

TREASURER'S ADVANCE AUTHORISATION BILL 2010

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [2.54 pm]: I will resume my comments on the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill introduced yesterday.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members may have other conversations they want to have in this place, but I am sure Hansard would like to hear what the member is saying. I would like to hear what the member is saying and other people here would like to hear it. If you have a conversation that is not relevant to this place, please take it outside.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Thank you, Mr Speaker. We heard during question time the Treasurer attack the previous government's handling of capital projects. But it is important to put on the record just where this government is at with its capital projects. As we have heard, Oakajee is in the budget. The state contribution is \$339 million, but the feasibility study, the business case, has not been undertaken yet. The state contribution will be \$339 million and an equal amount is to be funded by the commonwealth, yet no feasibility study or business case has been done on the cost of the project. The Northbridge Link, or now the Hub, project has been allocated about \$497 million in the budget and, again, no figures have been prepared to show the true cost of this project. We will be watching very carefully to see whether the costs and time frame for the Hub project increases.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: It will be probably a bit like the canal funding arrangements.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The office of canal development will fix it all! The Perth waterfront is also a project that has been committed to and is to start within a year, yet I have seen no accurate figures on the true cost of that project.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Do you oppose that, too?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What is the cost of it?

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: Show us your numbers. You have been pontificating today; get out and show us your numbers.

Mr C.J. Barnett: At least I've been here.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What is the cost of the project?

Mr C.J. Barnett: I'll tell you when we know.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Premier has committed to it; it will start within a year and he does not know the cost of the project.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: At least we tried to put an estimate on our projects.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You were 200 per cent out.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: If we do not put estimates on them, we will never be out. The Premier starts projects without any idea of how much they will cost. How can he do that? What is in the budget for it?

Mr C.J. Barnett: My goodness me! No wonder you are absolutely useless.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: How boring trying to include estimates in the budget.

Mr C.J. Barnett: What a poor performer you are.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Premier should not personally attack people.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Oh, personally attack you! Give us a break. You're not a good performer, are you?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: For the Oakajee project, no feasibility study has been undertaken, but a costing is provided in the budget with no certainty of whether those figures will be in the ballpark. Again, there are no details to show whether the figures for the Hub will be correct. Of course, there is the Perth waterfront, which is to commence next year with absolutely no estimate of the total cost.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It will begin serious construction in 2012.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I thought the Premier said on TV the other night that it would commence in 12 months.

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Mr C.J. Barnett: Preliminary work will commence on the main waste water pipeline.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: So will the utilities be moved in 2011?

Mr C.J. Barnett: They may.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: You are going to move them before you know the cost of the project.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: He is committed to it before he knows the cost of the project.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Yes; we're going to do it.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: He is going to build it. We built the Perth Arena; it is a great project which thousands of Western Australians will enjoy. It is the same philosophy.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Treasurer claimed that it is our project. It is our project. Is it now the Liberal Party's project? Whose project is it?

Mr T.G. Stephens: They'll be our statues.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: As we have been told.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Perth Arena will be a great project for all Western Australians. It is our project. The Treasurer said it is our project, therefore it is our project.

The financial mismanagement of the state's finances means a number of projects in my electorate and throughout Western Australia will not be funded. The incompetence of this government in handling its finances means that key priorities across Western Australia, including in my electorate of West Swan, will not go ahead. Key election commitments—for example, the construction of the Ellenbrook rail line—will not happen because of this government's incompetent handling of the state's finances. Key priority projects in other areas of public transport, as well as the construction and upgrading of roads throughout Western Australia, will not go ahead simply because this government is running out of money.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Did you support the 650 new buses announced last weekend?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: They are new buses; not additional buses. I understand that was listed in the midyear review.

Mr C.J. Barnett: There will be 650 new buses.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That will be over 10 years. It was announced in the midyear review and was to commence in 2010–11. They are just new buses replacing the existing buses. It is the continuation of the bus program and there is no provision for additional buses.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No additional buses?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. Barnett: We have contracted 65 to 80 buses a year according to demand. That is the contract.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It was described in the midyear review and press release that it is a continuation of the existing program.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You didn't do your homework again. The contract was for 65 to 80 buses a year with a minimum of 650.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is the continuation of the existing program. All governments buy new buses.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You didn't.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, we did.

Mr C.J. Barnett: The existing contract was entered into by the Richard Court government.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Honestly, the Premier can say whatever he wants.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I will just point out that the member for West Swan is, again, inaccurate.

The SPEAKER: I gave the call to the member for West Swan and I am sure she does not need the assistance of members on either side of this place.

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Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Key projects in my electorate will not be funded. I repeat that the Ellenbrook rail line is one of them. Given that the Premier is interjecting all the time, I ask him whether that was an election commitment.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I noted that you quoted one of your local newspapers the other day. You didn't quote me.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: So, there was not an election commitment?

Mr C.J. Barnett: You need to look at what I said in the election campaign.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Are the words in the pamphlet that I have in my hand, which was distributed by the Liberal Party's candidate, the now member for Swan Hills, that the Liberals will build a rail line to Ellenbrook not the Liberal Party's words?

Mr C.J. Barnett: I said two things: I said that was the next logical major extension of the metropolitan rail network and, if we were elected, it would be our second-term project.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, the Premier did not say that.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Yes, I did. That is exactly what I said in the campaign.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The then shadow Minister for Transport committed to a time frame, commencing 2012 and to be completed by 2015.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I know exactly what I said in the campaign.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The then shadow Minister for Transport and the now Premier said on television that the Liberal Party was matching the Labor Party commitment for the Ellenbrook rail line to commence in 2012. The then shadow Minister for Transport clearly committed to a time frame and the now member for Swan Hills distributed pamphlets throughout the electorate of Swan Hills —

Mr C.J. Barnett: All you had was a sign on a star picket that fell over in the election campaign, as your whole campaign did. That was the level of your preparation for the line.

Mr F.A. Alban: Can you show me the pamphlet I distributed?

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Mr Acting Speaker, I ask for an extension.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.M. Francis): Order, member for Swan Hills! For those members who missed the member's request for an extension of time, I advise that the extension has been granted.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: There are other roads in the area that need urgent attention and that are a high priority. Last week we saw the opening of a Reid Highway extension, between West Swan Road and Great Northern Highway. It was a great project committed to and funded and commenced by the previous government. That is now open, but it is necessary for the Reid Highway duplication to be completed, particularly between Beechboro Road and West Swan Road. It is a key priority. A number of crashes occur in that vicinity, and funding for that project is urgently needed.

Point of Order

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: This debate is on the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, member for Cannington!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Excuse me, but I am speaking to a point of order.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: This is not a general debate. The debate should focus on the bill at hand and whether the appropriation should be accepted.

Ruling by Acting Speaker

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.M. Francis): The debate on the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2010 is not a general, public affairs debate. Rather, the bill seeks to increase the Treasurer's advance account limit for

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the current financial year from the amount authorised. Hence, this bill is about to change the limit to which the Treasurer can advance funds for extraordinary or unforeseen matters. I ask the member to continue but to keep on topic.

Debate Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Didn't you work for Treasury at one stage? You don't know the difference between the Treasury bills.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I worked for Treasury. Did the Premier?

Mr C.J. Barnett: No.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It shows.

Mr C.J. Barnett: At least I know the difference between an appropriation bill and the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am talking about the extra \$1.15 billion that has been requested under this bill. What I have been saying is that this bill does not include key projects in my area, such as the extension of Reid Highway. The Reid Highway – Malaga Drive intersection also needs to be improved to help commercial and residential traffic in that area. Other key projects include the Lord Street - Reid Highway intersection, the duplication of Gnangara Road and the improvement of the Gnangara Road - Beechboro Road intersection. Under the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2010, the government is requesting an extra \$1.1 —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Do you think we should be spending more?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am saying that the government is bankrupting the state. There will be no money to fund the priorities in my electorate or other suburbs.

Mr C.J. Barnett: They are all the projects not done in the Labor years.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: By the way, Treasurer, how much will Oakajee cost?

Mr T.R. Buswell: Well, so far, the Premier and his good friend Kevin have put in around \$778 million from the state's point of view. Is that about right, Premier?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: How much will the project cost?

Mr T.R. Buswell: That is still being worked through.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is still to be worked through! I ask the Treasurer how much the Perth waterfront development will cost.

Mr T.R. Buswell: We'll show you ours if you'll show us yours!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I ask again: how much will the Perth waterfront development cost?

Mr C.J. Barnett: Oh, how ridiculous you are. What a ridiculous question.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: A ridiculous question?

