

## ESTIMATES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

### *Consideration of Tabled Papers*

Resumed from 10 August on the following motion moved by Hon Simon O'Brien (Minister for Finance) —

That pursuant to standing order 49(1)(c), the Legislative Council take note of tabled papers 3310A–F (budget papers 2011–12) laid upon the table of the house on Thursday, 19 May 2011.

**HON NIGEL HALLETT (South West)** [11.26 am]: Some time has elapsed since the handing down of the 2011 budget, and already benefits are starting to flow through. I would like to congratulate the Treasurer on the presentation of what has been seen as a responsible budget.

It is an entirely appropriate budget for this time of global uncertainty and economic recovery. When we look at the events of the last week or so, we appreciate the strength that this Liberal–National government has been able to secure for Western Australia and that it will continue to build on in the strong economic foundation in this state. It is a responsible budget and we can keep our eyes on the big picture projects, such as the mining, oil and gas projects in the Mid West and the north west of our state. This will increase the prosperity for Western Australians without forgetting the present need for investment in the social infrastructure. This was achieved this financial year with an unprecedented \$1 billion budget allocation to services for those who need them most in our community. It is the first time that this state has made such an investment. It is an investment in the social infrastructure of Western Australia that is to be commended, and it has greatly increased the support for seniors, people with disabilities, social housing needs, children and families, as well as the other support services that were lacking in past years.

Although we have seen falling levels of state revenue due to the global economic conditions and the inevitable increases of basic services such as electricity, gas and water, these are not and cannot be ignored, but they have to be dealt with. We still have good news in the budget for people of Western Australia and particularly for people in rural and regional areas who were long ignored by the previous Labor government. When in opposition I stood and deplored many times the previous Labor government's years of neglect of rural and regional areas. One must compliment the Barnett Liberal government for turning this around and now addressing these issues. They are now well and truly back on the radar and now we are starting to fix Labor's legacy of neglect. We saw years of record surplus budgets, but what was achieved out of that in rural and regional areas? We saw the closure of police stations. We saw nurse and teacher shortages. We saw the downgrading of country hospitals and schools and indifference to the Ord River project. Where did the previous government see food security? It did not see it. We saw education ministers—many of them—fail to realise the importance of agricultural colleges and the vital role they play in ensuring that the next generation of young farmers are equipped with the knowledge and skills to remain at the forefront of global agriculture knowledge and practices, as they are today. On that note I want to applaud the Liberal–National government's decision to allocate a total of \$136 million over the four years through the royalties for regions program to develop the skills and training facilities in regional Western Australia that will result in the Muresk education precinct as one of its initiatives. In my own electorate of the South West Region, I am pleased to see that the allocation of \$25 million, which has been needed for so very long, was announced in last year's budget for the relocation of the WA College of Agriculture–Harvey. I must acknowledge the work that Hon Peter Collier did in coming down, having a look at the college and, with his knowledge of the facilities required for boarding schools, having no hesitation in making that commitment to fund that college if elected to government. One of the first things that he and the Treasurer at the time, Hon Troy Buswell, did was tick off on the agricultural college. It is a fantastic achievement, and something of which the agriculture sector is very supportive.

I am also pleased to see that the WA College of Agriculture–Denmark will benefit from the share of the \$18 million upgrade in its student and staff accommodation. The state of these accommodation facilities overall has to be seen to be believed, and, as I said, Hon Peter Collier had no hesitation in saying, "Let's address these and get on with it."

Whilst on the subject of educational facilities, it is also pleasing to see that Denmark High School and Pinjarra and Collie Senior High Schools will be the beneficiaries of the regional schools plan, for which \$44.8 million has been allocated this financial year to provide new and upgraded buildings for schools in regional WA.

Referring again to Harvey, which is a vibrant town in the electorate, \$1.19 million will be spent on the ongoing redevelopment of Harvey District Hospital in this 2011–12 financial year. This is a classic example of a hospital that the previous Labor government intended to downgrade and make people travel to the centre of Bunbury. When the redevelopment is complete, it will have a new emergency unit, refurbished inpatient care, ambulance services, a general practitioner clinic, and the transfer of aged-care beds to the private sector. It is a great step

forward for the people of Harvey—as they have put up with a substandard health facility for a long time—in an area that is rapidly growing in population.

Another step in the right direction for regional health services by the Liberal–National government is the allocation of \$565 million announced for the proposed southern inland health initiative, which will be dedicated to substantially reforming and improving access to health care for all residents of the southern inland area of Western Australia. The package will be funded from July 2011 and will include a \$240 million investment in the health workforce and the provision of health services over four years, which includes \$325 million in capital works over the next five years. This investment in our rural and regional health workforce and services will significantly increase the number of private GPs required to improve the medical resources and 24-hour emergency coverage across the southern inland area. This should result in private GPs coming back into country towns and being engaged in a new way of working towards supporting the district network and the changing nature of the workforce and medical practices. That is something that did not occur under the previous Labor government.

[Quorum formed.]

**Hon NIGEL HALLETT:** In the South West region, the capital works aspect of this investment fund will now fund the upgrades of Warren District Hospital at Manjimup and Collie District Hospital. I am sure members are aware that the South West region is one of the most rapidly growing areas in this country. The budget will provide the South West with the resources to continue to work on important projects such as the southern desalination plant; \$62.5 million for building and upgrading schools, which includes \$7 million for east Dalyellup primary school; and \$5.3 million for the trade training centre at Busselton Senior High School. When we add to that the \$7.4 million for continuing work on the Goldfields Highway—a road that Hon Simon O’Brien, in his previous role as minister, viewed personally and committed to make safer—\$16 million for continuing work on the Bridgetown water supply, and funding for Millstream Dam raising, we can see that lots of projects are now starting to be developed and impacted on.

The Great Southern part of the electorate that I represent has been allocated more than \$162.7 million to supply infrastructure to support the Great Southern region. That includes \$94.2 million for the ongoing construction of Albany Regional Hospital and \$15.8 million for various water supply works, which includes \$7 million for the Denmark waste water treatment plant. Members may recall that in previous times Denmark was a town that had huge issues with water and lack of power. These issues are all now being addressed under this Barnett Liberal government.

In Peel we see a further continuation of works for construction of the Mandurah entrance road. We see \$3.1 million to upgrade the Water Corporation’s centralised monitoring control systems in Mandurah. It is also a good thing to see that the Liberal–National government has invested \$169 million in the Western Australian agriculture and food sector. While I am talking about agriculture—I will come back to some of Hon Lynn McLaren’s misinformed comments of a couple of days ago—this investment in agriculture clearly recognises the contribution that agriculture makes to the economy. An amount of \$186.6 million to upgrade the department’s South Perth offices was originally allocated to move the offices to a site near Murdoch University, but will now be used to redevelop these headquarters at South Perth. A further \$48.4 million will be allocated in the 2015–16 financial year to include the Australian Export Grain Innovation Centre. An allocation of \$17 million has been made for the construction of the new Katanning saleyards, which were announced last year, and will also include an upgrade to the saleyards at Boyanup, which are in dire need of redevelopment.

The proposed \$29.2 million water tax licensing fees of the previous government have now been scrapped. One would have to compliment Neil Bartholomaeus from Manjimup. He worked doggedly on this issue for many years when his pleas fell on deaf ears. This water tax was a disgrace. I would also like to make comment on people such as Lyndon Rowe from the Economic Regulation Authority. They just fail to realise the damage their policies do in so many regional areas. It is time these people and their powers were wound back and they were able to provide a balanced outcome in relation to the direct impact on business and consumers in these areas.

I will touch on the live export trade and the outrageous claims made by Hon Lynn McLaren a couple of days ago. One wonders what they have done, and the damage control they have gone into, to see what they can do to help address it. You wonder: have they put their hands in their pockets to support these families? Have they gone out and found any new markets? Do they think about world food security? These people never cease to amaze me that all they have is this one vision and philosophy of saving the world. If we look at the live animal export issue, Australia has the highest standards of animal welfare in the world. If Australia bans live exports, our trade partners will source their livestock from other countries. We have seen that happen with the Indonesian trade—there are boats coming from South America. These countries do not have the same animal standards that Australia has set. Australia needs to continue to work with its live export trade and trade partners to ensure animal welfare standards are improved. I do not think there is anyone in the sector who says we should not be

continually trying to improve animal export standards. There is now 185 000 head of cattle in limbo in Western Australia. I wonder what people like Hon Lynn MacLaren and her group think they are going to do about this. We will see environmental damage and we will see costs to pastoralists in losing a year's income. They say we can process these animals locally. The cost of chilled meat is roughly three times higher than live animals. The lower paid sector in Indonesia cannot afford that. They use lower cuts of meat and their standard of meat is not what Australians have become accustomed to. Markets such as Indonesia—the consumer—do not have access to refrigeration. They require freshly slaughtered meat. This is always referred to as a wet market. Brahman cattle that come out of particularly areas in the north west are bred specifically for export. They are not acceptable on our domestic market, so it is not an option to bring them 2 500 to 3 000 kilometres to the metropolitan or south west areas to process them.

