community or, worse, without caring, if they do know, because they can. The challenge facing Coles in this specific matter, and the challenge I put to Coles even at this late hour, is this: I challenge Coles to change its mindset a little; to give a little more consideration to its existing patrons and customers at the High Road Hotel. It has been serving them well, it is serving them well, and I hope it serves them well in the future. On this occasion, Coles has the opportunity to show genuine community support just because it can.

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the Opposition) [11.51 am]: I am delighted that Hon Simon O'Brien has raised the issue of the High Road Hotel in the house today because I was the member who tabled the petition in this house after I was contacted late October or early November last year by members of my community about this issue. This motion is about what we want to have in our suburbs; it is about the amenities we want in our suburbs. It is also about the level of frustration members of the community and people who use the High Road Hotel have had at every turn. Every time the community has raised its concern about the changes that Coles has proposed at this site, the response from everyone the community has tried to contact has been: Coles is acting within its rights; as a private owner of private land it is acting within its rights, and that is the end of it. The community is frustrated because it has not been able to engage in a conversation about what it is that we want in our suburbs, in our communities and, therefore, how can the policy levers be pulled in the right way to deliver the community's outcomes. The community is frustrated because everybody keeps saying, "Well, the owners of the land are operating within the legal framework, and we are not going to have a conversation about what the community wants."

When the process started, approval was granted for Coles to effectively cut down the size of the footprint of the pub, to put in place a liquor store and to build a new Coles. Everybody approved of that. Nearly a year later, Coles submitted an application to amend the development such that the hotel was completely demolished. That is a fundamentally different proposition from the proposition to which the community had first agreed and about which the community had felt quite relaxed. Completely demolishing the hotel is a fundamentally different proposition, and when community members heard about it, alarm bells started to ring. They have genuinely tried their best. They have had meetings with Coles, conversations with the local council and written to ministers—they have done all of that. Their sense of frustration is because, just as Hon Simon O'Brien has outlined, this is a good pub. It is a pub where the darts club meets. It is a pub where a range of different functions can occur at the same time. The most recent function I held there was a surprise farewell function for a member of my staff who finished working for me in February. We held it on a Friday night in the beer garden out the back. Her kids came along and a whole bunch of different people were coming and going throughout the course of the function, and it was a perfect spot for that function. We could see directly into the bistro and noticed that the place was full on a Friday night—full of ordinary groups of people who, it looked to me, had either come directly from work or were there as a family having dinner out on a Friday night. This is not one of those big pubs where there is antisocial behaviour. This is not one of those big pubs that is full of—if I can sound like an old person—young idiots driving around in their cars in the car parks afterwards. This pub is an ordinary suburban family pub, and it provides a meeting venue in which people can get a drink and something to eat, and maybe have a meeting of their local community group or maybe have a catch-up with people in their sporting or social club after functions down the road. The sense of loss is magnified because the nearest pub, the Lynwood Arms, was closed down several years ago as well, so the capacity for the local community to go to a place where they can get a quiet drink and something to eat and have a catch-up with the footy club after training, or whatever it is, has been diminished. For what purpose, they ask: to add a Coles supermarket about 100 metres down the road from a Woolworths supermarket at Riverton Forum. Really? Do we really need a Coles and a Woolworths in the same vicinity, and to achieve that great social aim must we destroy a suburban amenity? It does not make any sense to people, and they are really feeling terribly frustrated about it.

When the community wrote to the City of Canning about this matter, the City of Canning wrote back and said that it had acted within the law and that the owner of the land, Coles, is acting within the law. When the community wrote to the Minister for Planning, the minister replied that Coles is operating within the legal

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framework and it can do whatever it wants with the land. That answer is technically and legally correct, but it really has felt to Tanya Woosnam and the people involved in the group campaigning to save the hotel that they have not been able to have a say in the kind of community they want to live in; the kind of community they want to live in is one in which they can have a place to go that is a social hub of the community. That is what the High Road Hotel is—it is a social hub of the community—and the community is feeling really frustrated that it has lost the capacity to do that.

