

Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Troy Buswell; Mrs Liza Harvey; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr John Quigley

ELECTION PROMISES

Matter of Public Interest

THE SPEAKER (Mr M.W. Sutherland) informed the Assembly that he was in receipt within the prescribed time of a letter from the Leader of the Opposition seeking to debate a matter of public interest.

[In compliance with standing orders, at least five members rose in their places.]

Mr P.T. Miles interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo, I call you to order for the first time.

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Leader of the Opposition) [2.46 pm]: I move —

That this house calls on the Premier to apologise to the people of Western Australia for his broken promises including power price increases, Metro Area Express light rail, the Swan Valley bypass, small business tax cuts and the 24-hour Ballajura police station.

That is just the tip of the iceberg. There will be more broken promises as time goes on. The Premier has already flagged that there will be more, and he does so brazenly. He says that the government will have to cut back everywhere. I have already mentioned five major broken promises, and today we call on the Premier to apologise for those broken promises to the people of Western Australia. He solemnly indicated to the people of this state two months ago that these promises would be delivered by a re-elected Liberal–National government. If the Premier has any credibility whatsoever, and if he has any shame whatsoever, he will come into this house and say sorry to the people of Western Australia for that misleading and deceptive conduct engaged in by this government, by this Premier, in the lead-up to the 2013 election. That conduct was misleading and deceptive. If the Premier was in business, he would be sued for what he did in that election campaign—the false acquiring of votes from the people throughout this state based upon promises that he never had any intention of delivering upon if he was re-elected. This will be a defining feature of the debate over the next four years. Those broken promises and broken commitments to the people of Western Australia made by this government will be a defining feature of this Parliament that we will raise on regular occasions. In effect, the people of Western Australia were conned in the lead-up to the election when the Premier went out there and made numerous commitments to the people of this state that he is now backing off from. That someone could make billions of dollars' worth of commitments to the people of Western Australia and within two months back off from those commitments is one of the greatest cons in the history of democracy in this state. He then had the brazenness to come in here and say that he had not broken any promises even though everyone in this place knows that he did. That sort of thing is conman activity. That is the activity of those who do not think that they need to tell the truth and be held to account for what they say in the lead-up to an election. I know what the Premier's style is. He would have thought that because the government has four years ahead of it, if he got all the bad news out of the way early, in time they would forget. I can just imagine the Premier sitting in his office thinking how to get around the government's overpromises and commitments to things that it knew it could not deliver. He would have thought that the thing to do was to get them out of the road early and that in time people would have forgotten about them. That is the exact *modus operandi* that the Premier engaged in. It was dodgy, deceptive and misleading conduct. If the Premier were in business, he would be sued for such a deplorable breach of trust. During question time today, I heard the Premier say that it is a matter of trust for him; that is he a trusted figure. The Premier will not be trusted if he continues to break commitments in the manner in which he has broken commitments in the last week. I have listed those broken commitments: power price increases; Metro Area Express light rail; the Swan Valley bypass; small business tax cuts; and, a 24-hour police station in Ballajura. There is really too much material to talk about. Each one of those commitments entered into by the government will hurt various groups in our community. The power price increases will, on top of the government's other utility price increases, hurt people across Western Australia. The people of Western Australia trusted the Premier when he stood in the leaders' debate in the ABC studio. I was standing a matter of metres away from him when he made those commitments to the people of Western Australia. His commitment to the people of this state about power price increases has been broken by 45 per cent. Do not think that they did not notice those commitments.

Western Australian small business people trusted the government when in June 2010 the Treasurer oversaw the passing of legislation in this house—that is, L-A-W—that provided tax cuts for small businesses across the state by not subjecting the goodwill component of a small business to stamp duty when it was sold. That was a gain, because instead of paying the taxman, the purchaser paid the person who built the goodwill. The person who built the goodwill was the beneficiary of that largesse windfall rather than the Office of State Revenue. Instead of delivering on the tax cuts that became law—L-A-W—after being passed by this house in June 2010, the government cancelled them after the election without telling the people of this state prior to the election that that is what it was going to do. In many ways that is more deceptive than breaking an election promise, because we

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are talking about a law of this state that we relied on for two and a half years in the lead-up to the election. We trusted the Premier for two and a half years. It is not as though we should have asked the government whether it was going to change the law after the election. It is not as though the government changing the law to take away tax cuts that were legislated for the people of Western Australia was ever going to be an issue in the lead-up to the election campaign.

I refer to the MAX for our northern, eastern, south eastern and western suburbs, which was to be in place by 2019. The Premier stood in this house glibly and said that the government would still deliver it even though every day we hear that the government is backing off from its commitment. The Premier has the capacity to make contradictory remarks in the same sentence. He said the government would deliver on its promise, but that it would not be delivered in accordance within the set timeframe. That is a broken promise. I hate to inform the Premier of the ordinary usage of the English language, but that is actually a broken promise. The Premier was not committed to the MAX, for which inner-city voters obviously voted. It is not true that the Premier was committed to that project. He indicated to the people of Perth, Mt Lawley, Balcatta, Victoria Park, Nedlands, Mirrabooka and other electorates that the government would build that scheme, but it will not. I have a copy of the government's fully funded, fully costed plan that included the MAX light rail. As I said earlier, what is even worse is that the Premier used public money in the lead-up to the election campaign—\$1.5 million—on that specific campaign. Do members remember seeing pictures of trams running down the streets in the publicly funded election campaign, the website that provided the dates and time frames, the material put in people's letterboxes and the massive billboard in East Perth on which the Premier indicated that the government would build the light rail system? All of that was a lie to the people of Western Australia using public money, yet the Premier can stand in here and claim that people can trust him in light of breaking that commitment. We all saw it. Now the Premier is claiming all sorts of reasons that it cannot be done. There is more. There is the Swan Valley bypass about which some of my colleagues will talk. There is also the 24-hour police station at Ballajura. The Premier had the temerity to come in here and say that not all of it was his fault! How was the government possibly to know that WA's revenue would fall? What a surprise! We do not support the arrangement. We did not sign up to that arrangement—the government did. We do not support those arrangements because we think they are bad for the state. The irony is, as we demonstrated today, that the government will get more than its budget papers showed it would get. The Premier stood in here yesterday and said it would go down to \$1 billion. However, the federal budget, which was handed down the other day, never has it going below \$2 billion. I put this test to members: if Tony Abbott becomes Prime Minister in September, I guarantee that GST revenues will fall lower than they are now. That will be the Liberal Party's doing, because a Liberal Party Prime Minister and a Liberal Party Premier will support one another and GST revenues will go down significantly more. Let us see whose fault it is when that comes to pass.