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The government is demonstrating its absolute disregard for the state's finances. This will result in budget deficits. Debt will increase. Expense growth will be out of control. It will mean increased taxes and charges for everyone in Western Australia. We are already seeing that. It will also lead to the non-delivery of key projects in all electorates and suburbs across Western Australia. Those projects are priorities for the people. The Premier has today demonstrated that he has no regard for the state's finances; he makes it up as he goes along. All that this bill will mean for Western Australians is larger bills and no projects in their areas.

MR A.J. WADDELL (Forrestfield) [3.08 pm]: When I say the figure "\$1.15 billion", I feel like I need to do a Dr Evil impersonation. But it is not the highest figure we have heard in this place, and I am sure it will not be the highest figure that will be discussed in coming years. It is a large amount of money. The question on the tip of the tongue of all Western Australians would be: what value do we get for \$1.15 billion? If we were to ask that question of the people in my electorate, the answer would be zero.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Do you have any first home buyers in your electorate?

Mr A.J. WADDELL: I have some. There are a lot of new things happening in my electorate.

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Mr T.R. Buswell interjected.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: The Treasurer knows about small businesses in my electorate; I believe he recently visited some.

One thing I noted was the increased allocation for the police of \$19.243 million. That is an interesting topic. I would like some additional expenditure out of those savings on some more closed-circuit television cameras. The reason that we need closed-circuit television cameras is highlighted by what happened to one of my constituents, Mr Alan Russell. Perhaps he is known to this chamber. Mr Alan Russell recently highlighted the inadequacies and injustices that are inherent in the government's proposed stop-and-search laws and the mandatory sentencing law that applies when a person assaults a police officer. Mr Russell is the gentleman who, had it not been for CCTV footage, would be facing a jail term for assaulting a police officer. The assault charge was completely and utterly fabricated by the police officer concerned.

Mr T.R. Buswell: What happened to the police officer?

Mr A.J. WADDELL: He got a small fine, I believe. He was not given a mandatory sentence.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Was he charged?

Mr A.J. WADDELL: I am not sure what has happened to him since. That incident highlights the problems of putting blind faith in our police force and trusting that officers will always do the right thing. It should serve as a warning to the public that their interests are not always served by more policing and greater powers. It is frightening to think how many similar cases there are to Mr Russell's case. How many people are rotting away in our ever-increasing prison population simply because it was their word against the word of a police officer?

Mr C.C. Porter: That is ridiculous!

Mr A.J. WADDELL: It happened here, and without CCTV footage it would not have been proven that Mr Russell did not assault the police officer. The member is kidding himself if he thinks that that does not happen. Throughout the world there are countless examples of people who have rotted away in prison for years only to have been determined innocent years later when new evidence came to light. We should consider that. Who watches the watchers? Who is guarding the guards?

Point of Order

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: We are debating the Treasurer's advance bill. It is not a wide-ranging bill like the appropriation bills. It is a very specific bill. The subject that the member for Forrestfield is speaking about is way off beam. I ask the Acting Speaker to draw the member's attention to the bill we are debating.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Clearly the member was addressing the bill. He was making it clear what should have been included in the bill. He is arguing that what has been left out of the government's \$1.15 billion extravaganza is CCTV to protect Western Australian citizens. It is clearly relevant to the debate.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is very easy for members to make points of order about relevance to the bill. We could do it all day. However, it is easy for members to refer to any matter because the bill refers to many departments and budgets. If the government wants to take points of order, members can refer to what is in the bill. I suggest the government go with the flow.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.M. Francis): There is no point of order. Debate should be confined to whether the authorisation should be approved. It is not an opportunity for general debate on public affairs.

Debate Resumed

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Labor will support the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2010; we have made that perfectly clear. We do not block budgetary bills. What we are questioning is how it is that we came to the extraordinary figure of \$1.15 billion. It is difficult to demonstrate what the Western Australian public will get from that money. They have received nothing, particularly those in the eastern suburbs, which is where my seat is located. We barely get thrown scraps from the table.

I note an \$818 000 item for the Office of Energy that relates to a Gas Supply and Emergency Management Committee recommendation. I am not certain what the management committee recommended for the Office of Energy. I would like to think that the Office of Energy is concerned about the accountability of energy suppliers within Western Australia. I hope it is on top of the poor service and misinformation that was given by Synergy to people in my electorate.

A couple of weeks ago I had a number of meetings with some residents from my electorate about their concerns. These people were, quite literally, fed up that they had not been billed by Synergy and that they were getting the run-around, which relates to this Treasurer's advance. The government will be relying on moneys coming from

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Synergy, yet we find that Synergy, because of its billing practices, has not been billing people. Synergy will eventually bill these people; it will eventually bill the pensioners in my electorate, in some cases, up to six months worth of bills. It will have very little chance of receiving payment for that six-month bill simply because those people will not have the capacity to meet six months of backlogged power payments, added to the ever-increasing power bills they are facing right now. I was informed by a representative of Synergy that the bills had not been sent out due to a failure in its computer system. It introduced a new computer system in August 2009, and the problems will take some time to be rectified. Synergy signed off on this computer system; I understand it is a similar computer system to one used in the United Kingdom, and now the company involved is being sued for failing to deliver properly there as well.

What was even more disturbing about the whole Synergy mess was that these people were often receiving bills that were categorised as second notices—not the first notice, because they had never received the first notice. Synergy was trying to bill these people an additional administration charge for the collection of moneys not paid due to the fact that Synergy had not sent out a bill. Synergy went out of its way to try to explain this and promised to rectify it and waive all the payments for the late fees and so forth, but I cannot help but come to the conclusion that it was a little bit of too little too late, which reminds me a little bit of the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2010 before us today; it is too big too early for what we are receiving.

There have also been a lot of complaints from people who tried to do their bit for the environment by installing photovoltaic solar units on their roofs. These people were trying to offset the ever-increasing power bills they faced, trying to offset greenhouse gas emissions, and trying to do their bit for the environment. The complaints related to the equipment being improperly installed; the billing system being manipulated, meaning that they had no way of determining their input into it; and a lack of clarity on future tariffs they would be paid. There was confusion around government policy on that.

The area I wish to focus on most today is that of the budget for education. That has risen by \$66 764 000, which is only exceeded—in a massive, massive, massive amount—by the budget for the Department of Treasury and Finance. In travelling through my electorate, education is one of the elements that I interact with people about a great deal; in fact, the majority of people probably interact with government services through the education system more than just about anything, other than, say, the health system. I have been contacted recently by a number of parents who were immensely excited by all of the work going on in schools. The National School Pride money has seen schools spiffed up a little bit, which shows how schools have been left to deteriorate. Probably not enough money has been put into our budgets over the years for school maintenance.

One of the things parents are excited about, of course, is the construction of new buildings through the Building the Education Revolution fund, but a concern has been raised about the lack of air conditioning. Any member who has been outside today realises that it is a little bit unseasonably warm for this time of year—I think it is 39 degrees today. It will be similarly hot tomorrow, I understand, and it was over 40 degrees a couple of weeks ago. I did not come into this place to read a weather report, but the point is that we are now building school buildings without air conditioning. In this day and age we are not air conditioning these building simply because they do not fall within a certain boundary; they do not fall within a policy. This has been a long-standing policy. I believe the Premier himself commented on this matter in 2001 when he was the then education minister. He promised that if a coalition government were re-elected then anything that was partly air-cooled or not air-cooled at all would be air-cooled over the next four years. Of course, since then a Labor government has come and gone, and the Premier is, of course, in charge of a government that is more than capable of doing it. It seems a shame that we are constructing these buildings in a way that children will be subjected to heat fatigue and situations in which they will not be able to learn properly because they are simply uncomfortable. I think our children deserve better than that.

Mr C.J. Barnett: That is fair enough, and the member would agree that we should, as most governments have done, do the areas where it is hottest, which has primarily been country areas and, increasingly, the eastern suburbs of Perth. I happen to think schools in the member's electorate should get priority over schools in my electorate.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: I thank the Premier and I probably will quote him on that!

Mr C.J. Barnett: I do and I have always followed that. They should; it is hottest.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Exactly, it is very hot out there and often we do not get the benefit of the sea breeze and it becomes quite difficult.