If we look at the impact of cutting this trade on our grain growers in Western Australia, we export over 80 per cent of our grain, but our feed barley market could be severely impacted if Indonesia does not continue to take our cattle. One-third of cattle exports to Indonesia are from Western Australia. We meet the protein needs of at least 18 million Indonesians and, once again, I ask this group that Hon Lynn MacLaren is in: what do they think about supplying this group with food? The live export trade is a key element of viability for many northern Indigenous communities—where will their survival be now?

If we look at the financial impact, around \$170 million could be lost as well as 800 jobs as a direct result of the current suspension. Let us bear in mind that today or tomorrow might be the first ship to actually resume sailing with cattle, but we are now going to lose the majority of those cattle that have gone beyond the weight range that Indonesia will take. Global demand is rapidly increasing for high quality, effectively produced food and fibre. We are well placed to meet these demands but we now being seen as an unreliable trade partner. As I touched on earlier, the environmental impact on our rangelands will be quite profound once the season goes into the normal dry term.

I also want to touch on what role the RSPCA should play on this issue. I think it should be independent. We all care about the welfare of animals. The RSPCA is largely a taxpayer-funded organisation. My belief is it should provide a balanced view on the outcome of livestock issues. Today they follow a philosophical line that is in line with Animals Australia. If an organisation is going to accept taxpayers' money, it has to stand back from giving misleading comments and taking a stance that has important down benefits to a lot of small businesses in Western Australia. If Lynne Bradshaw, as president of the RSPCA, cannot control her board or the members of her organisation, she should resign. She should not be part of a forthcoming rally planned for next Sunday in the proposal to ban live export out of Western Australia and Australia.

We have to consider where food comes from. We can cut all these food supplies out, but where will it come from? Australia is now a net importer of food. As a previous grower of livestock and grain, I get totally sick and tired of listening to these misinformed people who —

**Hon Kate Doust:** Maybe you should get up and talk a bit more often, rather than once a year!

**Hon NIGEL HALLETT:** Do you want to go and have a happy pill again? You've been pretty good up until lately. Why make a crazy comment like that?

**Hon Kate Doust:** Why are you being so condescending? Get on with your speech before time runs out!

**Hon NIGEL HALLETT:** If you didn't interrupt, I would.

**Hon Kate Doust:** It just gives you a break from reading, I suppose!

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Michael Mischin):** Order, members!

**Hon NIGEL HALLETT:** We should be supporting Western Australia's small businesses and livelihoods. We have shown no consideration to the impacts of that.

I think one person who should be thanked is Howard Sattler from 6PR. His support on this issue has certainly been profound. He has been widely covered. He has good support from very well informed people. He has endeavoured to get the right message through, and, as he calls them, make the “mung beans” of this industry who oppose this trade accountable. With those few notes, I would like to finish. Thank you, Mr Deputy President.

**HON ALYSSA HAYDEN (East Metropolitan)** [11.48 am]: I rise to congratulate the government on a very compassionate budget and in particular to the amount dedicated to our community organisations. I would like to acknowledge a number of community groups within the electorate of the East Metropolitan Region and acknowledge the great work they have achieved amongst our community. The people who get involved in these groups are people with very special talents, and are very caring individuals. The support offered by countless organisations is relied on by so many in our community. The Midland Women's Health Care Place is one of these organisations. It is actually a true treasure in the community of Midland. I first met the very enthusiastic,

infectious manager of the Midland Women's Health Care Place, Patsy Molloy, at another organisation in the Swan Valley, the Zonta Club, when she spoke at a Zonta meeting. I was immediately in awe and amazed by this woman. I wanted and needed to find out more about what she did and what she stood for. Since then, I have had the opportunity to meet the extremely hardworking and dedicated staff and board members on a number of occasions at different events and meetings that they have held. I would like to make mention of these very special women: of course, Patsy Molloy—who I mentioned—Huyen Tran, Madeleine Hicks, Sharon Deslandes, Janet Duff, Sue Hisco, Gayle Dunn and Tricia Mitchell. There are also many contracted counsellors who join this vibrant team, and together they have made a workplace that is not only happy but full of energy. These ladies are of course supported by another amazing group of women, who make up the board of management, all of whom work in a voluntary capacity. Those women are Val Ferguson, Mary Papadopoulos, Gilliam Kaub, Judy Wilson, Alison Robartson, Julie Nelson-White, Mary Gadsden and Rachele Roberts. As I said, all of these women work in a voluntary capacity and support the very hardworking and dedicated staff of the Midland Women's Health Care Place. These women provide a very safe place for women and their families who seek assistance in all aspects of their lives covering issues surrounding physical and emotional health, education, exercise, family and the workplace. Their vision is "healthy women; a healthy community". Holding fun activities is an easy way for women to come forward in the community who otherwise would not, especially women from other cultures, of other nationalities and with financial burdens. The Midland Women's Health Care Place conducts classes for belly dancing, Zumba, meditation and yoga, just to mention a few, which has created an atmosphere in which these women feel relaxed to join in and participate, and hopefully seek further services that the Midland Women's Health Care Place provides. Aboriginal family support is strongly needed in and around Midland, and the Midland Women's Health Care Place has been successful in providing antenatal services to Aboriginal mothers, while also supporting and improving their health services as a whole.

In 2010, with the local member for Swan Hills, Frank Alban, we provided support for the application made by the Midland Women's Health Care Place to obtain funding from the state government to establish a community centre to focus on postnatal depression. Patsy and her team undertook to identify and define measures to improve mental health outcomes for children and their mothers in the Ellenbrook community. Ellenbrook has a rapidly growing number of young families, who are often first-time homebuyers, and, if that is not enough to juggle, there is a considerably high number of new fathers who are fly in, fly out workers. The pressure of a new family and a new home, and the current social pressure to have the latest gadgets and a proud home, is enough to put stress on any woman. But to add fuel to the fire, many lose part of their support system when their husbands leave for weeks at a time to go to work. It is not really a surprise that the Midland Women's Health Care Place identified postnatal depression as a real concern in Ellenbrook. As a resident of Ellenbrook and as a member for the East Metropolitan Region, I was delighted when the announcement was made by the Minister for Mental Health, Hon Helen Morton, that the Mental Health Commission would grant \$250 000 to the Midland Women's Health Care Place. This \$250 000 will allow Madeleine Hicks, the senior counsellor at Ellenbrook, to provide Ellenbrook mothers access to perinatal support services. These services will go a long way to assist mothers experiencing depression, anxiety and loneliness. At the celebration held last week, we heard a very moving story from a mother who felt all these emotions. Luckily for her, she found Madeleine Hicks and was able to turn her thoughts and emotions around. She is now leading a happier life with a very beautiful young daughter and loving husband. The work achieved by these amazing ladies is invaluable to our community. I am proud that our state government has acknowledged and recognised their valuable contribution. These women from the Midland Women's Health Care Place are not stopping there; they have already taken up their next project to assist in developing a suicide prevention strategy for our region. With an allocation of \$13 million from this government to the Ministerial Council for Suicide Prevention, organisations such as the Midland Women's Health Care Place are able to contribute to and assist with suicide prevention around the state, and I look forward to working with these women to develop and achieve this.

Earlier I mentioned another community group in the East Metropolitan Region, and that was the Zonta Club of Swan Hills. For those members who are not aware of Zonta, it is a worldwide organisation of women working towards advancing the status of women around the world. It has more than 33 000 members across 67 countries, an achievement to be very proud of. I have been privileged to support a couple of the Swan Hills club events and I know that my colleague Hon Liz Behjat has also done so with the clubs in her electorate. I look forward to attending their Spring in the Valley breakfast in October. The money that these women raise at these events enables them to assist women and families in need. One of their outstanding contributions is supplying birthing kits to developing countries. These kits cost only \$1.60 to produce and provide basic essentials to improve the conditions in which these women in developing countries have to deliver babies. These kits are a lot more basic than we would imagine. They consist of a one-metre by one-metre plastic sheet for the mother to lie on, a piece of soap, two gloves, three gauze squares, three cords and one sterile scalpel blade. These basic kits help women to deliver their babies in a safer environment. Last year the Swan Hills club, along with Hampton Park Adventure and Morley Girl Guides, made up and supplied 1 000 kits, which they delivered to Nigeria, Uganda

and Vietnam. Locally however, the Swan Hills Zonta Club has also supported and assisted many other causes within our region. As I said earlier, one of its main causes was the Midland Women's Health Care Place. It also supported the Koolkuna Women's Refuge, the Young Women in Public Affairs Award, the studies assistance grants, the AIDS Council women's office, the Jane M. Klausman Women in Business Scholarship, Carnarvon flood assistance, breast-care cushions, and, as I just mentioned, the birthing kits. Last year the functions that these women held raised just under \$6 500, and that has gone back into the local community. I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the women of the Zonta Club of Swan Hills and thank them for their valuable contribution to the community. In particular, I would like to point out and recognise the ladies I have dealt with: Ruth Thomas, Dee Saunders, Barbara Goulden, Faith O'Brien and Nancy Duxbury.