According to the Premier, another reason is commodity prices, even though we demonstrated that iron ore prices have risen above the estimates significantly in the midyear review. The estimates in the midyear review had it at \$US118 a tonne, but it is now \$US130 a tonne. The major source of royalties for Western Australia rose in price prior to the election and has now also increased in volume. As members know, volumes in the iron ore industry increase all the time. The other impact is the dollar, because every time the dollar goes down we get more money. What was the dollar estimate in the midyear review in December last year? The estimate was US103c and it is currently US98.7c. The dollar is less than what the government estimated. None of the reasons for breaking election promises hold any weight. They were not unforeseen in the case of the goods and services tax. We knew exactly what was going to happen. The Liberal Party should know better than anyone what was going to happen because it signed the deal.

The people of Western Australia have been conned. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition reminded me of someone famous whom the Premier reminds me of—Victor Lustig. Members may not know his name, but they will know who he is when they find out what he did. He is the bloke who sold the Eiffel Tower twice! On two separate occasions he conned people by selling the Eiffel Tower when he had no capacity to do so. The Premier of this state is the Victor Lustig of Australian politics. He is the bloke who goes out there and says one thing when he knows it is not true, and that is exactly what he did in the lead-up to the state election when he conned the people of Western Australia with all these promises, some of which used public money, yet he knew prior to the election that he would not deliver on them. He just thought to himself, “Well, after the election when I'm ensconced in power once again, I'll worry about that problem then.” That is the *modus operandi*—the Victor Lustig of Australian politics. There he is—member for Cottesloe, Premier of Western Australia. Good on you, Victor, and I am wondering where you are. Why is the Premier not in here when we are calling upon him to apologise to this Parliament? It is very poor form.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

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Mr M. McGOWAN: He is out there doing a deal as we speak. He is selling the Narrows Bridge as we speak, Mr Speaker; he is out there selling the Narrows right now to some unsuspecting buyer—the Victor Lustig of Australian politics. He should be in here apologising to the people of Western Australia for his failures and his broken promises, rather than hiding from this Parliament, as he so often does when these debates come on; he so often cowardly leaves the chamber in a manner that I would never have seen Richard Court, Geoff Gallop or Alan Carpenter do. Anyone who goes back to Richard Court would know that he never would have fled the chamber in the manner that this Premier does. The contempt with which he holds this chamber is beneath contempt. Here he comes now, just as I am concluding my remarks. The Victor Lustig of Western Australia is coming back in. He has just sold the Narrows to some unsuspecting buyer and he is coming back in now that I am concluding my remarks. I look forward to his commentary.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [3.02 pm]: I also support the Leader of the Opposition's motion. I make the point that before, during and after the election campaign, the issue of taxation was very important to the people of this state. In fact, it was discussed at a breakfast attended by the Treasurer, and he made an announcement at that breakfast regarding taxation. Never did he tell anybody that his promised tax cut would be paid for five times over by a tax increase; and, if that is not a lie, I am not sure what is.

The Premier likes to come in here, puff up his chest and boast. He likes to pretend that he knows it all. He likes to pretend that he is a paragon of honesty. But here is a tip to the people of Western Australia: the Premier and the truth are strangers. If the Premier says it is a fact, it is almost certainly not true. If the Premier says that something will happen, it will not. If the Premier says that he has made a promise, it is not going to happen; it is going to be broken. Why is that important? Because during an election campaign people judge what we are going to do. They judge whether we are telling the truth. If they think we are, they vote for us, and that is what happened. The Liberal lie in the campaign worked, and now they have to pay for it. As I said, it is not as though these things were not important. The Under Treasurer made the point in the election campaign, as reported in today's *The West Australian*, that the ability of the government to afford its outlandish promises was a major part of the structural weakness in the budget in this state. So, sadly, we get caught up in the history that the Premier has never been honest with the people of this state, and he needs to start doing it.

Before the election the Premier said that Browse liquefied natural gas was going to go ahead. Before the election he said that the Browse project was built. He said that electricity prices would stable at the inflation rate of 2.75 per cent. Actually, they are going up 45 per cent more than that. The increase in the electricity price by this Premier is approximately 14 per cent on average since he became the Premier. That is the truth of the electricity price in this state.