I have been approached by a number of constituents who are concerned about the amount of money that the government is spending. I have a constituent, Ms Maureen Moore, who cares for her mentally ill daughter who unfortunately escapes from her house from time to time and we are required to call out the police and so forth to

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track her down. Ms Moore asked why we cannot institute some sort of program whereby she can have technology or some other means to help her find where her daughter is running to, rather than having to mobilise large numbers of police and search parties to find her. It is one of those things that get us thinking: it seems a bit of an absurd claim until we start to think about what it actually costs us not to do the so-called absurd thing. In this instance we would have to say that for a relatively small amount of money—I mean, people can buy pet trackers these days—we could in fact identify children who are at risk and provide a program that would allow parents to enable a system whereby they could track their children if they do in fact manage to get out of their care. Sometimes we have to wait for the disaster to occur before we act, and the police get involved and it drags them away from other important work—we are not thinking proactively about this. I think a lot of these problems occur when mental illness is involved. A large number of problems that come before me in my electorate these days are to do with mental illness; people are being attacked or have to deal with very unusual behaviour and there is nowhere to turn. We are really not dealing very well with, or being proactive in, assisting people with mental illnesses.

Back to the issue of power, Donna and Rex Morrison contacted me about Western Power, which plans to put a 330 kilovolt powerline through their orchard in Maida Vale as part of the Guildford terminal to southern terminal route to pre-empt demand for power usage in 2017 when we will need additional power given population growth and so forth. Western Power is calling on easements that were put on the property in 1974. That is forward thinking: 1974 was more than 30 years ago—it would have been the State Energy Commission back then—and now Western Power says that it needs to put in these powerlines. This makes me ponder how thinking that occurred in 1974 is relevant to 2010, 2011, 2012 or 2017. How did the SEC get what we need now, when, as we have been debating today, we are dealing with cost blow-outs for all sorts of projects and things like that? Governments do think long term, but there is a danger in that. There is a danger in the fact that we can be locked into long-term thinking and long-term processes. It is a failure in the current budget to begin thinking like that. This is the twenty-first century; this is the time when we need to be thinking a little more parallel. We need to be thinking about ways that we can try to do things differently. In a lot of places around the world we see examples of governments implementing alternative, renewable and sustainable power generation directly to their communities. There is no reason we could not be using fuel-cell technology in outlying communities, even within the metropolitan area, and starting to reduce the need to spend this kind of money on that kind of infrastructure to deliver power. It would be greener; it would be more sustainable; it would not be a blight; and it certainly would prevent people such as Donna and Rex from being robbed of their future livelihood in running the orchard they wish to run.

A number of other issues have come up, such as Anne Godfree who wanted to take her son to the local primary school. Her local primary school said that it did not have the money to support her son because he constantly requires an oxygen tank. It was suggested that she take her son to a special school at Maddington. It is a school that is designed for children with severe intellectual disability and has the capacity to deal with special needs children like that who require special equipment. It was a staggering thought to me that we would treat somebody in that way. Can members imagine what it would be like to be told to send their child to a school where in every single way the child would exceed the capacity of everyone else in the school? The child's social life would be destroyed.

Mr C.J. Barnett: The child does not have an intellectual disability?

Mr A.J. WADDELL: The child has no intellectual disability, just a physical disability. It was just mind-blowing. Imagine what a living nightmare the child would be condemned to by not being able to have friends that he could play with normally or friends that he could talk to. The child's academic development would be stunted simply because the school is not geared up to deal with him. I managed to advocate on his and his mother's behalf and I have been talking with the Department of Education. I think a satisfactory solution will be found and he will be hosted within the local school. However, that drew to mind another problem.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Since Parliament rose last year, I was given the opportunity to be appointed patron of the Gifted and Talented Children's Association of Western Australia. I beg a bit of indulgence here; this is key to the education portfolio. I wish the Minister for Education was in the chamber, as this is a topic that I understand is fairly dear to her as well and flows into what we heard earlier today about the needs of children in early childhood.

The gifted association deals with gifted children. Giftedness is a very poorly understood concept. It is easy to regard it as a gift—something that we are lucky to receive and can politely refuse and get on with life as normal. But a gifted child is a very different child; a gifted child has very specific needs. They are needs which, I am afraid, we are not meeting very well. More often than not gifted children become problem children, and problem

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children cost us money in the system later on. We need to actually start thinking about how investing a small amount of money now can save us a great deal in the future. The reason they become problem children is that the system fails them. It fails to consider their differences; it fails to understand their needs; and it squanders their talents. Like the constituent I spoke of earlier who was told that her son would be condemned to a school that did not cater for his needs, the parents of gifted children and the children themselves are often put in this very same situation. They are caught up in institutions that simply do not understand nor cater for their learning circumstances. They often refuse to recognise the fact that they are different. Parents of gifted children are often dismissed with phrases such as "All children are gifted." Of course all children are gifted. All children are precious, but it does not mean that there are not some who have special needs. They are fobbed off with promises that they will be kept busy with some entertaining work, or something like that. That is a great way to squander a resource. There is a fundamental belief in our society that if a child is gifted or talented, those gifts or talents will shine through and they will be okay. That is not so. If this was a sporting situation, we would not take that attitude. We understand that we need to encourage and craft elite sportspeople. Governments spend large amounts of money on programs for elite sportspeople. Members will see it in this budget. There is money for sports. We understand that the needs of these people have to be nourished. We do not assume that their talent will shine through; we see it is a seed that we have to nurture so that it will grow to full blossoming. Giftedness requires the same nutrition, with carefully constructed education plans. Gifted students need support, they need understanding, they need challenging, they need compression, they need extension and they need acceleration. They need opportunities for these things, and they need recognition of who they are and what their capabilities are.

Before I go too far, I do not want to be too critical. I do not want to suggest that the education system, as it stands now, does not do anything in this area, because it does. It does understand the problem. It has an awareness of the issue, and there are policies and programs in place. There is the Gifted and Talented Education program and the Primary Extension and Challenge program. Perth Modern School is an academically select school, and there are other select schools, and there are specialist programs at some of the other schools. There is a system, and for those lucky few who are identified and get into such a school, the system works. The essential point I am trying to make is that although there are a lucky few who get through and who are looked after, for a large number of others the system fails. The system works when a child is identified and has the fortune to be at a school where the principal and the teachers have the necessary gifted professional development and understand it, and they have the resources to enact it. This often comes down to psychologists. We need more psychologists in the schools to be able to identify these different children. Most gifted children are not that lucky.

Children are not gifted when they enter grade 5, which is when PEAC starts; they are gifted right from the beginning. By the time students enter grade 5, they have been in our school system for five to seven years. It is much too late to identify a gifted child at that time. A new program called Junior PEAC started this year, and that is a start, but even then, it only goes back to grade 4. We need gifted programs under which we can begin to accelerate grade 1 and grade 2 children. We do not need to have children spending two years learning their ABCs if they grasped reading before they entered school. We need early identification of support. It is the late recognition that is the problem. It is often too late, and that is when poor habits are formed. That is why we need the psychologists in the schools and that is why we need to fund them. If it is left too late, by that time the students have begun to hate school because it is not a nice place to be. They are forced to do things that they do not like to do. They do not understand it; they do not get it. Then they begin to misbehave, and that misbehaviour deteriorates. The children are then identified not as gifted, but as problem children, and they are put into programs that do not suit them. We need to recognise that, and today we need specialist gifted primary schools. It is too late to leave it to Perth Modern School and like schools; we need to do it right from the beginning.

Giftedness is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Everyone is different and will need to be handled as such. Some students respond well to compression; others need to have advancement or extension. We need to recognise that when somebody has been identified as a problem child, it might be because that child has an underlying giftedness. We should not respond with punishment; we should respond with challenges for the child.

We should not be blinded by emotional and social factors. Imagine an alien planet on which, for some strange reason, we decided to group our children by their height. Imagine if a child happened to be a short seven-year-old or a short nine-year-old. Suddenly, that child is going to be listed with the six-year-olds. That child would be a fish out of water the whole time. Those other kids would not play in the same way as that child, they would not be able to answer questions in the same way as that child, and they would not think the same way as that child. It would seem to us to be an absurd system, yet that is what we do with age grouping today. At seven years of age, a gifted child could have the same emotional and intellectual abilities as a nine-year-old or a 10-year-old. Being forced to play the dress-up games and all those things that happen with other seven-year-olds is just torture for that poor kid. Age is no more a predictor of appropriate placement than height is.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.M. Francis): Member for Forrestfield —

Mr A.J. WADDELL: I am getting off the point.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Very much so, yes. Interesting though it is, I am going to direct you to come back to the issue at hand.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: I will come back to this matter in the future, because it is an area that we need to invest in. It is also an issue we need to look at in this appropriation bill. We are spending \$1.15 billion on top of what we already agreed to spend last year. It is a significant sum of money, and we have to ask ourselves what value we are getting for it. As consumers, what value are the electors of this state getting from this government? At the moment, there is not a lot to show for it. What does a consumer do when he does not get value from the things he purchases? He changes brands. I suppose when a government puts forward a bill asking for \$1.15 billion without offering significant value to consumers, it needs to ask itself whether consumers are going to switch brands. The warning that I lay out today is that consumers will change brands at the first opportunity, because this one provides very poor value.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [3.35 pm]: I am pleased to rise to address the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2010. The Liberal Party came to government on the basis that it was going to provide fiscal discipline for the state. Over the two years of this government, it has got a gold medal and a silver medal for the Treasurer's advance authorisation. We were all shocked last year when we saw more than \$1 billion in extra expenditure by the Liberal–National government, and we were even more shocked this year to see it come back again for more than \$1 billion. According to *The West Australian*, the Treasurer warned the Liberal party room that there was no money for additional activity in Western Australia. The political editor of *The West Australian* reported that ashen-faced backbenchers realised that they would not be able to deliver their pet projects in the suburbs.