Another organisation that plays an invaluable role in our community is the Western Australian Motor Industry Foundation. This fantastic group of people has been modifying vehicles to assist families with children with disability. Many of the modifications include wheelchair access and hoists, allowing families to feel a part of the community once again. Having these modified vehicles enables these families to do the simplest of activities that we all take for granted every day. Without these vehicles, these families are housebound. Providing wheels to families with children with disability takes away their isolation and feeling of despair. Not only does the foundation provide the vehicles with modifications free of charge to these families, it also maintains, services and repairs the vehicles, with RACWA providing the insurance cover and roadside assistance. These organisations are quiet achievers and do not seek recognition or glory. They are just content knowing that they provide a window of happiness to the most vulnerable in our community. After I attended the foundation's site and joined in on one of the vehicle handovers to a very excited family in 2009, I wrote to the Premier and the then Minister for Disability Services highlighting the great work being achieved by the Motor Industry Foundation and asking whether there was any way our government could support and help its great work. So I must say that I was over the moon when Hon Helen Morton, Minister for Disability Services, announced the allocation of \$1.6 million in new funds over four years from the Disability Services Commission. These funds will go towards modifying 40 vehicles, which will be enjoyed by these very important families. I also acknowledge the dedicated board of directors of the Motor Industry Foundation: Peter Fitzpatrick; Trent Bartlett; Bob Branchi; Gus Irđi; Mark Lauren; Rob Webster; Colin Rockman; a very long-term and good friend of mine, Wayne Phipps; Brian Bowley; Chris Leatt-Hayter; Benita Dowding; and another friend of mine, Stephen Moir. It is good to see that my friends are contributing and putting back into the community.

Without outstanding people in our community, like all involved in the three organisations I have mentioned today, this world would be a sadder place. That is why I am proud of the extraordinary \$1 billion that has been allocated from our state budget to support the most vulnerable in our community.

**HON BRIAN ELLIS (Agricultural)** [12.01 pm]: Last month, Deloitte Access Economics described Western Australia as the heavyweight champion of the Australian landscape. According to Deloitte's Investment Monitor report, WA leads the way in investment growth volume, with almost \$42 billion in extra investment since March 2010. Trailing way behind in second place is New South Wales, with only \$9.6 billion. As the Treasurer, Christian Porter, noted in his media statement at the time, the Deloitte figures showed that WA accounts for nearly a third of investment throughout Australia. Moreover, Deloitte's analysis shows that only WA and Victoria are predicting net operating surpluses across all years to 2012–13. The Barnett-led Liberal government must be doing something right.

**Hon Simon O'Brien:** It's doing a lot of things right.

**Hon BRIAN ELLIS:** I was not being as generous as the minister, and I must say that I think the minister is probably closer to the mark than I am when we take into account those figures.

With \$42 billion in extra investment compared with \$9.6 billion for the second rated state, we certainly are doing a lot more than other states. Best of all for the many thousands of people we represent, the report highlighted that WA is leading the way with social infrastructure investment, both currently and for the future.

How does this translate to the bush? One of the issues closest to my heart as a member for the Agricultural Region is the \$11 million allocated as part of the \$55 million second phase of the drought pilot scheme, which is a joint project with the federal government. Last year—I think it was in October—I went to a meeting of farmers and country businessmen in the bush for a barbecue. When I say “in the bush”, it was well out in the bush. It was a barbecue amongst the trees with men —

**Hon Alyssa Hayden:** There's a song about that.

**Hon BRIAN ELLIS:** Is there?

**Hon Alyssa Hayden:** Yes, *Home Among the Gum Trees!*

**Hon BRIAN ELLIS:** That is news to me.

Hon Nigel Hallett was at that gathering also. It was organised by the local community for the men of the district to perhaps let off a bit of steam. There was a doctor there also who could advise them on any health issues that they had. I suppose we went along thinking that maybe it would help if they could abuse a few politicians as well! However, as the evening went on, my eyes were opened to the problem that the farming area had been facing during that terrible year of drought and the pressures that were being loaded onto the community, in particular the farmers and their sons and daughters on the farm. One of the things that really hit me was the many men who got up and spoke about what the pressures were doing to them and their families and the amount of medication that these people were on for depression and related illnesses that had been brought on by the pressure of the drought and its effect on their farming businesses. One of their main concerns, obviously, was for the younger generation of farmers. These people said that their sons and daughters could see no future in farming.

This brings me to congratulate the Minister for Mental Health, Hon Helen Morton, who, in conjunction with the West Australian Country Football League, has introduced an initiative in relation to suicide prevention, which I launched in Mukinbudin. As we know, in the country, suicide amongst 20 to 35-year-old men is more predominant than it is in the city. I took great pleasure in representing the Minister for Mental Health at this launch in Mukinbudin of what is called the “Life Game of the Month”—that is, the One Life Game of the Month. At those games of the month, former footballers Heath Black and Paul Hasleby speak to the community and to the football sides before they play. I must admit that I had to take back what I thought about Heath Black; I thought he was a bit of a dill. I am being quite honest about that, and I told him that as well. However, after listening to his incredible story of experiencing mental illness, seeking help and now managing his illness, I have to say that he really is an inspiration to younger men, and he certainly held the audience of more than 80 people, I think it was, at the time. Also, when we went into the change rooms, young men came up to him and pointed out that they, too, were on medication, but they had not mentioned that to any of their friends before. I think that was the message that he was trying to get across; that is, until a person spoke to someone about the problem, they did not know that there were people out there to help. As I said, it is a great initiative that the Minister for Mental Health has instigated, and I congratulate the West Australian Country Football League also for taking it on board.

A plan has been developed that will reach every country town in Western Australia. With 25 leagues, including 28 junior competitions across 160 clubs, the plan will reach 41 000 players, 875 coaches and 1 100 umpires. Of those clubs, 105 are in rural and remote areas and 65 have a majority of Aboriginal players. It fits perfectly because football and mental health share similar philosophies of communication, teamwork and resilience, which makes football an ideal arena in which to talk about men’s mental health. When someone takes their life, the ripple effect through the family and the community lasts a lifetime. Each year in WA, 260 people take their lives. That is more than the road toll, which is about 190. As I said before, the highest risk group is men aged between 20 and 35 years. Although the suicide rate per 100 000 people is decreasing in WA, it is higher in rural and remote areas than it is in the city. That is why this initiative is so important. We need to make those risk groups aware of what is available. As Heath Black pointed out to those younger fellows out there, “When everything seems to be loading in on you and seems to be too much for you, the world will not be a better place without you.” I have to endorse those words. As I said before, I was quite impressed with Heath Black. Even though I had called him a dill earlier, I went up and congratulated him afterwards and said he was an inspiration to the whole community!

**Hon Ken Baston:** He who can change his mind is a good man!

**Hon BRIAN ELLIS:** Exactly. I certainly changed my mind about him. Obviously, the West Australian Country Football League has chosen two inspiring young men in Heath Black and Paul Hasleby.

I turn to the drought. This season the drought has broken with reasonable opening rains across most areas. However, some farmers would not have made it this far without the drought pilot scheme. At the beginning of this month 438 farming families had accessed income support to help meet basic household expenses. A total of 422 farm businesses had also received grants to undertake the farm planning program. Eligible farm businesses that complete the farm planning program can apply for grants of up to \$60 000. Of the 293 applications received, 119 were approved by 5 August. The rural outlook is encouraging but, as those who have been involved in farming know, there is still a long way to go. In some cases, even if this is a good year, it will take another year or two before some of those communities recover in areas that suffered badly over not only last year but previous years. What a shame this cooperation between state and federal government was so blatantly absent in the live trade issue. We can thank the Gillard government for bringing the live cattle trade to its knees. A lot has been said about the live cattle trade. Hon Lynn MacLaren expressed her views the other day in her budget reply speech. Members have already refuted her argument, but I am sure she would be disappointed if I did not say something about her comments.