We also have to remember that this is the Premier who invented the FM radio rule. I will explain what the FM radio rule is. If the Premier goes on FM radio and says something that is not true, it does not matter; that does not count. If he says something untrue on FM radio, that is not counted as part of the judgement of honesty. So, the Liberal Party lies on taxes. At the 2008 election, it promised \$250 million and delivered \$100 million, and at the same time increased taxes over that period by more than that. At the 2013 election, it promised a second round of cuts, but it must have had its fingers crossed behind its back because it is actually increasing taxes. The Premier and the Treasurer say that this is because of the bad budget management that they have been involved in. Guess what? They are responsible for that budget management. In fact, it is worse than that, because in the election campaign, again the Premier puffed up his chest and talked about how well he had been managing the budget of this state. He complains about how well he is running the economy of this state. In fact, the budget is a shambles. Two months after the Liberal Party was re-elected, it has to ditch its promises. It has to jettison what it promised the people of this state it would do. The management of the budget in this state is a complete shambles. We all know that the Treasurer has a tough job. The reason there is a structural flaw in the budget is the man sitting next to him, the Premier. That is the structural weakness in the budget in Western Australia.

Dr K.D. Hames: How many pages have you got?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: How many does the minister want?

This is time for some honesty. The Premier needs to find the opportunity to tell the truth. For the first time he should come into the chamber today and tell the truth about these promises that he has broken. We all remember the 2008 broken promise for the Ellenbrook rail line. The rail lies that we had at the 2008 election the Premier tried to blame on the member for Swan Hills. I feel sorry for the member for Swan Hills. Imagine having your party leader going on television and saying, "I didn't do it; he did it." What a disgrace. The way he blamed the member for Swan Hills for that was a disgrace. He said, "Oh, it was just the member for Swan Hills being enthusiastic in his campaigning." That is what he said. What an outrage! Normally, leaders stand with their backbenchers instead of against them. Normally, people whom you can trust as leaders do not hang you out like

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that, member for Swan Hills. Normally, leaders take responsibility for their own behaviour, and when they have broken a promise, they come in and say, "I've broken a promise."

I will remind the Premier about words from the past, because I will quote the Premier on this issue. It was either a lie or a broken promise. That is what has happened with this, Premier: it is either a lie or a broken promise, and he has to decide which it is. I do not mind whether it was a lie or a broken promise, but all I am asking him to do is stand up here today and outline whether it was a lie or a broken promise on the Ellenbrook rail line. Was it a lie or a broken promise on the lobbyists bill? Was it a lie or a broken promise on the Royal Perth Hospital bill? Was it a lie or a broken promise on the Swan Valley bypass? Was it a lie or a broken promise on the MAX light rail? What other lies or broken promises does the Premier have? On tax cuts, we already know about that. The Premier can come and tell us which one it is.

I will give a tip—a final tip—to the residents of Western Australia: if they see the Premier speaking on television or if they hear him on the radio, they know that what is coming out is not true, and that is very important. The way we can tell whether the Premier is saying something that is not correct is if he is speaking, because every time he speaks, he does not tell the truth.

MR T.R. BUSWELL (Vasse — Treasurer) [3.07 pm]: I am going to respond by working through a few issues—firstly, some issues around government revenue forecasting. I will then deal with some of the issues around recent announcements made by the government, and then perhaps reflect on three important components of the Liberal Party election platform: the Perth–Darwin highway, the MAX light rail, and the railway line to the airport. I will start with issues around revenue. We have argued of late that there have been some sudden and unforeseen shifts in our revenue base and that that is requiring the government to make a range of policy adjustments. The Leader of the Opposition has come into this place and in his second reading contribution on the Supply Bill and again this afternoon has argued that that is not the case—that Western Australian GST receipts are going up; therefore, that is not a —

Mr M. McGowan: I didn't say that.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: What did the Leader of the Opposition say?

Mr M. McGowan: I said —

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Western Australian GST receipts were presented as being higher in the federal budget than they were in the government's last financial summary, be it the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement* or the midyear review. That is the first thing. That is not true, and I will tell members why in a second. Secondly, the Leader of the Opposition said that the price of iron ore at the moment is \$US130—I think he said—a tonne. He argued that that was higher than the commodity price at the time of the midyear review, ignoring, of course, the fact that at the time of the PFPS, the latest snapshot, I think the price of iron ore was \$US123 a tonne. When we take \$US130 a tonne and take the \$US7 a tonne off—we have to allow for it to get to the port and develop the free-on-board price—it is exactly the same. But I am sure the Leader of the Opposition knew about that anyway because he is very —

Ms R. Saffioti: It hasn't reduced.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I have not finished with that argument yet. I will go back firstly to the GST. The reason that the Leader of the Opposition is wrong on the GST is that the GST figures that have always appeared, and will continue to appear, in the state's finances are not the commonwealth's figures; they are Treasury's estimates of what the GST will be.

Ms R. Saffioti: So you're anticipating more revenue generally.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: We are anticipating less.

Ms R. Saffioti: No, more revenue generally, so your GST share is down.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No.

Ms R. Saffioti: It's the only way it can happen.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Let me work through the argument. The member will have her chance to speak. I am trying to talk slowly and quietly so that members opposite can listen to what I have to say because it is an important point. When the commonwealth produced the budget papers earlier this week, the assumed relativities across the out years were between 0.34 per cent and 0.38 per cent. That will never, ever happen. State Treasury's assumption is that that will go from 0.27 per cent down to 0.16 per cent.

Ms R. Saffioti: But why?

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Mr T.R. BUSWELL: That has a material impact —

Ms R. Saffioti: But why?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It is in Treasury's interests and in the state's interests to estimate relativities accurately because it matters to us; it makes absolutely no difference to the commonwealth because the commonwealth collects GST and it passes through —

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for West Swan, I call you to order for the second time!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The point is that the figure that matters in the state's finances is Treasury's estimate of GST. I started to outline that to the house yesterday. Treasury's estimates of GST over the next four years are significantly lower than the amounts contained in the federal budget. We will receive significantly less GST over the next four years than was anticipated either at the time of the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement* or at the time of the midyear review. The quantum of the amount that Treasury is now forecasting we will receive in GST receipts over the period of the forward estimates—just to be clear, that goes through to the 2015–16 financial year—is \$1.22 billion lower than that estimated at the time of the midyear review. It is nearly \$480 million lower than that estimated at the time of the PFPS. In actual fact, the Leader of the Opposition's argument is wrong. Treasury is clearly indicating to us on the basis of the federal budget —

Ms R. Saffioti: But why?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Because the relativities are declining.