This matter goes to the point that Hon Simon O'Brien made—that is, to corporate responsibility—to look beyond the immediate necessity to have the 278th, or whatever it is, Coles supermarket. This is not just an attack on Coles, because both big retail outlets are pursuing the same agenda to buy land for this purpose. I assume that the motivation of this is that the zoning is not dissimilar, that there are not huge blocks of vacant land on which new supermarkets can be built inside existing built-up metropolitan suburbs. I assume that is the motivation and that the hotel land is easier to convert into a supermarket. There may well even be an argument that says that people are perhaps spending less time in bigger pubs and so those bigger footprints of land are becoming available, except in this case because people are using this pub. It is not the case that it is not being used; it is not the case that the local community is not using the facility at all. The pub is a valuable part of the community, and I am realistic enough to expect that Coles is not going to change its mind, but I really hope that it does.

It is entirely possible and entirely consistent with the first version of its application for Coles to put on that site a new supermarket, a liquor outlet and a smaller hotel. That is an outcome that the community can live with. The community is not saying it does not want a new Coles supermarket. The community is happy for Coles to build a new supermarket, as long as Coles keeps at least part of the hotel. There is no reason Coles cannot do that and also achieve the outcome of getting its 278th—if that is the right number—Coles supermarket. If that is what Coles needs, it can have that, but it should keep the hotel as well, in a reduced size, and the local community would be happy to live with that.

This reveals to me that we need to do more about giving third parties a voice in the approvals process. I know there is currently a parliamentary inquiry into this issue. A deliberate decision was made by this government to change the approvals process and take out the local politics, if we want to refer to it as that, which has been accused of bogging down the approvals processes. However, the pendulum has now swung too far. The people in and around Riverton are shocked that they did not get an automatic voice in this process. They are also pretty frustrated, because everybody is saying to them, “The owner of the land is operating within the legal framework, and we cannot have a conversation with you about anything else.” There is room for a conversation—if it is not in this place, I do not know where the hell it is—about the kind of social amenity we want in our suburbs.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Members, the question is that the motion be agreed to. I note, minister, that Hon Peter Katsambanis sought the call earlier, but if the minister is responding on behalf of the government, I am happy to give her the call first.

HON HELEN MORTON (East Metropolitan — Minister for Mental Health) [12.01 pm]: Thank you, Madam Deputy President. I will be very short, I am sure.

These comments are not to refute anything that anybody has said. It is really just putting on the record what the government's position is and what the government has undertaken so far in this process. I will begin once again with some history on the land use planning status of the site on which the High Road Hotel in Riverton sits. The subject site fronts High Road, Riverton, and shares a common boundary with Stockland Riverton Shopping Centre to the west. I am advised that the Minister for Planning approved the rezoning of the subject land from “Residential R17.5” to “Shopping” on 9 August 2013. As part of the rezoning process, the amendment was widely advertised for community consultation during September 2012. The outcome of the amendment was that shopping and retail uses were identified as permitted on the site under City of Canning town planning scheme 40. An application for planning approval for a supermarket and liquor outlet, which is consistent with the zoning, was lodged with the joint development assessment panel in August 2013. As part of this application, the existing motel was to be removed and the hotel and TAB were to be retained in a modified form. Conditional approval of the development was subsequently issued by the JDAP in November 2013. Following the conditional approval in November 2013, the applicant submitted a proposed amendment to the JDAP seeking approval to change the main facade and elevations of the shopping centre, demolish the hotel and carry out modifications to the parking layout. I am advised that the changes were considered by the JDAP and supported, subject to conditions, on 23 October 2014. I am further advised that the City of Canning carried out consultation with adjoining landholders about variations proposed by the development applicant for both the original application and the revised application.