**Hon Phil Edman:** We would also be disappointed.

**Hon BRIAN ELLIS:** I am glad you would.

Hon Lynn MacLaren seemed to promote the view that this government is of the view that animal cruelty does not matter. I would like to point out that the state government has more than doubled funding in the budget to \$1.6 million per annum as part of its commitment to animal welfare under the Animal Welfare Act 2002. The funding will allow the appointment of six additional full-time inspectors and double the annual funding for the RSPCA to \$500 000 under a service delivery agreement.

The transfer of responsibility for enforcing the Animal Welfare Act 2002 to the Department of Agriculture and Food in July will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of administering the state legislation. There will be a clear separation of DAFWA's animal welfare compliance arm from its existing industry extension, education and training arm. DAFWA's wide network, experience and knowledge will provide for a more integrated approach to animal welfare. The transfer of responsibility for enforcing the act brings WA into line with most other states whose primary industry departments are responsible for the enforcement of animal welfare requirements. The Liberal-National government recognises the importance placed on animal welfare by the community and is committed to ensuring that animals, whether pets or on farms, receive an appropriate standard of care. The transfer of responsibility for enforcing the Animal Welfare Act to the Department of Agriculture and Food in July will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of administering the legislation. The department's wide network, experience and knowledge will provide for a more integrated approach to animal welfare.

State government funding for enforcement under the Animal Welfare Act will increase from \$736 000 to \$1.6 million per annum. The budget of \$1.6 million is made up of an extra \$250 000 to the RSPCA, a transfer of \$736 000 from the Department of Local Government, which is made up of \$250 000 to the RSPCA and \$486 000 to the consolidated fund, and an extra \$620 000 from consolidated revenue. Additional resources have been allocated by way of six full-time inspectors, doubling the RSPCA's annual delivery contract to \$500 000. Those additional six full-time inspectors will be appointed and located between Broome and Albany. This brings the department's total number of full-time inspectors to 12, creating a greater presence throughout the state. These full-time inspectors complement approximately 200 existing general inspectors appointed in partnership with other government departments and the RSPCA.

The department's animal welfare compliance arm will be clearly separated from its existing industry extension, education and training arm. A scientific inspector will be responsible for monitoring each licensed research institution to ensure compliance with the "Australian code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes". The Animal Welfare Act provides the legal framework for animal welfare in Western Australia. It provides for the welfare, safety and health of animals in their relationships with people. The act and its accompanying regulations govern the treatment and welfare of all animals, including livestock animals used for scientific and teaching purposes, companion pets, animals for exhibition and entertainment, and wild animals. The act provides for some of Australia's harshest penalties for animal cruelty. It provides for substantial fines and/or imprisonment. An individual found guilty of cruelty offences can face a maximum penalty of \$50 000 and five years imprisonment. Organisations found guilty of an offence face five times the penalty of an individual. I think this indicates that this government treats incidents of animal cruelty seriously, contrary to what Hon Lynn MacLaren may want us to believe.

To return to the cattle trade: the only thing that I will say about Hon Lynn MacLaren's comments of the other day is that they show her complete lack of understanding of the reality —

**Hon Liz Behjat:** Now there's a surprise!

**Hon Robyn McSweeney:** Are you being polite?

**Hon BRIAN ELLIS:** I am trying to be polite. However, I do not really want to burst the bubble of Hon Lynn MacLaren's utopian view of the perfect world. Killing sheep was the first job I was ever taught on the farm—through necessity. I think that a lot of the people in the city do not realise that we have to kill an animal before we can eat it! That is a reality that some people still have to face up to. If those people who are opposed to the live cattle trade were to visit our abattoirs, they probably would not like what they would see. However, the reality is, if we wish to have a live animal trade and if we wish to eat meat, someone has to kill it.

**Hon Robyn McSweeney:** Or they can get a bit out of hand.

Several members interjected.

**Hon BRIAN ELLIS:** I probably do not need that comment from the honourable minister.

I wish it were a perfect world, as Hon Lynn MacLaren would like. She promoted the view that there should be more abattoirs in the north and that we should be killing our own meat and thereby creating jobs. Even if that

were true, where are the people to fill those jobs? Even if we could find them, what if the customer does not want the meat when we kill it? The simple case is customers prefer warm meat because in a lot of cases they do not have the refrigeration to take packaged meat. On top of that, if we were to get these abattoirs, who will work for six months, which is the time frame for mustering cattle? Without refuting any more of Hon Lynn MacLaren's argument —

**Hon Phil Edman:** Misinformed argument.

**Hon BRIAN ELLIS:** Correct—misinformed argument. I think Hon Philip Gardiner has already refuted or debunked much of Hon Lynn MacLaren's argument.

**Hon Max Trenorden:** A few weeks ago, I was in Penang speaking to a very senior individual. He was very friendly to me, but he just could not resist saying to me, "What is it about Australians that you think you have the right to remove the food chain from a nation?"

**Hon BRIAN ELLIS:** Hon Max Trenorden makes a very relevant comment and I agree with him. I do not think many people have given enough thought to the Gillard government's knee-jerk reaction, which has slaughtered the incomes of many cattle producers and has threatened the overall operation of the live meat trade. The repercussions have not been thought through at all.

I understand that eight months before the Indonesian abattoir video was aired, the federal agricultural minister, Joe Ludwig, was explicitly warned by his own department that the issue could cause a public outcry. If that is the case, there is absolutely no excuse for his government's rash decision. Those eight months should have been used to find a humane, commonsense and diplomatic solution that protected our animals.

**Hon Liz Behjat:** That's the problem; it's commonsense you are asking for. That is not going to come from the Gillard government.

**Hon BRIAN ELLIS:** I know that it is a bit of a stretch of the imagination—the member is correct.

However, we could also have preserved our trade relations and provided a sustained income to Western Australian producers. Instead, we have been left with a last-minute Gillard compensation package, which should never have been necessary; has come too late; will not move most of our cattle this season; and will not restore our trade relationships with Indonesia. The cattle industry has been left reeling with 326 jobs lost, and 274 000 cattle stranded—these figures are from *Farm Weekly* and *Countryman*. More than half the affected farmers are out of pocket and many pastoralists cannot justify the cost of keeping cattle in yards ready for export.

One Kimberley station owner estimated that with hay costing an average of \$300 a bale, keeping the cattle yarded would cost about \$10 000 each muster. July is traditionally an extremely busy month for cattle loading out of Broome, from where 80 per cent of the exported cattle go to Indonesia. I am sure that Hon Ken Baston will verify those figures. Last July, 18 000 were exported by Landmark; this July, the same company bought only 2 000 cattle to send south for slaughter. Many cattle are now too heavy for the Indonesian market. It takes months of strategy and planning to get them to the maximum weight stipulated by Indonesia and to get them there at the right time, which would have been June–July this year. One station owner said that 30 per cent of his cattle were now overweight and that he was not sure what he was going to do with them. It is estimated that Wyndham Port will lose more than \$500 000 if an export ship is not able to leave this year. It is also estimated that the interim ban on exports is likely to have a more than 18-month fallout.

In Western Australia there is upwards of 200 000 displaced cattle as a result of the federal government's knee-jerk decision. Some of these belong to a stud bull Brahmin cattle producer in the southern region—not far from here. I was speaking to him only a week or so ago. He has major concerns because he supplies bulls to Pilbara station owners. He normally sells 60 bulls at the Broome sales and this year he will be taking along 30 bulls, knowing that he will probably not be paid for them. However, he has to continue to supply his customers for the future in the hope that they will get back on their feet. Once again, it is an indication of the repercussions. It is not just about those cattle producers who export; it goes way down the line. The stud producer is well known and he will not receive an income because the exporters, the pastoralists, cannot afford to pay him. However, he still has to offload his stud bulls and he has to keep his customers for the future.

**Hon Phil Edman:** Good to see Labor supporting local jobs.

**Hon BRIAN ELLIS:** A good point.

Mr President, one of the most telling comments is that of Michael Percy, who runs 6 000 cattle on Yalleen Station. Michael Percy summed up industry feeling when he told *Farm Weekly* that he welcomed the first Elders shipment, but that the only thing that would make him happier was if some federal government representatives were also put on the boat. He stated —



It would be good if Joe Ludwig was on it and didn't come back — and the same with Julia Gillard for that matter.

Then he said —

I reckon all the farmers would just about pay for them to go over.

I am one farmer who would not mind chipping in for that.