Ms R. Saffioti: But why? What drives relativities?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It is a side argument. I will deal with royalties in a moment. That is the fact. The GST estimate post the federal budget, Leader of the Opposition, is less than that estimated at the time of the midyear review and at the time of the PFPS. It is completely the opposite of what the Leader of the Opposition has asserted in this place twice.

Mr M. McGowan interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No; the Leader of the Opposition cannot wriggle out of it. He came in here and made an assertion. He said that we are wrong and that GST has gone up.

Mr M. McGowan: I didn't say that GST had gone up.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The Leader of the Opposition said that GST had gone up based on his last estimate at the midyear review and at the PFPS. That is exactly what he said. He is wrong. There will be a decline in GST since the time of the PFPS.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The second point relates to iron ore prices.

Mr M. McGowan interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The Leader of the Opposition has said in this place that at the time of the midyear review, the iron ore price was \$118.40. He said today that it is \$130—I think that is what the Leader of the Opposition said—and therefore the iron ore price is higher than anticipated. What he did not say is that the PFPS is the snapshot of the state's finances that are the base. At the time of the PFPS, the estimated iron ore price for this financial year was \$US123 a tonne.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The member did not hear what I said before. The \$7 that Treasury allocates for the cost of getting the ore to the port has to be taken off the market price. That is free on board. That is what it says in the fine print. So the price is almost spot on.

Mr M. McGowan: No; \$123 includes f.o.b.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No; \$123 f.o.b.

Mr W.J. Johnston: So it's the same.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No, it is not. It is \$130 less \$7. But the issue arises in the out years. I will take the Leader of the Opposition to the PFPS, because I know he would have read it and he would have read the detail on

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page 3 around the Treasury note on forecasting iron ore prices. It is a very interesting read. The note that Treasury included quite unusually in the PFPS states that the mechanism it used to forecast iron ore prices —

... provides scope for extreme short-term spot price movements (e.g. the spike in January 2013) to substantially skew royalty revenue estimates over the forward years.

Treasury has had concerns about modelling iron ore prices for a number of years. Treasury determines the mechanism it will use to model iron ore prices, not me.

Ms R. Saffioti: So you've never engaged on that issue?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I have had a lot of briefings from Treasury on it, but I have never provided a direction to Treasury on that because I think it is a —

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It was not even a suggestion, member. It is a fundamental role of the Under Treasurer to do that forecasting. Treasury has identified that it is an issue, and it is an issue. It was not such a big issue when iron ore royalties were not such a large component of the state's revenue base, but now they are. Subsequent to the PFPS, Treasury officials have gone to China—Mr Barnes and Mr Court, as I recall, two senior professional independent Treasury officials, despite the fact that the Leader of the Opposition has cause to doubt their independence—and they have come back and provided a revised revenue-forecasting methodology that is very similar to that which is outlined on page 3 of the PFPS and has a similar impact on the state's finances as that which they predicted on page 3 of the PFPS. I will read it to members. It states that if an alternative methodology were applied, "the royalty revenue forecasts across the forward estimates period would be reduced by an aggregate \$1.4 billion". It has not been quite that bad, but we have lost in excess of \$1 billion of revenue across the forward estimates on the basis of that recasting of iron ore price forecasting.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: That is the scenario we are facing—a significant write-down in GST revenue and a major write-down in iron ore revenue over the next four years, complicated by the fact that demand for the services that we provide is rising at rates that we have never seen before in this state. I will give one example before I move on. It astounded me when I saw this piece of information. This relates to the rate of growth of the number of students in education. Education consumes a large part of our budget, as does health. We have revenue pressure and we have expense pressure. Between 2003 and 2010, based on semester 1 student enrolments, there was a growth in student enrolment in public schools in Western Australia of 5 476 students. That is an average of 782 students per annum. In the last three years, from 2010–11 to 2012–13, student numbers have grown by 19 062. In seven years, the number went up by 5 500; in the last three years, it has gone up by 19 000. That is an annual average increase in student enrolment numbers of 6 354. We have gone from 782 to 6 354 students. That puts enormous pressure on state finances. That is just one example. We all see it in our electorates.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Yes, but you knew that before the election.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, we didn't.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Members should go to their local primary school and look at the numbers. Member for Cannington, we did not know what school enrolments were in 2013 because we were in caretaker mode when the schools opened. They are the facts. There has been a massive spike. I have one last very interesting bit of information around the source —

Mr R.H. Cook: This is a voyage of discovery.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It is quite important that the member for Kwinana understand the framework and environment in which the government has to make some very difficult decisions.

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: This is very interesting; just listen. In 2013 there were 10 748 extra students in state and non-government schools across Western Australia. The largest source of enrolment growth in those schools was migration, which accounted for 70 per cent of enrolment growth in our state schools. So nearly 7 500 students at, say, a cost of \$12 400 a student, that is \$92 million. Do not get me wrong, there is nothing wrong with people migrating to the state, but that is \$92 million extra the government has to find to cover those kids in our school system. So revenues are under stress and expenses are under stress.

Dr A.D. Buti: You knew that before the election.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No, we did not.

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Dr A.D. Buti: You did not know that?