It is interesting to compare the revenue estimates in the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statements* for the four years from 2008–09 through to 2011–12 with the midyear reviews for the same period. The revenue estimate in the PFPS, as it is called, was \$83 274 million over the four years. If we put the 2008–09 annual report on finances together with the first three years of the midyear review forward estimates—the same four years as appeared in the PFPS—the revenue estimate is \$83 405 million, which is \$131 million more than was expected at the time of the PFPS. The PFPS, of course, was delivered at the height of the boom, so when the government says that it has no money, it is in fact expecting \$131 million extra from the boom period. Even though the boom arguably paused last year and is now reactivating, despite that pause, the government is going to actually have more money than was projected in the PFPS, not less. The real problem is that expenditure for the four years covered by the PFPS was \$76 448 million. Again, if we look at the same four years from the 2008–09 annual report on finances plus the midyear reviews, we see that expenditure is now expected to be \$83 498 million—an increase of \$7 billion. No wonder the surplus has disappeared. This is a reduction in the surplus of more than \$6 billion over that period. The very good finances that were left to the Liberal–National government have been wasted, and the bill that we are debating today is just one piece of evidence of that waste and lack of discipline.

The Treasurer used to rail against expenditure growth during the boom when we had to deal with the problem of a huge labour demand and a huge wage demand of eight per cent. The Treasurer has exceeded that figure in both years of his stewardship of Western Australian finances. It was no surprise to look back and see that the Liberal government in Western Australia delivered five budget deficits in eight years during the last time it was the steward of this state's finances. Looking at the *Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement*, we can see that the government expects to go back into deficit so that the Liberal Party habit of running deficits in this state will continue.

It has not been tabled in Parliament, but members of Parliament have been given a document from the Treasurer entitled "Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2010: Details of Excesses and New Items for the 2010 Financial Year". There is a lot more detail in the document that was handed out this year compared with the document that was handed out last year. That is very interesting because when we look at the document that was handed out last year and compare it with the information that was provided to members on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2007–08 and 2008–09 (Supplementary) Bill 2009 that we dealt with earlier this week, there was no relationship at all between the information that we were given during last year's debate on the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill and the subsequent appropriation bill—the appropriation bill that authorises the expenditure that is made under the Treasurer's advance authorisation. We really have to question what will be in next year's appropriation bill. Will it bear any relationship to what we are told the Treasurer wants to spend the money on? Last year it did not. It leads us to suspect that the government does not know.

I will go through a couple of the items that struck me out of the information that was provided to us under the appropriation bill and look at what sort of things the government was doing with the state's finances last year.

Extract from Hansard

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That will give us an idea of what it will do with the state's finances next year. The first issue that I draw to the attention of the house is the WA state suicide prevention strategy. In the information that the government has provided for the appropriation bill, we see that \$4 million was allocated to the state suicide prevention strategy. This is very important when we consider that on 1 September 2008 the leader of the Liberal Party, the now Premier, and Hon Helen Morton put out a media release headed "WA's first suicide prevention plan, minister and commissioner for mental health under Liberals". That press release said that an incoming government will —

Spend \$13 million in the first two years of government to develop and test a comprehensive WA State Suicide Prevention Strategy.

When that was announced in the community, people would have used that when considering whether they were going to vote Liberal. The information provided shows that \$4 million was allocated. However, the then government also told us under an item called "Cash flow of election commitment: WA state suicide prevention strategy," that \$3.5 million of that \$4 million was reversed out. This goes to the heart of the honesty and credibility of the government. It promised one thing in a media release on 1 September 2008 during the election campaign to trick people into thinking that they were going to do something about suicide prevention. They got into government and they simply dumped their election commitment. That is not right. It is not fair to the people of Western Australia. It demonstrates the lack of compassion that this government has.

On 22 August 2008 the then shadow Minister for Health, now the Minister for Health, put out a media release headed "A Liberal health plan to turn around eight years of neglect". It listed a range of things that the government said it would do. I will highlight one of those things. The media release said, under the heading "Valuing our nurses" —

- Establish a Hospital Nurse Support Fund to help fund workplace facilities and improvements for nurses and related staff in public hospitals

Indeed, on 12 May 2009, when in government, the Minister for Health put out a media release headed "New \$28million fund gives nurses a say on improving work environments". The media release said in part —

Health Minister Kim Hames today announced the fund, saying it would help attract and retain nurses by allowing hospital nursing staff to have their say in improving their workforce environment.

The government told us that it had allocated \$6.1 million to that project in 2008–09. However, it then reversed out 100 per cent of that—it reversed out the whole \$6.1 million. This is another example of a government that is all spin and no delivery. I cannot find that \$6.1 million anywhere in the government's documentation. Even though the government has said that that amount has been re-cashflowed, which would suggest that it will come up again in a future year, it has not come up in a future year. It is not there. It has disappeared. It is a broken election promise. It is a trick. It is a con. It is another Liberal lie.

In that same media release dated 22 August 2008, the then shadow and now Minister for Health said that a Liberal government would provide the following —

- Additional \$10 million over two years for chemotherapy services in public hospitals, to be allocated with expert advice.
- Establish a Palliative Services Support Fund to improve the capacity of existing palliative services, and innovative projects to deliver palliative care services to Western Australians.

If we look at the information the government has provided, these projects have been cancelled. That is another broken election commitment, with no apology, no care and no compassion for this community. This is another example of how the government is long on rhetoric and happy to put out a media release, but is not interested in delivery.

As I have said already to this chamber, this government is spending more money than has ever been spent by any government in the history of this state. This is not a question of a lack of resources. This government has more resources than any government in the history of this state has ever had. The revenue that this government expects to receive over the four-year period that I have described is higher than it was when Labor lost office—not lower.

I turn now to education. A very important issue during the election campaign was behaviour management. On 25 August 2008, the then Leader of the Opposition and now Premier, Hon Colin Barnett, and the then shadow Minister for Education and Training and now minister, Hon Peter Collier, put out a media release headed "Liberals to ensure better behaviour in public schools". That media release said that a Liberal government will —

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Provide an additional \$18million in our first term directly to public schools to fund behaviour management programs ...

Again, this program was allocated \$6.292 million. However, \$5 million of that money was then reversed out. I cannot see anywhere in the budget papers or the midyear review where that money has been re-expensed. It has just been cancelled. That is a dishonest way of behaving. It is another Liberal lie.

No-one can think about the election campaign and not remember the teachers' enterprise bargaining agreement. The Labor Party took a very responsible position in respect of the teachers' EBA. We negotiated in good faith and made an exceptional offer to the State School Teachers' Union of WA, but it chose to reject that offer. We were not prepared to negotiate with the teachers' union during the election campaign, because we did not want the financial position of the state to be held to ransom by the political necessities of an election campaign. However, despite our responsible position, our opponents were very happy to play politics with that issue. On 24 August 2008, the now Premier, Hon Colin Barnett, and the now minister, Hon Peter Collier, put out a media release headed, "Liberals to increase teachers' pay". The first paragraph of that media release stated —

A Liberal Government will allocate an additional \$120 million in its first Budget to improve teacher salaries over the current three year agreement.

The promise was \$120 million. Actually, it is slightly worse than that because in government spin—no substance—on 2 November 2008 the Premier and the Minister for Education put out a joint media release in which they stated —

The agreement, which is subject to acceptance by union members, includes the Liberal Party's pre-election commitment to spend an extra \$120million on teacher salaries.