When I began this speech, I mentioned the praise heaped upon the Barnett government by Deloitte Australia regarding current and future social infrastructure. I would like to highlight just a couple of projects that particularly benefit the Mid West and the Wheatbelt. I am sure Mr Deputy President (Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm) would also be aware of these. I have had some personal lobbying input into a couple of these; one of which is the Gravity Discovery Centre in Gingin. It was struggling for funds to continue. I was pleased to see in the budget the announcement that the Gravity Discovery Centre in the Shire of Gingin will receive more than \$1.1 million over four years to enable the centre to continue operating. The financial support will enable the centre to continue to develop future funding options. The Gravity Discovery Centre is a public science education facility focused on gravity, astrophysics and cosmology as well as answering the big question—the origin of the universe. That is a bit too big for me to understand! Many schools in the district travel to the gravity centre and find the experience quite rewarding. I encourage those members who have not been there to go along and support the gravity centre.

The other highlight—I suppose I could say—which I mention because I know both sides of the house support it, is the Square Kilometre Array. In its budget the state government announced that \$10.8 million will be invested in new roads and power and optical fibre infrastructure in the state's Mid West to further develop the SKA project and supply high-speed broadband to local residents. The investment would strengthen Australia and New Zealand's bid to host the SKA, and was a win for both radioastronomy and local communities. The state government is acutely aware of the need to invest in projects that will ensure Western Australia remains economically competitive into the future. The infrastructure is critical to the success of the Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder, which is an important precursor project to the SKA. The new roads and power and optical fibre infrastructure will link the Murchison Radio-Astronomy Observatory, the ASKAP and potentially the SKA to the world, while also benefiting the Mid West communities. The route for the fibre installation from the MRO to Geraldton was planned in consultation with the City of Geraldton—Greenough to provide better connectivity for the government buildings, the new technology precinct and the Geraldton airport. The town of Mullewa and three pastoral stations along the route to Mullewa will also gain access to high-speed broadband connections in exchange for housing repeater huts on their properties. The final site decision is approaching and this investment will boost the state's international credibility as the best location to host the full SKA. It is also an excellent example of how strategic decisions can benefit both science and the community. The MRO is a uniquely radio-quiet area located 330 kilometres north east of Geraldton and is the Australia–New Zealand selection site to host the SKA. The \$2.2 billion SKA project will see over 70 institutions in 20 countries involved in the development of the world's largest radio telescope. Two consortia are in contention to host the SKA, Australia and New Zealand, and a group of nine African countries led by the Republic of South Africa. The final site selection will be announced in 2012. Obviously, I believe, and I am sure the Deputy President does too, that we have the best site and I hope that politics do not get in the way and we win that submission.

In conclusion, I would like to quote from a media statement issued by the Treasurer, Christian Porter, on 20 July 2011, which reads—

“During a period of diminishing GST payments, the Government has managed the competing infrastructure requirements of the State's increasing population while sustaining a high level of service delivery. The Government has managed this while maintaining its triple-A credit rating and continuing to deliver strong operating surpluses over this budget period.”

All I can say to that is hear, hear!

**HON KEN BASTON (Mining and Pastoral)** [12.37 pm]: I stand to speak on the budget papers that were tabled in the house on 19 May 2011. In doing so, I acknowledge the Treasurer's first budget, and I would like to touch on some areas that affect the Mining and Pastoral Region. In the Goldfields, the Kalgoorlie Health Campus has been allocated \$55.8 million. Of course, this project has been around for some time, and that will be gratefully received in that area, with \$20 million allocated in this financial year. Also in Kalgoorlie is the Kalgoorlie Courthouse, which has been discussed for some time but now is scheduled to start in 2011 with completion in 2014. Some \$34 million was made available for that, with \$30 million this year. Some \$2 million has been made available in 2011–12 in the Goldfields for earthquake restoration in Boulder. I have to say, having visited there a couple of times, that there is a lot of work to do to make sure those historical buildings are restored. Many of them were insured, and some were not, and I guess that is where this funding will help.

Moving onto Carnarvon, another justice complex project has been around for some time; in fact, I remember asking questions in this house about that complex in 2006, 2007 and 2008. This complex will be moved to the old Gascoyne Traders site, which is on the way into town, from which a trucking company operated for many years. That development will cost \$52 million, of which \$11 million was in this 2011–12 budget. The government is very serious about that project and realises that it has been a cause of angst for Carnarvon for some time. In doing so, it has set up a community reference group, and a number of members have been selected on that. A press release was put out on 19 July this year. I would just like to give an idea of the representation that is on that committee. I am sure all members will have their hearts in this project, as the courthouse will be at the beginning of the town and will certainly create an entrance statement. Committee members include Melanie Bellotti, a Carnarvon resident who is active on Aboriginal issues; Vince Catania, the local member; Wally Dale; Bluey Dwyer, an old Carnarvon resident; Ron Hartcher, a Carnarvon resident; Heather Hibben; and John Oxenham, who is also a respected Aboriginal elder. The shire and police are represented on the committee as well. Other members include shire president Dudley Maslen and Tami Maitre from the Gascoyne Development Commission.

Another project in Carnarvon is the hospital redevelopment. That has been on the books since Richard Court lost government. He promised to have that redevelopment done. Finally, I am pleased to say that over the next three years some \$21.8 million will be spent on the Carnarvon hospital redevelopment. I know that is very welcome in that town.

The next one that has been around for a long time is the power station. Interestingly, the Carnarvon power station is finally going to be built; the minister, Hon Peter Collier, went up and turned the first sod for the power station not very long ago. During 2007 I asked four questions in this place on what was happening with this power station. This power station was originally going to be built for a cost of some \$32 million. It is very interesting that the cost is now projected at \$79.7 million, so the delay in not having this power plant built has resulted in an extra cost of some \$37 million. Carnarvon is very fortunate, because it already has a gas pipeline off the main Dampier to Perth pipeline, which comes in from Gascoyne Junction into Carnarvon. It is a gas-fired power station off the main line. That is one positive: it is already there. Moving the power station, which would be out of town for future development, will also release further in the town. Interestingly, when the power station was built—when Wilson Tuckey was on the shire council—it was considered right out of town. Everyone said it was too far away. Now that the power station is right in town, everyone is complaining about the noise factor. That always happens. People buy next to power stations or airports to get cheap land and then complain later and get them moved. And I am not pointing at members.

**Hon Norman Moore:** That's a very cynical comment.

**Hon KEN BASTON:** I am sure we will all see it happen again. Also in Carnarvon is funding of \$1.1 million for the Carnarvon boat ramp. That is something else that has been badly needed, because boat access used to be into the same little boating harbour that was used by all the prawn trawlers and all the work tugs that were hauled up from Cape Cuvier and the salt mine. It was always quite a dangerous situation when recreational fishing boats were launching their boats and mixing with the larger trawlers in a very small area. That is very welcome. I believe the boat ramp is just about complete. However, I think there is one small hiccup, which I was told about the other day; that is, the walkway where people launch their boats has been set too low. Somebody made a mistake on the level of the tide. When the high tide comes in, the walkway goes under water. I have not been to see that yet, but I am sure that it will have to be rectified.

**Hon Nigel Hallett** interjected.

**Hon KEN BASTON:** That is exactly right, honourable member.

The other thing that was completed this year was the sealing of the Gascoyne Junction Road. This development has been awaited for some time. The last 40 kilometres seem to have taken years. It has been sealed and, basically, bar a once-in-a-100-year flood, it is an all-weather road to Gascoyne Junction. That will mean that eventually, one would hope, this road will be sealed through to Meekatharra to allow access to Mt Augustus, which is the biggest monolith in the Southern Hemisphere. It is bigger than Ayers Rock, and we have not even scratched the surface of opportunities as a tourist destination. For those who have not been out there, I can assure them that it is quite a task. I have done it only once, and I am not going to do it again.

**Hon Brian Ellis:** Not going back?

**Hon KEN BASTON:** I will go back to take pictures.

Carnarvon is very much suffering from the recovery of the floods in December 2010. I visited the town recently, unfortunately for a funeral rather than anything else. The town is recovering, but roadhouses are still being rebuilt, and some roadhouses probably will not be reopened. Carnarvon was declared a natural disaster zone, which I was heavily involved in at the time. The damage that was done in the floods was estimated to cost some

\$100 million, which includes all the state roads, infrastructure and private residences. Funding of \$175 million in the Gascoyne revitalisation fund covers Exmouth, Shark Bay and that whole area. Some of that funding, I believe, will be used for the flood mitigation works in Carnarvon. Everyone said we had to do the flood mitigation. Just for people's memory, some of the flood mitigation has been done. Carnarvon itself, the actual town, has a levee bank right around it. Therefore, if the one-in-100-year flood broke one of those levee banks, it would be an absolute disaster. The next proposed flood mitigation works, which comes off Brown Range and heads north along the North West Coastal Highway, are designed to stop the water flowing back into the river when the river drops. What happens is that the river rises, and it floods out on the floodplain called Nickol Bay flats. When the river drops suddenly, that water rushes back and gouges out all those plantations along the riverbank. The difficulty for government is the amount of funding for rehabilitating the soil in the plantations and the cost of the flood mitigation work, bearing in mind that the flood mitigation work will not protect all the plantations. The northern side of the river would go underwater in a normal flood. That is the dilemma for government. Governments can keep building levee banks, but how far do they take them? In some instances growers have told me that a flood actually brings down a load of alluvial soils, and in the next year they end up with a very good crop from their horticulture.