The SPEAKER: Members!

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Armadale to order for the second time.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Member for Armadale, school enrolment numbers for 2013 were not known until school went back.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The point I am trying to make is that there has been real revenue pressure and real expense pressure, in part caused by population growth. As a result, the government has had to make some difficult decisions. Some of those difficult decisions relate to stamp duty on non-real transactions. The government did not take the decision on stamp duty on non-real transactions lightly. The government thinks it is important to defer the removal of that stamp duty to help protect the state's finances; to help provide revenue to deal with the growth pressures facing the state. It is a tax, as the Leader of the Opposition finely and accurately pointed out, that is paid by the potential purchasers of business. I have no doubt it would, through some capitalisation process, impact on what would be paid for a business. That is a fair conclusion to that argument. It is worth about \$120 million per annum to the state and, frankly, I make no apologies for that, because in the current environment the government needs that \$120 million in its bank account for some of the reasons I outlined earlier.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Why didn't you say that two months ago?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Because I was not aware that it was even an option the government needed to consider two months ago. Western Australia is not the first jurisdiction to have been put in this situation. The New South Wales and Queensland state governments have had to make similar decisions. It is not something the government wanted to do; it is something the government had to do.

Similarly, the best outcome for most people is that the state does not increase energy prices. I am sure if a survey were done of people on the street, most would say that is the best outcome. However, we have to understand that the taxpayer provides a subsidy for every cent the government charges that is lower than the cost of producing energy. It is my view that the four per cent increase in the price of energy does two things. Firstly, it is well within the parameters that the Premier outlined during the election campaign of where energy prices would sit. Secondly, it provides a fair balance between the subsidies taxpayers have to pay, which in the next few years will be \$1.2 billion, compared with what the energy user pays.

Mr D.J. Kelly: You have no idea how much pain that is causing.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Does the member for Bassendean think so?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It is like the member for Bassendean's misso mate when he came into my office.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Go on! Have a dip at someone who is not here.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am not having a dip at him. He came into my office with a group of education assistants. He sat there with all of them, and he said, "The problem with you is you don't know what it's like to live on a low income." He said that to me. Do you know what I said to him?

Mr D.J. Kelly: Have a go at someone who's not here.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am not having a go at him. I said that I was brought up by my mum, and she was an education assistant. Every person around that table remembered my mum from her time at school, and that guy left very quickly, not because I kicked him out, but because he had embarrassed himself. Perhaps that is the reason, when he ran as the ALP candidate in my seat in the last election, the ALP polled only 12 per cent.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! I call the member for Bassendean to order for the first time.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: In my view, the four per cent is moderate, fair and balanced. Of course the government acknowledges it caused difficulties for people. That is why the cost of living allowance adjustments and the other supports the government provides have been increased in line with the increase in the price of energy. Similarly, earlier this week the government announced a range of corrective measures to save about \$92 million this financial year. Again, I make no apologies for that. The government needs to live within its means. It cannot

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spend money it does not have; it is not going to. That \$92 million will assist the government deliver on that commitment this year.

I want to close on a couple of points. The first is the Perth–Darwin highway. I have here a modest visual prop to assist the member for West Swan work through the issues around the Perth–Darwin highway. This is a map! I had better put it behind me because I cannot see it.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Have you got the Speaker's permission, because we now have to have the Speaker's permission for things like that?

The SPEAKER: It is a map.

Mr J.R. Quigley: It is not a map; it is an aerial photograph.

Several members interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Thank you, member for Bassendean.

Point of Order

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Mr Speaker, may I inquire, for the information of members, if that board is something members are required to get approval for in advance or whether all members can bring in something like that whenever they like?

The SPEAKER: In this instance, if it allows the minister to explain the point, I am allowing it.

Mr M. McGOWAN: On the point of order, Mr Speaker. To bring something like that into the chamber demeans this chamber. Other members seated behind the Treasurer cannot see what is going on. If the ruling is that members can bring in things of that nature and magnitude, look forward to some very big maps and charts coming into this chamber, because if it is good enough for the government, it is good enough for the opposition.

Several members interjected.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Order! Firstly, I ask the member for Armadale to withdraw that statement.

Dr A.D. Buti: I withdraw.

The SPEAKER: Secondly, I call the member for Armadale to order for a third time.

The position is this: all members have had a look at this map, or this aerial photograph. In normal circumstances the Treasurer should have applied for approval to bring it into the chamber. All members have had a look at it. They know what it is all about. Would the Treasurer please take it down and continue his speech.

Debate Resumed

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Mr Speaker, my sincerest apologies for not seeking your approval to display the map because it is a useful map. I want to explain the circumstance around the Perth–Darwin highway. As the Premier indicated, this is the Liberal Party position on the Perth–Darwin highway: it will ultimately run 37 kilometres from the current Tonkin Highway.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: The member for West Swan has not yet spoken, and she will have a chance to speak. However, I call the member for West Swan to order for the third time.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: So, effectively, it will run from where Tonkin and Reid highways currently meet, right through to Muchea. During the election campaign the Liberal Party promise was—

A Liberal Government, if re-elected, will allocate \$196million ... It is anticipated that major works would commence at the northern end of the alignment ...

That is entirely what will happen. The commonwealth has agreed to contribute \$400 million on top of the \$200 million. In my view, that is a perfect logical next step in financing that proposal, and I am confident that the \$800 million will be spent.

Dr A.D. Buti: Read the second page.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Which part?

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Which part of the next page?

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Dr A.D. Buti: The second paragraph of the second page.