Hon Simon O'Brien raised the issue of the demolition of the hotel and the redevelopment of the site for shopping uses. It is understood that there are no valid planning grounds for the City of Canning or the JDAP to refuse to approve the demolition of the building in this instance, particularly when it is not identified as worthy of

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conservation under the City of Canning town planning scheme or included in the city's municipal heritage inventory. Although it is acknowledged that the community considers the hotel to be an important focal point, the building is located on private land, and the continued use of the building as a hotel is a decision for the landowner—a point that was alluded to by both the member who moved the motion and the subsequent speaker.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Members, the question is that the motion be agreed to. I will give the call to Hon Kate Doust, and then Hon Peter Katsambanis. I am required to give people the call across the chamber.

Hon Kate Doust: I am happy for Hon Peter Katsambanis to go first.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I give the call to Hon Peter Katsambanis. I am here to serve the house.

HON PETER KATSAMBANIS (North Metropolitan) [12.05 pm]: Thank you, Madam Deputy President.

I thank Hon Simon O'Brien for bringing this motion to the house, because it highlights a couple of issues that I feel very passionately about. People might say that these issues are contradictory, but hopefully in the short time that I have today I will highlight that they are not contradictory at all.

I firstly want to highlight that everyone in this house would realise and understand that I fully support the right of private individuals and private companies to make their own decisions, totally unfettered other than by the rule of law that applies to them, as was pointed out quite eloquently by the Minister for Mental Health in her contribution to this debate. Of course corporations have the right to maximise their profits—their shareholders demand it—and large corporations such as Wesfarmers, of which Coles is a part, do attempt to maximise their profits, and their shares are held by almost all Australians, either as direct shareholdings or indirectly through their superannuation funds. It is, therefore, incumbent upon these corporations to make profits for the betterment of our society, and that goes without saying.

However, at the same time, this motion and this debate have highlighted something that I really believe in; that is, that social institutions and social value are not derived by governments going out and building buildings. They are derived organically from the bottom up by communities. It is clear from what both Hon Simon O'Brien and Hon Sue Ellery have said that the High Road Hotel in Riverton is one of those businesses that has become a hub in the community. That has happened organically. It has not happened by decree. It has not happened by legislative action. It has not happened by government deciding that it will build a community centre or something on a patch of land. It has happened because someone thought they could make a bit of money by setting up a pub. In order to do that, they had to create an atmosphere that would attract local people to go there, have fun and enjoy themselves, and value the institution that has been created. That is fantastic. The High Road Hotel is a great example of that, and it is replicated across our suburbs, regional cities and country towns. We all know the institution that is the country pub. There is a pub in almost every country town. It is the same in our suburbs as well. People derive great value from these places. They are social institutions. They break down barriers of isolation.

However, pubs serve a number of other purposes that we sometimes forget. One of those purposes is to demonstrate to young people that drinking is only a part of social interaction; it is not the purpose of social interaction. There is no better way to demonstrate that than by taking the family to the local bistro and having a meal and a chat, perhaps running into neighbours or friends, and incidentally to that having a glass of beer or a glass of wine or a Coca-Cola, or whatever takes their fancy. I think that is important. Pubs also encourage people to drink in public and around other people. The concept nowadays has been refined to the term "responsible service of alcohol". That means people are not taking packaged liquor away to drink at home, possibly to excess, and the access to alcohol in a pub by underage people can be monitored. In fact, that is a condition of the licence, and licensees take those conditions extremely seriously. Again, with packaged liquor, we know that people who either look 18 years or are 18 years are often tasked with securing alcohol for under 18s, which is a less than optimal outcome. The fact that it is a pub rather than a takeaway liquor outlet assists in ensuring that underage drinking is minimised. That is the social capital built up by a private business.