**Hon Max Trenorden:** That was always the argument of Egypt. That is why Egypt has always been able to grow enough food for itself—the annual floods.

**Hon KEN BASTON:** I remember that one ruby red grapefruit grower in Carnarvon always said his production doubled in the year after a flood. He had a massive amount of grapefruit trees.

I would like to move on now to Exmouth. I was very pleased to learn from some of my constituents this morning that Exmouth has been having one of the best tourist seasons ever. That is due to the decision that was made to allow in another airline. It was a regulated route; it now has two airlines still under regulation—Skywest and Qantas. That has made a huge difference to opening up tourism, not only due to the cost and putting in some competition but also through the airlines being linked to other domestic airlines within Australia and internationally, as is the case with Qantas. Skywest has linked itself now to Virgin, which I think has probably also helped to get extra tourists into this destination.

I mention also that Exmouth has been World Heritage listed. I would like to mention a gentleman called Mr Barry Sullivan, who used to be the head of the Exmouth Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He got very involved and was instrumental in the whole listing process for Exmouth. He was invited to go to Paris and represent the people of the Exmouth region and the chamber of commerce. It was through that process that the proposed two-kilometre strip along the coast of some 250 kilometres was kept out of the World Heritage listing. If members had been following the process, they would realise that that two-kilometre strip was actually in the area proposed to be listed. I congratulate Barry for his efforts in that process, which were very important in the outcome. I might say that I have never been a supporter of the necessity for World Heritage listing. I believe that the two sites we already have listed—that is, the Bungle Bungle Range and Shark Bay—have not benefited greatly from a World Heritage listing. Any feature that has World Heritage listing basically means that it is in lights for the rest of the world to come and see what we perceive as something special. If that be the case, we need to ensure that there is adequate funding for people to utilise those areas as tourist attractions and for putting them up in lights. It is pretty important to do that.

I was at Exmouth recently with the Minister for Transport to look at the marina. Offshore of Exmouth, of course, is oil and gas, and if we go to the North West Cape where the lighthouse is we can see five oil wells in operation. Western Australia's main source of oil is in that area. A lot of the boats or tenders that service the rigs out there operate out of the marina at Exmouth. Of course, the marina was never designed for that purpose. In fact, it was never even designed for Kailis fishing boats, but they do fit in there. Originally they used to pull alongside and now they have to back in. All these larger craft now come in that were never meant to be in that confined space. The minister and I looked at extending the light industrial area out to where the limestone quarry is, which already has approval to build and extend by some 450 metres. Extending it obviously needs to be done with private enterprise so that the oil and gas tenders can be placed there and have some safe anchorage et cetera for loading on the facilities, such as a water well drill stem and other stores.

The budget for facilities at that marina is fantastic. When Hon Simon O'Brien was Minister for Transport, we looked at these facilities. They were supposed to be built then but now I see in the budget an allocation for 46 new pens at a cost of some \$2.3 million. They will be very welcome. There were some issues about how we would allocate those pens or how we would raise the funds on those pens. There are still some issues that we need to look at. At present, if someone who has successfully tendered for one of these pens does not have a boat in the pen, the Department of Transport can put a boat in there and charge a fee. There are, therefore, no real property rights to the pen. I think that is what happened at Fremantle Sailing Club many years ago: people

invested in pens and then made them available by leasing them out to other people. However, it is a good way of getting capital to make sure we get this type of infrastructure in place.

I would now like to move to Karratha. One of the issues for the first couple of years when I first became a member of Parliament was Karratha Hospital. At that stage a mother could not have her baby delivered in Karratha Hospital and had to go to Port Hedland Regional Hospital. The logistics behind that were huge. I might say that Port Hedland is not that far from Karratha; it is only a two-hour drive. However, the lack of accommodation in Port Hedland for someone working in Karratha meant that they had to drive two hours north and two hours back if they wanted to visit their partner. If there were any difficulties, of course, it was an absolutely crazy situation. Therefore, \$150 million has been allocated for development of the Karratha health campus, and I know that that will be very welcome and will benefit everyone in the Pilbara.

In education, of course, we have a continuing commitment in the regions for education. Stage 2 of Karratha Senior High School has an allocation this year of \$27.37 million in a total allocation of \$45 million. For the completion of the new primary school, there is \$1.5 million, and the commencement of a new primary school at Baynton West has a project cost of some \$23 million.

One of the other very important things in Karratha is the continuing infrastructure development on Dampier highway going out on Balmoral Road to Burrup Peninsula. I do not know whether members have been there when there is a shift change early in the morning. If they have, they would know that it is far worse than the traffic on the freeway here in Perth. Hon Nigel Hallett likes to wait a while before he goes home because the traffic is too busy. Dampier highway is worse than that. We are therefore allocating some \$73.761 million to fix that situation and put in a dual carriageway. Anyone in Karratha trying to get to the airport to catch a plane can sit there waiting to turn right for a long time until somebody is nice and lets them in. That is one of the issues there.

I now continue by talking about power. Some of the other funding in the budget is some \$68 million to put underground power in Karratha, South Hedland, Onslow and the remainder of Roebourne. Underground power is expensive. However, I believe it is necessary in areas that suffer cyclonic conditions, because one of the most important things for recovery after a cyclone is power for refrigeration, lighting et cetera so that people can get things moving. I am therefore a great supporter of underground power in those areas, and this underground power is well worth funding. Of course, other towns need considering, and it would be remiss of me to neglect to put a plug in for them. They are, of course, Exmouth and Broome, which are also very vulnerable because of distance and isolation.

In the Pilbara I also noticed that the realignment of the Marble Bar Road from Port Hedland through to Coongan gorge has surfaced and is in the forward estimates. This is another road that I have mentioned on many occasions. I drove along there only recently to attend the Marble Bar races, and only one truck at a time can get through the hill at Coongan gorge. It is very sharp, very bendy, and when there are four trailers on it, the last trailer always tends to be on the other side of the road. It is only a matter of time before it squashes some little tourist caravan. Instead of a pop up, it will be a pop down! It will certainly be well and truly worth having that road completed.

We should not forget to continue pushing very hard for completion of Marble Bar Road from Newman and Nullagine. That will have advantages not only for the mining industry there and the people of those towns in opening up tourism, but also for trucks in cutting a couple of hours off their journey to the Kimberley.

I want to now move up to Broome and talk about a couple of issues there. Of course, funding has been allocated to complete the 14-bed facility for mental health services. Staff positions have already been advertised and will be completed. That will be a very valuable facility, as there was no secure facility in the north for mental health services. That will make it a lot better for people, instead of having to fly them all to Perth. Broome of course has been very much in the press lately.

*Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm*

**Hon KEN BASTON:** Before the break, I was touching on tourism in Broome and what the government is pursuing up there. We are basically looking at three aviation areas, two of which have the potential to give a boost to tourism in Broome. In one area, we are pursuing a direct air service from China to Western Australia to bring in Chinese tourists and then connect back to Broome. There are plans for the other facility in Broome to be an international airport with a gateway to the north west directly from Singapore. Of course, that could go from Singapore to Sydney, which would be a fantastic benefit for tourism in the north. The other important link, which operates one day a week, is a connection from Broome to Exmouth. Now that we have put that up in lights as a World Heritage-listed area, one would think that the triangle of tourism through Exmouth, Perth and Broome would be extremely important. I am aware that Airlnorth flies as far down as Karratha, so it is just a

matter of getting that company to continue on to Exmouth. I believe that would be a fantastic direction to take to increase tourism in Western Australia, and by that I mean real tourism with people coming into the country.