We can see from the information the government has provided us that in the first year there is an election commitment to teachers' pay of \$35 million. Then there is a reversing decision valued at \$33.954 million. In other words, of that \$35 million promise, \$1 million and the change was actually spent on that election commitment. Again, I have examined the budget papers and I have examined the midyear review, but nowhere is that \$33.954 million returned to the budget.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Aren't there any teachers in the member's electorate?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is a dishonest approach. If the government intended to spend that money, it has an obligation to spend it. If the Liberal Party was telling us the truth, the money would not be reversed out of the budget; it would be spent. The fact that it has not been spent demonstrates a dishonest campaign promise. There was no additional money delivered to teachers. This is a very important issue because, at the time of the Treasurer's authorisation last year, this matter was raised in detail. We went through the information that was provided to us at that time. The Premier participated in that debate. The Premier gave us a lecture in mathematics on the night, even though, of course, his sums were wrong and he had to correct himself later. They were the facts. It is even worse than what happened last year. The truth now, when it comes out at the end of this period of time, is that less than \$2 million—only \$1.046 million—was spent on the enterprise bargaining agreement by the incoming Liberal government and not the \$35 million promised. That was the difference between the offer made and budgeted for in the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement* by the Labor Party and the incoming Liberal government's position. That is the truth; it cannot be denied.

A very important area of activity, of course, is providing additional services to people with disabilities. Again, the Liberal Party put out a media release on 21 August 2008 from Hon Donna Faragher headed "Building a future for people with disabilities". I quote, in part —

Provide \$11.75 million through the *Community Disability Housing Programme* to build five out-of-home respite facilities in both metropolitan and rural Western Australia.

I go further on that topic and refer to a media release put out by the Minister for Disability Services, Hon Simon O'Brien, on 2 November 2009.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: He put out a press release headed "Minister announces respite care facilities for Joondalup and Rockingham". He lists the \$12 million promise and other things about those two facilities—one in the northern suburbs and one in the south. Interestingly, again, there is spin—no delivery. The media statement reads —

"Work on the two facilities will start once suitable land is sourced," he said.

That is not what the promise was but that is what he is now saying. There is no commitment in this media release to do anything. The government is happy to have the headline and happy to have the media release put out, but

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what do we find when we examine the budget? We find there was a \$5 million commitment but \$4.588 million of that \$5 million was reversed out. Again, it was not brought forward into the future years. It has disappeared off the agenda. That is a broken election promise and it is up to the Liberal Party to fix it. If the government fixes its series of broken election promises that I have highlighted, that would be welcomed by me. It is not honest; it is typical of a government that is interested in having a headline, having a quick focus group line, but not interested in governing the state. It is not interested in doing the hard work to keep control over costs. It is happy to spend billions of dollars more than the level of expenditure under the former government. This is a government that, when in opposition, said the Labor Party was spending too much money. Now it has come into government, it spends more than we did. When we were in government, they said that it was fiscal weakness to have high levels of expenditure growth, yet this government has increased our expenditure growth and is not prepared to be accountable for that.

I also bring to the attention of members a media release by the then Leader of the Opposition on 2 September 2008 titled “Mobile speed humps, tougher penalties for hoons and education for P-platers”. The media release states, in part —

The Liberals want to empower local communities to take the fight up to hoons in local trouble spots and we will help at that grass roots level with mobile speed humps ...

It is interesting that in the list of re-cashflow items there is \$500 000 for speed humps. The government has reversed that decision and taken away the promise it made. It is happy to announce a media release and get a headline —

Ms M.M. Quirk: There is one in the marginal seat of Kingsley.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Very good. The then opposition promised to do it and its members were happy to talk about it in front of a television camera, but when it comes to the hard work of delivering on its commitments, it is has not delivered. Despite \$2.3 billion of additional expenditure, the government cannot find \$500 000 to meet its own election commitment.

Mr C.J. Barnett: We are 17 months into a four-and-a-half-year term.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It has been two years, Premier. The Premier is sitting in the chamber with no work to do. That is very impressive. We are always very interested to see how hard the Premier works. At least he has come in here sober. I am very pleased that the Premier is sober in the chamber. The last time we had this conversation, I was not quite sure what his sobriety was.

Withdrawal of Remark

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.M. Francis): Order! I do not need a member to raise a point of order to ask the member to withdraw that imputation.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I made no imputation against the Premier.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, I heard it very clearly and I ask you to withdraw the imputation.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I made no imputation. I cannot withdraw what I have not said.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I instruct you to withdraw what you said.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: If you can tell me the words that I need to withdraw, I will withdraw them.

The ACTING SPEAKER: You implied that the Premier comes in here in a non-sober state.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I did not.

The ACTING SPEAKER: It was black and white, member for Cannington, and I am instructing you to withdraw your comment.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: If the Premier —

The ACTING SPEAKER: No ifs or buts, member for Cannington! I am instructing you to withdraw the comment.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I cannot withdraw what I have not said, but I am happy to withdraw any statement that I made that the Premier was drunk.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Well, do it. Withdraw.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I have done it.

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The ACTING SPEAKER: Continue.

Debate Resumed

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am very pleased that the Premier is here sober today. It is very good that he did that.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I call you for the first time for repeating that comment. That is your second time today. Do you want to continue down this line?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am happy to continue to make my remarks if the Premier wants to be disorderly.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I have just called you for the second time. I ask you to continue and to not make that implication again.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I would appreciate it if you would direct the Premier to be orderly in the chamber, Mr Acting Speaker. I am not prepared to have the Premier come in here and bully me in the same way he bullies the member for West Swan. It is not fair of the Premier to bully the member for West Swan. We know that every time the member for West Swan gets on her feet, the Premier drops his work, comes into the chamber and abuses her because he cannot stand successful women. That is why there is not a single female Liberal on his front bench in this chamber. If he was not intimidated by successful women, he would have more women in his party, he would have an affirmative action rule in his party and he would have women on his front bench representing this state. The fact that he chooses not to do that is a reflection on him. The fact that he comes in here every time the member for West Swan gets on her feet and tries to intimidate her and bully her is a reflection on him and no-one else. I will not accept him bullying me because I will not put up with that. The Premier can do what he likes, but I will not put up with that.

I am happy that these are clear breaches of election commitments. These were solemn promises made by the Liberal Party to the people of this state and they have been breached. They are broken promises. The Liberal Party has clearly not kept faith with the people of this state, and it is not for lack of resources. This government has had more income than any government in the history of this state. The global financial crisis has affected everyone in the world, including Australia. At the time, we were very fortunate that we had a federal government that was prepared to intervene and provide additional resources to ensure the economy kept working. The state government has benefited from that; its revenues are at record levels. The coming boom that the member for Riverton spoke about the other day will put even more money back into the resources of this state. However, the government will not be able to balance its budgets if it is not prepared to do the fiscal hard work of keeping control of expenditure rather than coming in here and saying, "I don't know whose fault it is, but it ain't mine", which is the usual chant in question time. Members opposite are happy to receive their salary and get their title but they are not interested in doing any work. That is what is causing the blow-outs in these budgets. This is not an acceptable situation. We do not need to quote the Treasurer, but I am happy to quote what he said when the former government sought a Treasurer's advance authorisation of half the value of that being sought today. I can quote the personal abuse the then Treasurer used to cop, and over half the amount of money. When the Treasurer and ministers tell the backbench members of the Liberal Party that a rail line to Swan Hills or to Southern River will not be built, they should remember that more money will be spent in this financial year and the next three than has ever been spent in the history of this state. This is not a question of lack of resources; it is a question of discipline, of hard work and of being honest with the people of Western Australia.

I have outlined a series of very significant breaches of faith by the Liberal government whereby it has clearly not adhered to the solemn promises it made at election time. We must understand some of these promises. Many of them were made to fill in the holes that Liberal Party members found in their focus groups, such as the use of the term "compassion" by the Premier in the Premier's Statement. Members of the Liberal Party know they are not seen in that light; they find out what the negative is and make a promise to fill it in. That is why the disability services promises were so important to the Liberal Party. The government has reneged on those promises and the minister responsible cannot do the work that is required. I am not even getting to what it did about Redress WA, which was the most disgraceful behaviour exercised by any government in the state's history. Another example is the breach of promise to the older Australians, the great generation who fought World War II, whom the government has deceived by breaching its promise to provide the cost-of-living rebate. The cost-of-living rebate for the current financial year has been cancelled and will never be paid. That is a disgrace; it is a breach; it is a lie; it is dishonest and should not be acceptable. This government needs to be accountable for this dishonest behaviour. The people of this state need an opposition that is prepared to stand up. We are the richest state in the country; we deserve better. We should not be hearing excuses from the government; we should be seeing delivery.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [4.03 pm]: I am very pleased to make a contribution to this afternoon's debate on the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2010. I listened intently to a number of speeches this

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afternoon. It is very interesting to make comparisons. The state of Western Australia, of course, has been described in the past as a frontier state. We know that in our great north west we are producing some amazing wealth for this country, as we are in a number of other regions, and we have a growing population. I look now, of course, at the present government that is in charge of seeing this through.