I want to look at why an organisation such as Coles, which is a division of Wesfarmers and which is a socially responsible organisation run by managing director Richard Goyder, who would be known to members in this place as a wonderful Western Australian, does this. Coles and Wesfarmers do not take these decisions lightly. They are not fly-by-nighters and they do not want to destroy the fabric of society. In fact, they rely on society for their profits and ongoing viability. Why do organisations such as Coles or private individuals who might own only one pub decide to shut down pubs left right and centre and move to other enterprises, be they supermarkets or residential developments? As the minister pointed out in her contribution, this piece of land was zoned residential and the pub was a nonconforming land use until the recent series of rezonings. We could have ended up with a residential development instead of a pub. Why is this happening and who is causing it? I submit that this diminution in the attractiveness of owning and operating pubs is caused by governments at the federal, state and local government levels. We are effectively regulating and legislating pubs out of existence. We continue to

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put massive barriers in the way of the people who operate these places. We do that through heavy restrictions on opening hours. Recently, a review of liquor licensing recommended a tiny extension of Sunday general trading hours of pubs from 10.00 pm to 12 midnight. I look forward to that legislation coming into this place so we can put it into effect. It is a small change that might add a bit of profitability.

We also fetter pubs with penal provisions around penalty rates. These are labour-intensive businesses and they primarily operate outside the nine-to-five environment. In fact, they rely upon people popping in after work and operating on weekends and public holidays to be viable. We continue to smash pubs with penalty rates. We bring in restrictions, and we bring them in on a one-size-fits-all basis. I pick up on some of the comments of Hon Sue Ellery, who said that this hotel was not a place where idiots went to cause trouble and it was not featured on the late-night news or in the newspapers as having had brawls and people spilling out into the streets; it was a place where people went to have a couple of drinks, a meal and a chat, and then they went home. We impose on those good businesses—those good pubs that are not bloodhouses, to use an old-fashioned term—the same restrictions and requirements that we impose on a place that has a bad record of compliance with its obligations. Through red tape, taxes and more legislation, we make it harder and harder for these places to exist.

When members get up in this place and talk about the great contribution that local institutions such as hotels and other businesses make to the coherence of our society, we need to look into ourselves and ask: Do we really mean that? Do our actions prove that or have our actions as legislators, be it in this place or in federal Parliament or in local government, over time demonstrated the complete opposite? Have we made it harder and harder for publicans to turn a buck? Whether the publicans are the couple down the road running a little family hotel, a large organisation that runs four or five places or a big publicly listed company such as Wesfarmers, Coles and Woolworths, they all say that we are making it impossible for them. They say, “Take your foot off our throat, and let us continue to run these important places that the community values.” As other speakers have said, this place is pretty full at most times. Despite the fact that it is full, the cost structure—the legislative noose around the publican’s neck—is making it impossible for these people to turn a buck, and that is why pubs are closing across the metropolitan area.

HON KATE DOUST (South Metropolitan — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [12.15 pm]: I am very pleased that Hon Simon O'Brien moved this motion today. I fully support both his and Hon Sue Ellery's words about this being a significant issue for the people who live on and around High Road in Riverton. I note that this has been an ongoing campaign in that area, and we need to congratulate the group involved for the way it has gone about engaging the community to support the retention of this hotel through the media and by collecting a significant number of signatures on a petition, which I understand still resides with the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs.

Hon Simon O'Brien's motion raises some significant matters. I agree with the member about the level of dismay in the community. I appreciate that the member referred to 2006, when there was a significant transaction of long-term hotels, predominantly in and around the metropolitan area, to the major retailing companies, Coles and Woolworths. Over the last few years, there has been a change in ownership of some of the quite vibrant local hotels in the south metropolitan area, such as the Leopold Hotel on Canning Highway, which is now owned by a major retailer. The Willagee pub, which was a major workman's pub, has totally disappeared and is now a Woolworths supermarket. I think the Cooby pub has gone, and the Lynwood Arms has disappeared. Multinational companies are cherrypicking and purchasing these sites, having the land use converted and putting up new supermarkets. As my colleagues said, it is their right as private owners to use that land for whatever purpose they choose but, as corporate entities, they have an ethical obligation to the community to think about the purpose and the value of those types of institutions in the community and how they have operated. Hon Simon O'Brien is right; people talk about going off to the pub to have a meal or a drink or to take the kids for a lemon squash; they do not talk about going off to the local supermarket. I see that where I live in Victoria Park. The Victoria Park Hotel is now owned by a retailing outfit. There are a number of taverns and pubs near where I live in Victoria Park. As a family, we regularly walk down to the Broken Hill Hotel or the Victoria Park Hotel, or we go up to the Balmoral Hotel for a feed. It is great to see families or young people together at all hours. They might not be having a beer; they might be having a coffee and a meal. But it is a gathering point for the local community where people can talk about a range of things. We do not necessarily see that type of engagement in a supermarket. I like to talk to people in supermarkets, but that is just a bit of my background.