In this year's budget the government committed some \$35 million to building a boat harbour in Broome. I have correspondence going back to 2002 and glossy profiles about proposed boat harbour facilities. The boat harbour that is being built is a recreational boat-launching facility near the main jetty. It will allow recreational fisherpersons to launch their boats in safety. At present, there is a cross-flow of tides and wind—of course, there are very big tides up there—and it becomes quite dangerous to launch a boat, especially if only two people are involved. This facility will make it safer. There are about 1 600 recreational boat owners in Broome, as well as visiting boat owners. About 120 commercial boat owners will also benefit to a small degree. According to the plans that I have seen, there will be a floating jetty that will allow them to load and off-load equipment and passengers. At present, to unload their fish, they have to pull up at the main jetty, which is sometimes totally inconvenient because ships and oil and gas vessels frequently use that main jetty. This will provide a safe option for the fishing boats that work out of there. Of course, this will not wipe out the necessity for a safe boat harbour. I have spoken previously about the necessity for a safe boat harbour in Broome. It will be similar to what is in Darwin in that it will be able to take trawlers, small customs vessels and small Fremantle frigates. That is about the size that is needed with a lock. That would also give us a cyclone-proof mooring between Exmouth and Darwin, because there is currently no such thing between Exmouth and Darwin. Some facilities for the repair and overhaul of larger vessels are also needed, because at present those vessels have to go to Dampier in the south or to Darwin in the north. I was quite interested to learn that of that \$35 million, more than \$1 million will be spent just on environmental approvals to get that boating facility up and running. I find that amazing quite frankly, because we already have a jetty that is virtually right beside it. One would have thought that that would have been enough without spending \$1 million just on environmental approvals.

Oil and gas exploration is very much a year-round activity. It does not just take place in the dry season; hence, its importance in providing jobs for the people of Broome. Since Tony Burke, the federal minister for environment, visited Broome, the ante has been upped and lots of signs have been put up in the area. It has been about 10 or 15 days since I was last there. Hon Sue Ellery told me the other day that she had visited my area and had seen the signs everywhere. The main reason for that was the visit by the federal minister. The process has been gone through and the Indigenous people have supported it. It was a long process. I believe that the decision by the companies on whether it is a financial goer will not be made until next year. However, there will be a huge shortage of oil and gas in particular by 2014–15, so I cannot see it not happening. The most important thing for Western Australia is to ensure that some of that funding is spent onshore. The same benefits will not be achieved from a floating platform, as proposed by the Shell company. Even though the two tugs will be the biggest tugs in the world, will be based in Broome and will have the fly in, fly out workers on helicopters from Broome, it still will not give us the job benefits et cetera that will be seen at James Price Point.

I now move to Kununurra and the north. Health and renal clinics will be built in Kununurra and Derby. An amount of \$6.2 million has been allocated in the budget. I visited one of these clinics in Derby early last year, as well as one in Broome, and it was quite frightening to see the number of patients with diabetes. I guess it is a reflection of the health issues in the Kimberley. These are very expensive clinics to run, but they are needed. Of course, when they are at full capacity, lots of people have to be flown to Perth. I guess the cost of sending those patients to Perth can be weighed against having the facilities based in Kununurra and Derby. As I mentioned earlier, the \$43 million courthouse project in Kununurra is due to start in 2012 and be finished by 2014.

One of the other important factors in the budget was the funding of \$695 000 for the introduction of barramundi into the Ord, of which \$195 000 is budgeted for this year. This is an excellent project and is something that I have supported. I think it will provide a huge opportunity for tourism. If barramundi can be bred and released, we might then, dare I say it—I better not give the Minister for Fisheries any ideas—charge people to catch the fish. It could be a very economical exercise, similar to what happens in Shark Bay at Freycinet estuary where people are charged \$10 per snapper. It still amazes me. It is done through a ballot system. I think 950-odd quotas are let in Shark Bay each year and they are fully taken up. People are allowed to catch only two fish, so they get \$20 worth of fish —

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich:** It costs you \$100.

**Hon KEN BASTON:** And probably a couple of thousand dollars to get there! Never mind; it is an idea. I was speaking earlier to Hon Jon Ford. He said that when he was fisheries minister, he had funding set aside for a fish ladder up there, which I thought was an excellent idea. That seemed to fall over through—what should I say?—many government departments not heading in the same direction. I think they were frightened of getting crocodiles up it and God knows what! It became quite an issue.

**Hon Norman Moore:** It is still being very carefully looked at.

**Hon KEN BASTON:** I am very pleased to hear that, minister, because I think it would add to tourism. There are so many tourism opportunities there.

Ord stage 2 is continuing. Central to the project is the engagement of the Miriwung and Gajerrong people in training, business and employment opportunities. I believe that the Northern Territory is starting to be a little more receptive to Ord stages 3 and 4, which would give greater economies of scale for the use of the land and what could be grown there in the future.

The other big announcement was of the Kimberley science and conservation strategy. It is a very ambitious project to which the government has committed some \$41 million over four years. I am not going to spell it all out. Some of it is still getting sorted out in the wash. That funding certainly shows that this government is environmentally inclined, even though some people say the opposite. There will be partnerships with traditional owners to enable the employment of Indigenous people in managing and caring for the Kimberley's marine and terrestrial environments. There will be \$9 million set aside for that. One thing I am in favour of is opportunities for ecotourism ventures. I believe that if we set aside areas for national parks et cetera, they are set aside for the people of Western Australia and Australia and ecotourism ventures should operate in those areas. I think that is the only way people will feel and love the expenditure that is being put into those places by the government. It is an investment for the future.

One other thing I would like to talk about is corrective services and, in particular, West Kimberley Regional Prison. I visited Derby, which is booming at present. Rents are now \$1 000 a week on average. There are two reasons for that. One is the construction of the Derby prison, which I believe will house some 150 prisoners. Fifty-three houses are being built to house prison officers once the prison is completed. The second reason is that there are some 1 500 boat people at Curtin air base. I have heard a couple of figures, but that is worth in the order of \$180 million a year to Derby, and hence the pressure. I had the pleasure of attending the Derby ball a month or so ago. I have to say it was quite interesting, because a lot of the people I met there were from Canberra from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. There was a lot of enthusiasm in Derby. The person who bought the Spinifex Hotel is bulldozing it and is in the process of building a new hotel and accommodation. That is a very good sign of the enthusiasm that is now in Derby. There are now three restaurants in Derby. I had the privilege of visiting only two of those restaurants, but the standard of those restaurants is fantastic. One of the chefs was a boat person—he is now on a visa—so there has been some good there. The reason that the prison was put in Derby was, of course, to keep prisoners closer to the area they come from and to give them greater opportunities for rehabilitation. One thing I would like—I have spoken on this before—is for juvenile offenders to be part of this prison. I would like the prison to be extended to include juvenile offenders, who are at present flown to Perth. Of course, one police officer must accompany each juvenile offender to and from Perth, so that takes forces from the area all the time. That is a drain on our police forces.

The increase in EventsCorp funding by this government will help to support events such as the Kimberley Moon Experience, Derby Boab Festival, Shinju Matsuri in Broome, beach polo and Opera Under the Stars. The Minister for Tourism announced yesterday that international teams will also come to Cable Beach to play beach basketball. That type of funding will certainly encourage tourism.

I want to briefly comment on a couple of issues that I have come across when travelling around the Mining and Pastoral Region. An issue was brought up at a Shire of Wiluna meeting about Homeswest housing. Would members believe that there are people in that area who, if they get a job and their income is too high to warrant having Homeswest or government housing, toss in their job to keep the house? That sounds absolutely crazy; however, there are no other houses to rent. If they work, they lose their house; there is no other avenue. I know the Minister for Housing is looking at that issue; he visited Wiluna with me. We also looked at the Wiluna–Meekatharra Road.

One initiative I did admire was that the Shire of Meekatharra spent some of its consolidated country local government fund, which came from royalties for regions, on building a sealed road heading towards Carnarvon. I spoke earlier about the road to Gascoyne Junction being sealed. This road links the other way. The shire considers that the sealing of this road will provide tourism opportunities and an opportunity for vegetables to be delivered direct from Carnarvon to Kalgoorlie and the Goldfields. What interested me was that the shire built this road itself, using its own staff in Meekatharra, at a cost of \$100 000 a kilometre. For Main Roads to build a road, it usually costs \$350 000 a kilometre. We asked to inspect this road because we wanted to see what we get for \$100 000 a kilometre. The shire has done some 17 kilometres of the road and I have to say it is a magnificent road. It is well worth having a look at. I guess that is something I believe we should do more of; that is, have local government build roads. They could be given the funding. They have the people in the region to build them. That is quite important.

Halls Creek still has issues with liquor licensing. It has been some two years since the trial was put in place, and it is about to be revisited. I met with the shire and was told that it had lost people; people have gone to live in

Fitzroy Crossing because it is closer to Derby. Derby has alcohol available from midday till 8.00 pm. If they go the other way, to Kununurra, it is only available from 5.00 pm till 8.00 pm, so it is better for them to go the other way. The other interesting thing is that when they go to get alcohol, they take cash with them, so there is actually a shortage of cash in the town. They are forever trying to get cash into the town, because they get their pension cheques or whatever they are and take them with them.