I was watching one of my favourite shows the other night—*F Troop*—and I started to realise that there were very clear similarities between the characters of the government of Western Australia, 2010, and the caricatures who made that show such a wonderful show in the 1960s and 1970s. Of course, the interesting thing is that one of the critics of *F Troop* said it was a show that started off with a lot colour but abruptly faded after two seasons. I believe that this government is the epitome of *F Troop* and that this Premier, his ministers and his backbenchers could all be described individually in that way.

Mr F.A. Alban interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member for Swan Hills should not be worried because I have him down as somebody from *F Troop*. I have him down as Trooper Duffy, who was an elderly cavalryman with a limp. Duffy was the loan survivor of the Battle of the Alamo and he used to recount all the wonderful things that he used to do when he was in the Alamo mission. Captain Parmenter discovered very, very quickly that he was listed as being killed in action; in fact, he was an absolute fake. I have got the member for Swan Hills down as Duffy. He would play the part beautifully. He may go by the name of “Little Frankie”, but —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): I hate to spoil everybody’s fun but this debate is about the Treasurer’s Advance Authorisation Bill 2010. I urge the member for Mandurah to keep to the debate at hand.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Absolutely. Let us get to the Treasurer. The Treasurer’s role is a very important role, particularly when the government is presenting legislation to this Parliament seeking our support for more money. That reminds me of a very interesting character in *F Troop* known as Sergeant O’Rourke. Sergeant O’Rourke, of course, was involved in interesting business dealings. He was illegally running the local saloon and was in cahoots with the local Indian Hekawi tribe, which is clearly demonstrated by the National Party, with the Leader of the National Party playing the part of Chief Wild Eagle. Chief Wild Eagle was a shrewd man. We know that the Leader of the National Party is shrewd, because he is in cahoots with the Treasurer. We know that these two parties that call themselves an alliance are, just like the Hekawi tribe and the members of *F Troop*, in each other’s pockets. However the smart man known as Chief Wild Eagle has, of course, the Treasurer by the goolies, just as Chief Wild Eagle did.

When we are talking about the Treasurer’s advance, we know that it is up to the Treasurer to ensure that all his team is behind him.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I find a lot of the comments from the member for Mandurah very amusing, but amongst the amusement he used a term that is totally unparliamentary. He knows that and he should withdraw it.

Mr T.G. Stephens interjected.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I would keep quiet if I were the member for Pilbara.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): Members cannot interject on a point of order. Would the Leader of the House like to continue with his point of order?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: We obviously find the member’s comments very amusing, but there is some work for the house to get through. If all the opposition wants to do is turn the debate into a pantomime, that will not help. The member is not speaking to the bill.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): I have warned the member for Mandurah once already. I ask the member to please stick to the bill we are debating this afternoon; otherwise, I will have to call him to order again.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I will. It is interesting that the member for Hillarys attacked me in that way. He reminds me, of course, of Vanderbilt, who stood on the lookout and had no idea what he was doing. He shot himself in the foot every time.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: He did; he had a rifle.

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Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am trying to draw a clear analogy between this bill and the competency of the government. I could go on but the Acting Speaker has warned me, and I know I am very close to being sat down. I know; I could go on and tell members that the member for Jandakot was given that role! He was always jumping up and down. He had the ideas, but, as described by him, he was the dimwitted sidekick and business partner of O'Rourke. But I would of course not reflect on the member for Jandakot by using that description.

I want to move on.

Point of Order

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I enjoy good humour in this place, but when we are sitting here at 1.00 am next Wednesday to go through this bill, as we will be, I do not think we will reflect on this contribution to the debate as being a useful use of Parliament's time. The member has had his fun. His comments were good and very humorous. I am sure Madam Acting Speaker will direct him to move on.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I have already warned the member for Mandurah and have called him to order once before. If the member is to again get to his feet in this debate, I ask him to restrict his comments to the authorisation bill. I will sit him down if he continues with this line.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I ask members opposite to stop taunting me, because that is what draws me to remind them of whom they might be linked to.

The Treasurer highlighted the provisions of this bill and asked us to support the bill. He outlined in his second reading speech a range of measures towards which this money will go. I have considered some of the things that have been promised in my electorate. I am very concerned, because I asked some questions of the Minister for Mental Health back on Wednesday, 18 November 2009 about spending on mental health facilities in Mandurah. I received a response to those questions in late February this year. The questions related to the very important proposed community supported residential units for the Peel region. Members are well aware of the importance of resources and facilities for people with mental health illnesses or conditions and their families. When the government came to power, it made statements about how mental health would be a focus of the government and about how services would be delivered. We have been waiting and waiting for some real change to occur but none has occurred. The Acting Mental Health Commissioner has been appointed, but nothing else has happened. The answers the Minister for Mental Health gave to the questions I asked in November are of real concern. My first question concerned the recurrent budget for Mandurah's community supported residential units, the second asked about the capital budget for construction of this facility, the third asked about the commencement of the construction, the fourth was about the service model under which the Mandurah community supported residential units would operate, and the fifth asked about the staffing provision for the units. Bear in mind, the hundreds of people in Mandurah with a mental health condition have been expecting that these residential units would be built and that they would become available. The residential units would have addressed the important issue of those who are sent to Perth for treatment and then sent back to Mandurah with reduced support for their recurring condition. I was aghast when I read an answer about the model. It reads —

The planned service model for the Mandurah CSRU is an in-home visiting support model for individuals and their families living in independent dwellings. There will not be a standalone facility for this service.

The government has struck off the stand-alone service. I am absolutely appalled by that, especially given that for a long time that is what the people of Mandurah and Peel have expected. Despite having written to the minister on a number of occasions asking him what is happening, and despite having approached him in the chamber and telling him that I needed to know what was happening, I learnt the answer through a question on notice that was lodged in November 2009. The answer is that we are not going to get it at all. Instead, it will be a different model. The answer to the last part of the question reads —

The staffing provision will not be known until the service is tendered.

There is still no indication when the service will be tendered and operational. All this time there is still no delivery of services to these people. The answer continues —

It is estimated that staffing levels will be 1 full time equivalent (FTE) community inreach support staff for 10 clients.

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There is no mention of where these people are being housed. Rather, there is an assumption that the service will be for those who are already living in independent dwellings. People in Mandurah, the Peel and many other communities are asking for supported accommodation units. Some people will need 24-hour support at certain periods to heal and to address their particular health needs. That will not be available. My assumption is that because there will not be a stand-alone facility, there will be a botched arrangement that will involve someone going out to those who already have their own accommodation. One of the primary concerns of many of those with a mental health condition—apart from their condition—is the stability of their accommodation. Many people who are at the high end of mental health services need are released into the community with nowhere to go. They do not live independently, nor do they have supported accommodation, which is what we are after. However, that possibility has been absolutely destroyed by the minister's sleight of hand, even though he and his government have claimed that mental health would be a priority.

When I visited the Minister for Health in November last year, I took with me a client from the June O'Connor Centre. I prompted the minister about the meeting and he obliged. I thanked the minister for the meeting. I also took the coordinator of the Mandurah June O'Connor Centre, which would have closed in December last year had we not been able to find ongoing funding for it. The centre started in January 2008, because so many clients and their families were travelling to the Rockingham June O'Connor Centre. There was a need to have in Mandurah a centre that delivered the type of support and services that June O'Connor Centres are famous for. Such a centre would also service the wider Peel region; namely, Dwellingup, Pinjarra, Waroona and the Murray shires. Off their own bat, admittedly, and with the help of the local community, including corporate citizens such as Alcoa and local community organisations such as the City of Mandurah and Rotary et cetera, they all came together and said that they could understand why the service was needed and that they would give support, and they did. A bit of funding was obtained from that which was allocated to the June O'Connor Centres, which are mostly metropolitan based; Mandurah is the only one, I think, outside the metropolitan area. They got the centre up and running and it was an absolute overnight success. Over 200 clients now attend the centre weekly.

The Mandurah June O'Connor Centre is due to close in December, so I said that we needed to see the minister to tell him why it is so important that this centre continue, which brings me to an interesting point. The government, through the minister, told us there was no money; however, his answer to my first question about recurrent budget allocation for the Mandurah community supported residential units, which we know will not now happen, shows that \$650 000 was allocated in the 2009–10 budget, which will be an underspend; it will not be spent. We were asking for some money to keep this centre going, and there is some money, but we have not been told that that money is available. The minister would not even entertain that idea of making that money available.