I think these venues hold a strong place in communities, and it is a real shame that we are seeing them being cut out of the fabric of those communities. I grew up in a country town, Coolgardie, and the pubs played a very important role in that community. Of course, people would drift off to the pub on a Saturday afternoon, because there was not much else to do in Coolgardie. We would be parked outside with a lemon squash—there would always be a grown-up to keep an eye on us—or we would wander down to Ben Prior's Open Air Museum for a

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bit of a play. If we start to see these types of places disappear, where will young people go; where will young families go for a reasonably priced meal, an afternoon out, a summer's afternoon in the beer garden or an evening out? All these things evoke memories for families and young people. We can all hark back to going to a session at Steve's in Nedlands, which I do not think operates as a pub anymore.

Hon Sue Ellery: I do not know that we want to repeat everything that happened there either!

Hon KATE DOUST: I always had a good time!

We can also hark back to the Captain Stirling Hotel, another pub whose existence is currently under contention. I have been a frequent attendee there over the years. Whenever we finished hockey at college we would go for a drink as a team. I go there now on an annual basis to catch up with my college mates. What will we do when that disappears? That is just a natural gathering point for a group of people who know that that is where we go in the second Friday in February every year for a bit of a catch-up. The "Cap S" is part of that connection for us because we used to live down the road from there and that was the local watering hole. We have seen a lot of hotels just along that strip—the Coronado; the "Cap S"; Steve's, which I referred to; the Highway. A whole list of pubs have disappeared down that way that were all positioned so that people could walk to them. If the High Road Hotel is lost from Riverton, there is the Market City Tavern or the Burrendah, but people will not get in their cars to drive 20 minutes to the Market City Tavern, which sits in a car park essentially; there is not a lot to attract them to that area.

Hon Simon O'Brien: It is an industrial area.

Hon KATE DOUST: That is right; it is an industrial area, so no-one will load the kids in the car to go there. Let us face it, if people want to walk down to the local pub, they might have a couple of beers and it is much safer for them to walk home. If these places do not exist, where will people go to? It is one thing to talk about having a community centre that has been set up by government, but people do not go there on a Friday evening or Saturday afternoon to sit down and have a coffee because that is not the purpose of those types of facilities. They are set up for community groups to have meetings, to run training sessions, to have community forums or to have an early childhood type of event or something like that. They are not set up to provide music, entertainment, food, drink and a relaxed environment. When these types of facilities are lost in the community, the question has to be asked about where people will go. I do not think these companies, which are entirely profit focused, have addressed that question, and I do not think they are entirely required to address it.

A significant point has been raised by my colleagues on both sides about the community's right to have a say, and I think that needs to be addressed. It is a growing issue. When these types of negative changes are mooted, the response in the community is usually quite angry. An inquiry into the development assessment panels process is currently before the committee that I am involved in. I can say this because all the evidence given has been public. The issue of the community having a say in the DAPs process has been one of the consistent themes of that inquiry. It will be interesting to see where that goes, but it is something government will need to address, because communities are demanding, rightfully so, to have a say about what goes on in their backyard. I know currently that in the seat of South Perth there are issues around the Como pub, which is another pub people would walk to with their families and it has been there for probably more than 50 or 60 years. I think there was discussion about that site being redeveloped as apartments and a bottle shop. I have had calls from people in the community about not only that issue but also a range of other developments, and they feel as though they do not have the capacity to have a voice. They feel as though the decisions are totally out of their hands and that because of guidelines put down via council, legislation and regulations and the constraints placed upon the decision-making processes of a joint development assessment panel, individuals or the community at large do not have the right to have a say, and if they try to have a say, they are not listened to and it will not have any impact on the outcome. There is a growing sense of frustration across communities about changes occurring in their areas that will be detrimental to the lifestyle they have enjoyed. There are some serious issues.