I have spoken very briefly on this before, but I believe the liquor laws in Kununurra this year are over the top. It is quite interesting, because we now have what is called the “Kimberley area”, which extends from Broome to Kununurra. There is a distillery up there called The Hoochery, which is a tourism destination run by a guy called Spike Dessert, as many members will know. It distils rum and other delectables, and he shuts at four o’clock. The interesting thing is that people can buy full-strength alcohol from 5.00 pm to 8.00 pm, but as a resident of Broome I cannot buy alcohol there because I am in the Kimberley precinct. He shuts at 4.00 pm and my opportunity to buy there is between 5.00 pm and 8.00 pm, so I do not get that opportunity, which I think is absolutely crazy. I could not believe that.

In the few minutes I have left, I will touch on the issue of the alcohol restrictions in Kununurra and Wyndham. I can understand why tourists get there and throw their hands up in the air. In fact, I believe a police inspector visited there about three or four weeks ago and tried to get a bottle of wine; he was amazed that he could not get one. The Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor has put out this nice little colourful brochure with some lovely pictures on it. I will read a summary of the takeaway alcohol restrictions. The first category is for an alcohol strength of 2.7 per cent or less, such as light beer: Monday to Saturday, 12.00 till 8.00 pm; people can drink as much as they like, with no limit. The second category is for percentages greater than 2.7 per cent to 3.5 per cent, which is some mid-strength beer: Monday to Saturday, 12.00 till 8.00 pm; the maximum that can be bought in that category is 11.5 litres, which is one carton. The third category is greater than 3.5 per cent to seven per cent, which includes mid and full-strength beers, some spirits and ready-to-drink alcohol: Monday to Saturday, 5.00 pm till 8.00 pm; the maximum is 11.5 litres, the equivalent of one carton of beer. The fourth category is greater than seven per cent to 15 per cent, which includes wine, some spirits and RTDs: Monday to Saturday, 5.00 pm till 8.00 pm; the maximum is 1.5 litres, the equivalent of two bottles of wine. The last category is for greater than 15 per cent, including spirits, wine and liqueurs: Monday to Saturday, 5.00 pm till 8.00 pm; the maximum is one litre. Liquor may be purchased in the amounts specified in the second and third categories, plus either the fourth or fifth categories, but not both. When someone arrives in their caravan and they are given this pamphlet, they think, “Oh my God,” and then they realise they cannot get any alcohol until they get to Derby, which is quite a long haul; they might die of thirst! People are only allowed that once, but there are three liquor stores in Kununurra, so they can go around and collect alcohol at each one. Because of this narrow window of opportunity, we have created binge drinking in a big way, so there are even more problems than there were before. According to the shire, even the police believe it is not working. There were a number of caravans queuing up at 5.00 pm to get to a liquor store, and one of the publicans up there told me that he had had to increase his staff by threefold during the 5.00 pm to 8.00 pm slot because there were so many people hitting the liquor store at one time. We make these laws and they sound very good; however, in practice they are damned difficult. I think it actually puts a burden on society; we are supposed to be tourist-oriented. I can come down here and be amazed that I can get a bottle of wine at 10 o’clock if I want to. Why should they not have the same opportunities?

It would be remiss of me to not mention the Tanami Road, which I always like to bash on about. This is a local government road; I have mentioned to the minister that we need to make it a state road so that we can get funding. The Western Australian section is 308 kilometres and unsealed; the Northern Territory section is 514 kilometres, of which 321 kilometres are unsealed and 193 kilometres are sealed. This road decreases the driving distance from Melbourne or Sydney, through Alice Springs, by 1 100 kilometres. That is a considerable distance to cut off a journey. The advantage is that there are mining operations out there, including the Granite mine. I sat next to an engineer on the plane coming back from Kununurra the other day; he had been to Halls Creek and assured me that they had a very interesting deposit of rare earths. That is another opportunity that may come up.

There are also the Indigenous communities of Balgo, Mulan and Bililuna. Balgo is famous for its arts. A sealed tourism road through there would make a lot of difference to people intermingling, and they might sell more paintings. There is also a pastoral industry out there, but the big one that I really believe in is defence. I have written a letter to the federal Minister for Defence, inviting him to visit the region and have a look at what needs to be done. It is not the first time I have written letters about that; I sent letters to the previous minister, but they had a change of portfolios, so I had to send them again. There are also opportunities for the horticultural industry and the products of the Ord to be linked straight back down. It also gives opportunities to the cattle industry to actually take cattle to abattoirs in, say, Victoria or South Australia. The defence issue, with RAAF Base Curtin being situated there, is important. We have seen in the press that the federal government is looking to have a more active defence base in the Kimberley.

The shire did a cost-benefit analysis of it, and it believed it could build the road for \$200 000 per kilometre. Of course, the Main Roads estimate is \$350 000 to \$400 000, so there is a discrepancy, but I believe that it is a project that should be continued. Main Roads said that it did not carry enough traffic, but if a road cannot be used for six months of the year because of the wet season, it is very hard to ascertain what the true traffic volume is. It needs to be made into an all-weather road.

Some other members have already corrected the comments of Hon Lynn MacLaren on live exports, but she made a point about the three or four speakers who spoke on live exports as all having different figures. I think I was the first, and I just wanted to point out to her that the differential for some of these figures are because live cattle exports go right across the top of Australia. The figures I quoted were only for Western Australia, and not by port. Western Australian cattle, for example, can be exported out of Darwin, so that is where we can get a differentiation in the figures, and it is very hard. I will quote some figures from the Department of Agriculture and Food that show the value of live export for slaughter. These figures were taken from 2006 to April 2011. Over those years, the number of cattle exported from Western Australia to Indonesia was 172 000 in 2006, 174 000 in 2007, 186 000 in 2008, 263 000 in 2009, 170 500 in 2010, and 16 000 this year up to April and before the ban was put in place. Interestingly, exports to a couple of other countries have picked up. Western Australia exported 58 500 cattle to Turkey last year, and until April this year, 23 000 were exported. Egypt has been out of the trade since 2006 when issues arose from the screening of a *Four Corners* program—sorry; it was a *60 Minutes* program, but a similar type of propaganda, I suppose, was put forward. Israel has also been a player from 2006 and it has averaged about 40 000 to 50 000 head of cattle from Western Australia. The value of live cattle exports from Western Australia to Indonesia in 2010 was \$100 million. The value of live cattle exports from Western Australia to all countries, including Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, was \$235 million. The member made a comment on some report that it was not a big amount of money in the scheme of things, but I put it to her that these are real export dollars and any export dollar into a state or a nation is a very valuable dollar, because they are dollars that are coming in and increasing the economy. We want those dollars, not to mention the role that pastoral properties play through having people located in large areas of land, which is probably still the cheapest form of guardianship that government can possibly have. I think that it is all very well for people to live in a perfect world and think that the cattle can be sent somewhere else, but, as other members have said, it is a specific breed of cattle. People have raised droughtmasters instead of *bos indicus* and therefore have some other avenues for their cattle, such as sending them to feedlots here, but it is still a huge haul. Tanami Road, of course, would help and give pastoralists the opportunity to go to other markets interstate. I used to export live sheep. I know that whenever the market fell over or did not happen for a year, the price of stock dropped dramatically because those sheep were not going overseas and meeting those other markets. Therefore, those live exports have always put a floor in the market, and it is very important to all the other values of the stock that is being killed or consumed in the domestic market in Australia.

In finishing on the live cattle export issue, I note the remarks made by other members about the RSPCA. I find it astounding that the government gives funding to the RSPCA and it almost goes and turns on us and says we should not support live exports. I do not have a problem with the RSPCA standing on the ship making suggestions about how we should handle the sheep that are going on board and things like that. That is fine; that is its role. However, when the RSPCA point-blank says, “No, we’re going to cut that out”, I do have a problem. I think that the export industry is so important, as I said earlier, that we need to ensure we do everything right and continue it. I attended the meeting in Broome that the minister, Joe Ludwig, attended. About 30 pastoral properties were represented and there was one fairly vocal gentleman who had just invested \$20 million in a property up there. Having had the trade cut off in the first year that he was going to export cattle, he was not a very happy chappie. In fact, I will not repeat what he said to the minister, although he did threaten to punch his eyes out afterwards; it was quite a heated debate. However, it probably needed saying because that is the type of feeling that was about for somebody who just had their wages totally cut off. Other people have been affected by the export ban. I believe that a stock manufacturer of blocks was 500 tonnes down, so the flow-on effect has been huge. It has certainly set everyone up there back after they had had an excellent wet season and they were looking forward to probably a maximum number of turn-off. That is very disappointing to them and my thoughts are with all the people who are involved in that industry.

Question put and passed.