Luckily, and thankfully, Lotterywest—that great Western Australian institution, unique from all other lottery organisations around the country—came to the party, and tomorrow I will go to the Minister for Health's announcement, where he will, of course, make a fanfare about the fact that they are getting some money. That is money from the community of Western Australia via Lotterywest.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Did you ever do that when you were in government?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: No; that is not money from the government of Western Australia, which already has \$650 000 unspent and recurrent in the budget. That \$650 000 that should have been spent this year on the Mandurah community supported residential units would have allowed the June O'Connor Centre in Mandurah to run for the next six years, probably. Tomorrow, Lotterywest will present a cheque that will enable the centre to continue for this year, but the problem is that there is absolutely no surety that there will be any forthcoming funding from this government; therefore, there is no surety that that operation will continue after December of this year.

I will not need an extension; I am sure members are pleased to hear that.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: This is a very serious issue for us in Mandurah, and I hope the Minister for Mental Health is listening, because that underspend from this year's budget—or actually that non-spend from this year's budget—would fund the June O'Connor Centre in Mandurah for the next six years and allow that very important community facility that supports people with mental health conditions and their families in their own locality to continue into the future. I am appealing once again to the Treasurer, through the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill, to reconsider that appeal to the Minister for Mental Health for funding for the June O'Connor Centre. Why has the Minister for Mental Health not been able to give the community of Mandurah and the Peel region a clear indication of how the so-called in-home visiting support model for individuals and their families living in independent dwellings is going to work? How will it be set up, how will it address the needs of men and

women in Mandurah and the Peel region who suffer from mental health conditions, and why will that service deliver better outcomes than the proposed community supported residential units planned by the previous government, which now seem to have disappeared into the wilderness? I am very interested in looking at that. I believe that mental health continues to be a concern in my community and that the provision of appropriate services continues to be of utmost priority. If this government is to nail its colours to mental health as its leading policy, it has not got much to show for it. Like *F Troop*, it started well and faded into obscurity.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro) [4.25 pm]: I intend addressing the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2010 by taking the opportunity to reflect on the incredibly large amount of that incredibly large advance that is dedicated to corrective services—some \$72 million. I know that comparatively it might be considered a small amount; in the overall picture of \$1.15 billion, \$72 million might just disappear. However, I want to address that and I will do so in a more reflective fashion than I might otherwise have in the past in regard to speeches on this subject, because I want to provide a response to some of the criticism the Treasurer made of me when we were discussing previous advances for corrective services. I will not do so in a defensive way because, fair enough, as the Treasurer and the minister, he had been on his feet for a long time and had to rebut a number of questions from the opposition. I understand that over time that must get tiring, particularly during the earlier debates this week. However, I want to address the Treasurer's questioning of why I continue to raise this issue of apparently ever-growing expenditure in corrective services. I do not want to do this in a confrontational manner, if it is at all possible to avoid it; I know the Treasurer and I enjoy it, but if we try to avoid it, I think, it might be more worthwhile.

The reason I am concerned is that the Treasurer did not appear to focus much attention on the nature of the rise in expenditure within corrective services. This is not because of the process or the structure of how we budget for rises in demand. The Treasurer gave the example of a number of children showing up at a school that the government had not anticipated, but the government does not close the school's doors and not fund it. That is not the issue. I was trying to garner from the Treasurer an indication of how much interest he and the Department of Treasury and Finance have in how robust a fashion the Department of Corrective Services is approaching its task of analysing the future growth of the prison muster. Beyond that, has the Treasurer considered that the actions the department takes to deal with that challenge through not only capital expenditure in the form of growing prisons, work camps and other sites to put the bodies, but also whether an innovative approach with an open mind, perhaps a questioning mind, is being taken to suggest that what is being done now does not appear to be working. Despite all the rhetoric from both sides of politics over more than the past decade, perhaps the path that we have all been moving down may not be appropriate for the wellbeing of the state from not only a financial perspective, but also a social perspective. That is why I hoped that the Treasurer would be a potential ally in the cause of assessing the value of what we are doing now. I am not pretending that I have a solution necessarily, and I am not criticising the people involved as not being devoted enough to the cause of trying to reduce reoffending. I am saying, though, that we constrain people in the Department of Corrective Services by a political environment that dictates that they are risk averse. They are very much focused on a path that is similar to the one we have been on for the past decade or more, whereby the party that happens to be in government at the time responds to populist demands from the community. I am not denying that. I do not deny the member for Hillarys' claims that the measure he proposes is popular. I question whether it is the right thing and whether we—and you as Treasurer—should accept it just because it is popular. The prison population is continuing to climb and there is no evidence that the growth is under control.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Can I just make a point about that? I am not sure of the exact statistics or the graphs on the prison population, but there have been a series of spikes that have been found historically. My advice is that the main damage is around the historical changes to, for example, where paroled people go.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I appreciate that and I know that the Treasurer is responding to advice. However, the advice that the Treasurer is receiving is from the same people who advised the Minister for Corrective Services at the estimates hearings last year that the prison population would be about 4 700 by June next year. We all know that that is not the case; it was 4 871 last week! What I am saying is that we need to question these figures. I am not criticising those individuals for in any way trying to deceive us or for not acting in what they perceive to be the best interests of the state. However, ultimately they are constrained by the nature of the public debate in Western Australia, as are we, and unless we analyse whether that presents the best outcome for the state or whether we should shift the debate to a more mature level, we cannot determine whether the Treasurer is doing the right thing by the state and insisting that the Department of Corrective Services must enact best practice of anywhere in the world.

I know that the Minister for Corrective Services and Attorney General means well, but he said that he hoped the figure would plateau midway through last year; it did not. I understand that throughout the Labor government's term the growth rate fluctuated; my colleague the member for Girrawheen will confirm that. If we drew a line

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across the general growth, which was in the region of 100 to 150 a year, we would see that it was not a straight line; it went up and down. But if we look at the figures at the start and end of our period in office, we see that is what it was. The Inspector of Custodial Services in an unpublished report—I am waiting for him to publish it—advises that we need to build another major medium to maximum-security prison facility in the metropolitan area very soon. Prisons cannot be built straightaway, as the Treasurer knows, but in the out years there is already a huge amount of money allocated to capital works—\$656 million. Even if normal growth is resumed, that will not be enough. That advice came from an independent body, Neil Morgan, not from me.

I am not trying to score a political point; that would be stupid. The Treasurer knows that popular opinion lies over there with the member for Hillarys. I think he is on to something when he says that this is popular. But is that the right thing to do? Is it right for the Treasurer to concede that it is populist so we will continue to empty out the Treasury bucket into the never-ending hole that calls for us to spend more on prison buildings, in light of the fact that we know that around the world other jurisdictions that make us look like petals and soft fluffy toys in relation to being tough on crime are changing?

Texas has been the biggest killer of its own citizens of any state in the United States. Since 1972 when it was allowed to reintroduce capital punishment, Texas has killed more people than has any other state in the United States. The authorities in Texas do not pretend to be generous to their prison population, but they determined in 2007 that it was unsustainable to continue expending funds on just building prisons and focusing on a punitive response. What drove Texas to that decision was an impending cost of \$500 million for building the next prisons. We have \$656 million in the out years allocated to that task. Under the United States political system, it is probably a little more possible to achieve some sort of bipartisanship on any issue, but that was particularly so on this issue. The way Texas actually —

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: At this level, this is what they did.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Not in Texas.

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, this is what happened on this particular subject. A bipartisan committee was formed and it got the Council of State Governments Justice Center to provide specialists to do a geographical analysis of where the costs in the prison system were coming from. It was determined that right across the state there were hot spots. High-density areas were generating the costs in the system. The areas from which these people were coming and to which they were going back were clustered in locations disproportionately. For instance, in Houston, 50 per cent of the costs in the prison system were being generated by 15 neighbourhoods. Then the joint state committee, which was bipartisan, went to those communities, and together with all levels of government, non-government organisations, educators, any number of specialist advisers, plus the community, they worked on determining what actions they could take to interrupt that flow to the prison system, and also try to stop people going back into prison. They came up with a whole list of potential interventions and potential responses, which obviously had an associated cost to it, and so then they costed those. They went back to the other end, to the prison system, and costed the consequence of not doing them. Not surprisingly, because it is invariably the case, the things in the community, plus some activities in prison prior to release, were much cheaper than paying for new prisons and people occupying a space, and just racking and stacking them.