The SPEAKER: It would be better if the Treasurer continued his speech.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Mr Speaker, I have quickly scanned that paragraph and that paragraph is true and still stands today. This project will link the Reid–Tonkin highway interchange through to Muchea by 2019. That is entirely consistent with what the government has been saying. The government has committed \$196 million through to 2015–16 and there is plenty of time after that to spend the commonwealth and state money to deliver that.

It gets better than that, because, as the member for Bassendean pointed out yesterday, the commonwealth has also contributed funds to upgrade those three intersections on Tonkin Highway.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Are you going to do it?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It gets better than that.

Several members interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: We will be sitting down with the commonwealth over the next couple of weeks to understand the cash flow—the process and how it works. But it gets better than that because when the railway line goes out to the airport, there will be a second bridge over the river so that the highway will be able to expand even further. That road will happen. The member for West Swan has been taking a subset of the project and saying, “That’s all you’re going to do; therefore, the big project is not going to happen.” That would be a bit like saying that the government has awarded the contract for the forward works of the sports stadium for only \$30 million; therefore, the government will not build the stadium.” It just does not work like that. This project will be delivered.

Unfortunately, I need to share some time for my colleagues and I cannot go into too much detail about the Metro Area Express light rail project—it is revolutionary and visionary—nor can I go too much into the airport rail project, other than to say —

Several members interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Not at all, member! The money from the commonwealth is much appreciated. Private sector capital will play a part in delivery of those projects.

Several members interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The stadium has private sector capital. Are members opposed to that?

Several members interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: You are opposed; I forgot.

Several members interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No toll roads, my friend! I will say only this: I can give members opposite an iron-clad guarantee that the Liberal Party’s train line to the airport will go to the airport terminal, unlike the train line that the Labor Party proposed during the election campaign.

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Minister for Police) [3.31 pm]: I rise to respond to the accusation that the Premier and this government have broken a promise to deliver the police station at Ballajura. I draw members’ attention to —

Mr M. McGowan: Read what the motion says—a 24-hour police station!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: It refers to a 24-hour Ballajura police station. I draw members’ attention to the commitment that we made during the election campaign. The Liberal Party’s commitment regarding this police station at Ballajura was made on 11 February 2013, and it was reported shortly thereafter in the *Eastern Reporter* by a very good journalist; namely, its editor, Michael Ferrante. I put out a media release on that day that was very clear as to what the Liberal government was promising. What was in the media release? Our words were also quoted in the *Eastern Reporter*. For the benefit of members, I will read from that statement. It says —

The station would be built on a greenfields site yet to be chosen, and completed in 2015–16. It would cater for 21 police officers who would use it on a 24-hour basis and contain holding cells, modern fingerprinting facilities and secure parking.

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Mrs Harvey said it was likely detectives would be stationed there to deal with the high burglary rate in the area, but operational decisions would be made by the Commissioner. It is envisaged it would be open to the public during business hours.

Further to that, the Liberal candidate for Ballajura, who doorknocked the entire electorate and I believe won the trust of the people of Ballajura in that process, sent out a letter to all residents of Ballajura. Her letter read —

I'm delighted to let you know that if elected, a Liberal Government will deliver a **\$12.5 million purpose-built police station in Ballajura that will staff 21 full-time police officers, which means more police on the beat and safer neighbourhoods.**

...

... **a new police station in Ballajura —**

Is expected —

to be operational in 2016.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: You said it was going to 24/7, 24 hours a day!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Member for Willagee.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I am willing to table all of these documents at the end of my contribution, but I actually find the assertions of the member for West Swan and those opposite about the people of Ballajura quite offensive.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: The member for Willagee.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Those opposite are implying that the learned, intelligent and literate people of Ballajura completely disregarded —

Several members interjected.

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Did the member for Midland say that the member should admit that she lied to the people of Ballajura?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Yes. I would like to —

The SPEAKER: Can you withdraw that, please.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I would like to withdraw the remark because I realise it is unparliamentary.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Midland to order for the first time. Members have had a good look at that diagram that has been shown by the member for Midland. Let us move on from that diagram. The member for Midland can speak with the member for West Swan in due course.

Debate Resumed

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I was saying that I find it offensive that the literate, intelligent people of Ballajura —

Several members interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The implication is that the material that was deposited in the letter boxes that contained the Liberal Party promise to those people was ignored. It is implying that the people of Ballajura, after the Liberal candidate, Natasha Cheung, door-knocked and listened to people's concerns and sent a letter stating what our Liberal government promise was, ignored the letter. It is implying that the people of Ballajura could not read and comprehend the very clear information that was reported in the *Eastern Reporter* that accurately portrayed exactly what this government will do. This government will build a \$12.5 million police station in Ballajura— \$2 million will go towards land acquisition; \$10.5 million will go towards a modern policing facility that will provide for police officers to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week out of Ballajura station. Quite frankly, the fact that the member for West Swan thinks that the people of Ballajura are going to be swayed by an electronic sign on the back of a trailer as opposed to the letters and the written newspaper —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

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Mrs L.M. HARVEY: — reporting that accurately reflected our commitment is offensive! I stand by our commitment. I will build our police station.

Several members interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: We have funded it and —

The SPEAKER: Sit down, please, police minister. I call the member for Willagee to order for the second time. Everybody is now drowning out the Minister for Police. I call the member for Girrawheen to order for the first time. I want to remind a number of members that they have been called three times and I do not want to have to invoke standing order 48.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I point out that we have fully funded this commitment. We have also promised to fund 550 additional police officers, some of whom will be housed out of this police station. I will compare the government's commitment to the paltry offerings of those opposite who said they could build three police stations for \$27.5 million. It is impossible; it cannot be done. Members opposite could not have kept their promise. We will keep ours to the people of Ballajura.