With this particular matter, it will be an absolute travesty if Coles proceeds to bowl over and demolish the High Road Hotel in Riverton, because for those 2 500 people—there are probably more—throughout the community it has to be asked: What will they do when that place goes? Where will they go? What type of negative implications will that have in the long term for that community? That is the tragedy of this type of change. I join Hon Simon O'Brien and I hope Coles might give an eleventh hour rethink to the decision it has made and think about the benefits to the community, not just the bottom line of its profit making.

HON KEN TRAVERS (North Metropolitan) [12.25 pm]: I must say at the outset that listening to Hon Simon O'Brien's tales of going down to the High Road Hotel in Riverton I often looked up across the chamber and wondered who he reminded me of. I put a glass of red wine in his hand and from now on he will always be "Sir Les O'Brien" to me!

Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Helen Morton; Hon Peter Katsambanis; Hon Kate Doust; Hon Ken Travers

Hon Simon O'Brien: No worries!

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I have been trying to work out who he resembled. Sir Les is a bit greyer than Hon Simon O'Brien, but I am sure he will catch him eventually! I can see Hon Simon O'Brien propped at his spot at the bar at the High Road talking about that!

On a serious matter, this is not an issue that simply relates to Hon Simon O'Brien's electorate. It is an issue happening across the Perth metropolitan area. For those of us in the North Metropolitan Region, there has been a similar issue and, for the benefit of balance, an issue that involves Woolworths, so we are now able to completely balance the debate. That issue is the Captain Stirling Hotel, which has great heritage value apart from the fact of being a hotel. It is the place I spent my very first night in Western Australia and that alone should see it registered and preserved for all time! Again, there has been an ongoing debate in which Woolworths, as the owner of that site, has sought to have it rezoned to allow it to put in a Woolworths supermarket as part of development there.

Why is this all happening? There is a couple of reasons that this is happening. Hotels traditionally are on significantly large blocks of land within our suburban environment because they were required to provide large volumes of car parking. When one thinks about it, it is kind of ironic these days to think that we wanted people to drive to a hotel; in fact, that is probably the last thing we want them to do if they imbibe there. Hotels were required to have lots of large landholdings around them and the rate of return on the value of having that land as a car park for a hotel, particularly in the inner urban areas, is constantly putting pressure on things. I suspect penalty rates are in fact a very small factor in the rate of return on the land value and the size of the landholding of those car parks, which basically sit there empty.

Hon Simon O'Brien: You make a lot easier money with a big liquor barn rather than running a hotel.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: The Knutsford Arms Hotel, which was a hotel in North Perth known to me in my youth, was converted to housing because the value of the land got to the point at which not enough money could be made out of the land compared with what it was valued at. The North Perth Hotel is another hotel where I spent some time in my youth. It has gone because it was cheaper to put in a Chicken Treat and a BP service station there.

Hon Phil Edman: Drive-ins?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Drive-ins were another thing.

One of the problems with this whole issue, apart from the development assessment panels and the local community involvement, is that we are clearly going through a transformational process as a city in which the inner urban areas are getting denser and that land is needed for a whole range of purposes, sometimes to provide more housing, in the case of the Knutsford, but in other cases, such as that of the Captain Stirling Hotel, to provide services to the people who live in that area. Why is it that a few years ago we did not need a Woolworths supermarket in Nedlands, yet today we do? Interestingly, in the case of the Nedlands Captain Stirling Hotel example, alongside it the traditional neighbourhood shopping centre has just recently been bought by Aldi and will be converted into an Aldi; so we have got these pressures. It comes back to that we have dropped the ball in the last few years about that high level planning. We have it all going on in quite a dysfunctional way. One of the classic areas of that is in the link between transport planning and land-use management, in which case this current government has simply abdicated its responsibility and said to local government, "Increase your density in these areas", but then has not tried to guide how to get good outcomes. So local government has just simply said that it does not know where the transport solutions are, or any of these items are going to be. What it will do is just take a broadbrush approach and rezone large tracts of areas from R20 to R30, and then we get that really higgledy-piggledy messy battleaxe block infill. It would be a far better system if the government engaged in a community debate about where we want that density to occur. Where are we prepared to accept the changes and what are the trade-offs we are prepared to give to get that density done in a good form supported by good public transport? Those are the problems that we are facing in Western Australia at the moment—a lack of a coordinated plan to deal with those pressures that are occurring in our urban areas. The High Road Hotel in Riverton and the Captain Stirling Hotel are all part of the manifestation of the problems of the current processes, and the lack of strategic direction coming from the top; coming from the state government.