That is why I was concerned about some of the discussion across the chamber in the course of question time, when the Attorney General indicated—I think he was being flippant to dismiss me—that he saw people sitting around in prison doing nothing as being okay. I am absolutely appalled by any suggestion of that nature. I think it should be an affront to all of us in this place to suggest that a prison is nothing more than a warehouse for people, to lock them up, throw away the key and leave there, because they will come out eventually; the vast majority of them are going to come out. It is an undeniable fact that if we do not do things to try to change their behaviour while they are in there, they will reoffend at a higher rate when they come out. Currently, there is an exponential growth in the prison muster. We may be crossing our fingers at the moment and hoping that in the past two weeks it has plateaued and may return to historical growth rates. But, even then, it is going to cost us another whole prison. Therefore, the question to be asked is: does this critical situation in our prisons at the moment represent an opportunity?

I would like to think that I could reach the police minister, but I do not think I am going to be able to do that.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Reach out, my son!

Mr P. PAPALIA: I had thought that I might also be able to reach the Attorney General because he is a few decades younger and might be open to ideas; perhaps he is not so set in his ways yet. However, I am beginning to despair of that occurring. So the Treasurer is my last hope, because I know that he, as the individual responsible in Western Australia for managing expenditure, managing the taxpayers' dollars and trying to extract

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the most efficient use of those taxpayer dollars, is interested. I hope that he is interested. That is why I was not trying to be a smart Alec when I was interjecting on the Treasurer. I was trying to draw his attention to the potential for an alternative view. I was trying to seek out an ally across the chamber in the government, because I know that other people in the Treasurer's party on that side of the chamber —

Mr T.R. Buswell: I'm the soft heart of the government.

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, the Treasurer is not soft at all.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I am.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Here is the problem. The Treasurer just fell back into it automatically. He has been here for three years longer than I, so he just fell back automatically into the old role-play in which he says, "I'm on this side so you call me soft, and on that side you say you're tougher."

Mr T.R. Buswell: No, I'm soft! The Premier's told me I have to soften up! I'm soft!

Mr P. PAPALIA: In that case, I hold hope for the Treasurer!

Mr T.R. Buswell: I was talking to the Chief Justice and a magistrate in the Kimberley about incarceration in some of the prisons up there in Roebourne, and I am staggered that so many people are in prison for driving offences. When I look at the total corrective services budget, because I am soft, I wonder how much lower it would be if people were not incarcerated for driving offences.

Ms M.M. Quirk: The member for Victoria Park has done an excellent report on that.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Maybe he could write an opinion piece about it. Are he and you having some sort of opinion piece competition? The problem is, you don't get to be leader through opinion pieces.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Let us not descend into old habits! I would like to keep this on a level where I am having a discussion with my potentially soft ally on the other side of the chamber!

I am glad that the Treasurer is talking to the Chief Justice because he has some very interesting things to say. If I were to recommend any document on this subject to members opposite, particularly backbenchers, it would be a speech that the Chief Justice gave on 23 November 2009 to the Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology conference. It is entitled, "Popular Punitivism – The Role of the Courts in the Development of Criminal Justice Policies". I mention this speech because it contains messages to all of us from the Chief Justice, whom we all respect. It is often difficult for us to gain access to some of these observations. What he said resonates for both sides of politics, because we engaged in it in government, and those opposite are making an art form of incarceration arguments. He said —

The impression one gets from public debate is that there is also a perception that increasing the rate at which people are sent to prison, and the length of imprisonment, will reduce criminal behaviour.

I have had that assertion thrown at me from across the chamber; members opposite would all acknowledge that. The speech continues —

The data does not support that proposition.

He is saying that some people believe that pure punitivism is the way to go, and that if we are tougher and harder, it will result in the message getting through to individuals, who therefore will not want to go back to prison. The assumption is that we are soft and that we need to get harder. The fact is that over the past decade, prison sentences in Western Australia have been constantly lengthening—under the current government, the previous government and the government before that. The consequence of that is that someone who commits a crime now will go to jail for a longer period than he would if he had committed the same crime 10 years ago.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P. PAPALIA: If it were the case that making punishments harder got the message through, or that the reason for crime is that we are not tough enough on criminals, one would expect that there would be a diminishing prison population, and that once a person had been to prison he would be less likely to reoffend; the reoffending rate would go down because we have extended punishments and have consistently got tougher over that time. The fact is that that has not happened. The fact is that in Western Australia, our reoffending rates are appalling. The saddest part is the disproportionate Indigenous representation in our prison system. Even the non-Indigenous reoffending rate is 40 per cent, but it is 60 per cent for Aboriginal prisoners.

The Chief Justice identified that fact. He said —

These are very broad indicators of lack of success.

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If it worked, they would not want to go back to prison; returning to prison would be such a disincentive to reoffending that they would not do it.

I concede, as does everyone, that we have to jail bad people. I am sure that the Attorney General will extract some of what I have said today and run out there with a media release to say that the member for Warnbro is stupid, lazy or living on a different planet because he does not want to lock people up. I did not say that, and I have never said that. I actually agree with the UK House of Commons Justice Committee report that was handed down in January. It analysed the situation and came to the conclusion that justice reinvestment is the way to go. Members should bear in mind that this was a normal committee inquiry; all members have been on them and they know what they involve. The committee stated —

Our evidence suggests that prison is a relatively ineffective way of reducing crime for other than serious offenders who need to be physically contained for the protection of the public.

I agree with that. I have always said that bad people need to go to prison. It is an undeniable fact that a lot of people are being caught in our prison system right now, particularly since the government took office. I am not pointing the finger at the government; it was the same when we were in office, but the figures have spiked. The Chief Justice acknowledged that too. A lot of people going into our jails at the moment are not threatening or dangerous. Many of them are mentally ill. Many of them are in jail because of an inability to pay fines. Many of them are there for the same reason that the Treasurer identified. I have been to Roebourne Regional Prison, too, and I totally agree with him. They are there for an accumulation of driving-related offences. Yes, there might be a drink-driving charge thrown in there, too. We have to be careful when police commissioners make statements such as, “If you have a multiple drink-driving offender, he should be banned for life.” That will condemn people to jail for the rest of their lives. One-third of the continent is in Western Australia. We are different from everybody else. We have a very high proportion of Indigenous people living in remote communities. They have no public transport. They have no option but to drive. That is the only way to travel the hundreds of kilometres of roads around the member for Geraldton’s electorate or around the electorates of Pilbara or Kimberley, or even on the other side of Perth in the hills area. It does not take long to get out of the net of public transport.

What are we saying to people? We are going out and giving a Sunday morning or Sunday afternoon grab about how tough we are, and the consequences might not be seen for years. I know that the Minister for Police has experienced the consequences of doing that in another area but it is related. I am not trying to criticise him for that because I know that both sides of politics have engaged in this process whereby the media tries to get a very short grab and we are trying to grasp it and be tough, which gets us time on television. It is no-one’s fault but we all have the opportunity to consider whether we continue down this path. I do see the Treasurer as an ally because his job is to extract the most efficient use out of the taxpayer dollar. If those in Texas are able to save \$200 million in their corrective services budget from redesigning how they operate in the short time frame of two years, we have to ask whether we are doing the right thing. That is all I am asking. I will give the Minister for Corrective Services plenty of opportunities; he will be able to extract all manner of quotes from me now, and so will the police minister.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Soft on crime; soft on criminals.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is about the only thing I have ever been soft on.

Mr P. Abetz interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Texas is the location where the Sycamore Tree Project was established. The member for Southern River would be interested in that. He would be familiar with it. I do not have the document to confirm this, but the organisers of the project claim that they reduced recidivist rates—reoffending rates—by 17 per cent. Of those reoffenders, as few as one per cent reoffended in a violent fashion. We are the only jurisdiction in Australia to have the Sycamore Tree Project in our prisons. It empowers victims of crime to go into our jails. Michael Cockram put together a business plan and submitted it to the government more than a year ago asking for \$500 000 to roll out something like 29 programs across the state. They are mostly done voluntarily but all he wanted to do was retire because he is 72. He wanted to get someone to carry out the operation and manage it. This project brings together victims of crime and selected prisoners. I have talked to the victims who have gone to prisons, victims whose children were killed. They have said to me that it is the most empowering thing that they have done since they suffered that loss.

It is not much money. I implore members on the back bench to pressure the Attorney General. That is one little step they could be taking. If members want to do more, if they want to shift the debate, then get involved—get out there and talk about it. It would be very easy to just come back and say, “We are doing all that stuff.” I know that we in government did a lot of things like that, and members opposite in government are doing a lot of things like that. But what we are not doing is taking a consolidated and focused approach to justice reinvestment. Justice reinvestment is across governments at all levels, across non-government organisations, and across

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educators. It is across all manner of individuals who might be able to help, particularly located at the community level and engaging with the communities that are being impacted upon the most. I encourage all members to consider that, particularly the Treasurer.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr R.F. Johnson (Leader of the House)**.