Lastly, for the record, the people of Ballajura believed us and they supported Natasha Cheung overwhelmingly. We will deliver for those people a \$12.5 million police station and I will proudly be there the day that it is opened.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [3.37 pm]: What contributions we have just had! The Treasurer stood up, and what did he try to do? He tried to recreate a global financial crisis. Post-September 2008, there was a GFC and revenues did take a hammering, but post this election there has been no GFC. The government is trying to manufacture a financial crisis over the past two months; there has been no financial crisis. Everything known today was known at the midyear review and known at the time of the pre-election statement. Let us go through the facts. We have heard about commodities and iron ore price. No significant reduction —

A government member interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member opposite should stand up and make a contribution.

There is no significant reduction in commodity prices. The government knew about the GST two months ago. The midyear review did write down revenue and the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement* also wrote down some revenue. They knew about it. Nothing new has emerged in the past two months, but members opposite try to create excuses for not delivering their election commitments. As I said, post-September 2008, there was a GFC and it gave the Treasurer the excuse to abandon the sports stadium and the Museum at the time, but there is no GFC this time. He is trying to recreate one. The Treasurer is trying to pretend there has been some type of financial shock that no-one else is aware of. In the past two months, I have not seen a massive financial shock that has completely changed the entire revenue and expenditure landscape for this budget.

There are structural problems with this budget and they emerged as soon as those opposite won government. It is a Premier with absolute disregard for Treasury and Treasury processes. He does not believe in forward estimates. Of course the Premier has to come unstuck if he does not believe in forward estimates and if he lives day by day, and this is what has happened. The Treasurer spent more time trying to be popular with his backbench than looking after Treasury. The Minister for Regional Development used to spend and do whatever he wanted at the time. That was a structural problem. They created it. In September 2008, the surplus was over \$2 billion and net debt was down to \$3.6 billion. Revenue has increased. We have seen absolutely nothing new in the past two months to justify their actions. As I said, the government got away with the GFC post-September 2008. There is no GFC now. There is no enormous shock. It is a case of complete mismanagement and deceit of the people.

I want to go through the GST argument put forward by the Treasurer. After many opportunities, he did not adequately explain why the GST has been written down so significantly. The GST can be driven down by that magnitude for three reasons: firstly, WA Treasury's estimates are higher than previously given to the Commonwealth Grants Commission; secondly, expenditure is lower than the government would have given to the Commonwealth Grants Commission; or, thirdly, the GST pool has reduced significantly. We can cut out the third reason because the GST pool has not decreased significantly. Either the revenue forecasts that Treasury holds are higher or expenditure is lower. We also heard that the population is increasing. If the population is increasing, that will work in our favour in the Commonwealth Grants Commission process. The Treasurer gave no reason for the GST being written down so significantly; he just said that it is lower. We asked him for the reason again and again. He said that the ratio is lower. We know that the ratio is lower. We know when we multiply 0.16 by another number, we get another number, but what is driving that 0.16? There must be a reason

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why WA Treasury figures are so different. As I said, there are normally three reasons: firstly, the GST pool is significantly different, which I do not think it is; secondly, the revenue is high, which is a possibility; or, thirdly, expenditure is lower, but that cannot be the case because of the population figures. The government is saying there has been a massive population increase but that will work in our favour too.

The Treasurer stood up for five minutes talking about ratios but he could not explain why his figures are so different from those in the federal budget. The real issue for us is that we will not really get to examine that until August because the government had to postpone the budget. We know that it had to postpone the budget because of the absolute chaos this budget is in. Day by day, we have seen cuts, deferral of taxes and increases in charges. It is absolute chaos. This is a government that has never taken it seriously. We all know that. The Premier has form. We all know it. The government does not take it seriously, and this is the outcome. We have had revenue growth. There has not been declining revenue. In comparison with other states, we have had strong revenue growth. Since the GFC, the economy has grown strongly. The Premier has tried to be popular day by day. Business class seats were proposed for the new stadium. Then he said that the government has run out of money. Seriously, the government has to pay for every announcement. It cannot make an announcement and not expect to pay for it.

When the Treasurer tabled that GST graph yesterday, he said they were the net flows from the commonwealth. When we picked up the graph, it showed figures relating to the GST. I agree that the GST system has to be fixed. We said this in 2000. Geoff Gallop said this was a bad deal for WA. Do members know who defended it? The Premier defended it. I remember that because I was there watching. Premier Gallop said this was a bad deal. He said it was a bad deal because it was handing over revenue-raising power to the commonwealth and more of our income was subject to the Commonwealth Grants Commission process. That was the reason. What has happened? We handed more power to the Commonwealth under the Howard–Court GST deal, and guess what? We have less money. It was a bad deal and we have always argued against it.

This government comes into this place with its little GST graph and says that these are the net flows from the federal budget but it does not acknowledge the \$1.5 billion of infrastructure funding on the table. Frankly, that is a ridiculous amount. We had to struggle to get \$42 million in grants for our national water initiative. No-one backed us. Of course, Barnett said, “John Howard’s right.”

The SPEAKER: You are not supposed to refer to members by their name in this house.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sorry; I mean the Premier. Basically, no-one backed us. We asked for \$42 million. We had three meetings with John Howard. He laughed in our face. The commonwealth has given the state government \$1.5 billion to help it deliver its commitment, regardless of what it is saying with its stupid maps. Everyone knew the Swan Valley bypass was 37 kilometres long. The Premier is trying to walk away. A total of \$420 million has been allocated for the Swan Valley bypass. I think \$140 million has been allocated for three overpasses. Work will be done on regional roads and massive projects leading into Fremantle. A total of \$1.5 billion is on the table. We could not have dreamt of any of that.