I am glad though, that no-one has proffered that the solution to all of this is to go back to the days of the state owning the hotels. Even if we were to buy these hotels, I suspect the state would not be able to see a return on investment for the amount of land that they currently have. There needs to be a complete strategic high-level look at how we want our cities to be functioning, how we want them to be designed, what services and how we provide the zoning of the lands to meet those demands. That is the contribution that I wanted to make this morning.

Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Helen Morton; Hon Peter Katsambanis; Hon Kate Doust; Hon Ken Travers

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [12.32 pm] — in reply: I would like to thank members for their participation and for their general support of the sentiments contained in the motion, because of course, under standing order 112, this is a motion that will not resolve itself in a decision that is binding on anybody.

Hon Ken Travers: Move to suspend standing orders.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Even the suspension of standing orders will not achieve that, because in this case Coles has the prerogative to exercise an attitude of, "Well, we are going to proceed on the track that we have embarked upon because we can" or "No, we are going to listen to the representations that have been made." I know they have been made by many over the last year or two, including the local member, Mike Nahan, MLA, who I understand has organised meetings with Coles and with residents and made public representations himself, all to no avail—and he is an acquaintance of Richard Goyder, the head of Wesfarmers.

I am sincere when I say here is a new challenge and hopefully a new way for this corporate entity to look at its responsibilities. As we have seen through the development of the debate this morning, the place in which we arrive is to invite corporate entities to go beyond the established and understandable view that they have certain rights, powers and entitlements that they can exercise—governments and this place indeed recognise those rights. They should go beyond that and say, "Well, hang on though. When a development decision of ours actually does impact on the established norms of our community and when it takes away something that people have enjoyed forever, perhaps we do have a responsibility to give a little bit more weight to that consideration, even if it does affect our bottom line a bit."

One of the ironies in all of this is that after the amended development application was ticked off by the joint development assessment panel to knock over the pub and get a few extra parking bays—as I have characterised it, but parking is an important issue—they will end up with 289 parking bays. Do members know how many they have now? They have 312! The whole blinking thing and we are actually going backwards 23 parking bays!

Hon Ken Travers: You could do what they did out at Hillarys when the Department of Fisheries put the fishing parks in.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Do not mention Hillarys at the moment!

Hon Ken Travers: They just make the bays smaller to create more bays. That is how they did it.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: That, I am sure, is not the answer because I do not want to see the community short-changed.

When I and my community have the benefit of the review of the situation by experienced and independent third parties, such as the membership of this chamber of the Parliament, I gain comfort from the fact that what I am seeking to put forward—from what Hon Sue Ellery, Hon Mike Nahan and others have also put forward publicly over a period—gives some confidence that what we are asking for is reasonable. Maybe that gives at least some little ray of hope that if they ever get to hear of this debate, some of the mandarins in that vast corporation might actually say, "Well, hang on. Maybe they have got a point. Maybe we can enhance our reputation as individuals and enhance the reputation of our very important organisation", which I might add, employs over 11 000 Western Australians. That means there are 11 000 Western Australians and their families to whom they also owe something.

I think we have made our point today and I guess it is in the lap of the gods now, but I hope that several of us from the South Metropolitan Region have at least acted in good faith and tried to represent the constituents who have petitioned us.

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.