I want to refer to what the Minister for Police said. She insulted the people of Ballajura. Why did the Liberal Party put up eight or nine signs around my electorate saying that the Liberals will deliver 24/7 police stations? They were insulting to the people of Ballajura. The government closed the Ballajura police station and for 1 342 days said that the suburb did not need a police station and its residents were stupid for asking for one. Twenty-five days before the election, the minister said that the government was going to build a police station. Who do members think the people of Ballajura believed? Why did the government pull this crass stunt, putting up signs everywhere saying a Liberal government will build 24/7 police stations? It deceived the people of Ballajura. The minister should not come into this place talking about the people of Ballajura when the government insulted them for four and a half years on law and order. The minister should not try to pretend that she knows anything about law and order in Ballajura.

To sum up, this government is failing the people of WA. It is breaking its election promises day by day and trying to create a financial monster that does not exist. If it had read the budget papers and budgeted more than year to year or day by day, we would not be in this mess. The government has no-one else to blame but itself. It has to stop blaming other people because soon it might not have anyone else to blame.

I seek leave to lay the sign saying that the Liberals will build a 24/7 police station on the table for the rest of the day.

Leave granted.

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

Tabling of Papers

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Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I did say that I would table these documents documenting our commitment to the people of Ballajura.

[See paper 323.]

Debate Resumed

MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Premier) [3.48 pm]: The Liberal Party did not win the seat of West Swan but the Liberal Party and the National Party had an overwhelming victory on 9 March. We had a two-party preferred vote of 58 per cent.

Mr J.R. Quigley interjected.

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Member for Butler, that is unparliamentary language. Could you please withdraw it?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I withdraw.

Debate Resumed

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It was the highest two-party preferred vote for a government since —

Mr J.R. Quigley: By misleading them.

The SPEAKER: Member for Butler, there are four minutes to go. Can you please let the Premier finish. I call you to order for the first time.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: In 2008 this government won 10 seats off Labor. In 2013 the Liberal Party won a further five seats off Labor, including traditional Labor seats such as Perth, Belmont and others, so-called Labor heartland. The National Party won Pilbara off the Labor Party, yet members opposite are in denial. They were smashed in the election—absolutely smashed—and they will not concede it.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah, I call you to order for the first time. Can we just see if we can hear the Premier in silence for three minutes?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member for Ocean Reef won a swing to him of 17 per cent. Do members opposite not think the electorate is saying something? Do they not think the electors are expressing their will?

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It was an overwhelming endorsement of this government and it was an overwhelming mandate of trust for this government.

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany!

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

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

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Here we are on 16 May, two months after the election and in reality about six weeks into government after the swearing-in of the new government. There are changed circumstances and those circumstances will change again year in, year out over the next four years. What the people of Western Australia were saying was, “We think you’re a good government and we trust you to govern this state.” They did not determine their vote on every promise and every little announcement, whether it was from Liberal or Labor.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: They did not. They trusted this government in an overwhelming vote of support, and they trust us to deliver our commitments. They trust us to do that and we will do it. But they also trust us to adjust and do what we need to do to keep this state in a strong financial position. We will do that, and they will judge us in four years. That is the time of judgement.

I give members opposite some advice from someone who has spent a bit of time in opposition. They need to actually stop recycling their speeches of a term ago and sit down and do a bit of serious policy work. They should travel around the state and travel overseas, if they want to, instead of coming into this place with corny, boring propositions. The public of Western Australia are way ahead of them in sophistication. They may even be

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ahead of the media. They look at a government in its totality, they look at the individual who is Premier, they look at the minister and they look at the new members coming in and they vote accordingly.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Members opposite can carry on like this.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I hope members opposite carry on like this—the way they have carried on since Parliament reconvened. I hope they continue, because if they do they will not regain any ground at the next election.

Division

Question put and a division taken with the following result —

Ayes (18)

Dr A.D. Buti
Mr R.H. Cook
Ms J. Farrer
Mr W.J. Johnston
Mr D.J. Kelly

Mr F.M. Logan
Mr M. McGowan
Ms S.F. McGurk
Mr M.P. Murray
Mr P. Papalia

Mr J.R. Quigley
Ms M.M. Quirk
Mrs M.H. Roberts
Ms R. Saffioti
Mr C.J. Tallentire

Mr P.C. Tinley
Mr P.B. Watson
Mr D.A. Templeman
(Teller)

Noes (34)

Mr F.A. Alban
Mr C.J. Barnett
Mr I.C. Blayney
Mr I.M. Britza
Mr T.R. Buswell
Mr G.M. Castrilli
Mr V.A. Catania
Mr M.J. Cowper
Ms M.J. Davies

Mr J.H.D. Day
Ms W.M. Duncan
Ms E. Evangel
Mr J.M. Francis
Mrs G.J. Godfrey
Mr B.J. Grylls
Dr K.D. Hames
Mrs L.M. Harvey
Mr C.D. Hatton

Mr A.P. Jacob
Dr G.G. Jacobs
Mr S.K. L'Estrange
Mr W.R. Marmion
Mr J.E. McGrath
Mr P.T. Miles
Ms A.R. Mitchell
Mr N.W. Morton
Dr M.D. Nahan

Mr D.C. Nalder
Mr J. Norberger
Mr D.T. Redman
Mr A.J. Simpson
Mr M.H. Taylor
Mr T.K. Waldron
Mr A. Krsticevic *(Teller)*

Pairs

Mr B.S. Wyatt
Ms J.M. Freeman
Ms L.L. Baker

Mr R.F. Johnson
Mr P. Abetz
Mr R.S. Love

Question thus negatived.