

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) RECURRENT 2009–10 (SUPPLEMENTARY) BILL 2010
APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) CAPITAL 2009–10 (SUPPLEMENTARY) BILL 2010

Third Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan — Minister for Finance) [5.04 pm]: I move —

That the bills be now read a third time.

It is not normal for a third reading debate to be entered into when a bill has not been amended—of course, we cannot amend these bills. They are also a bit unusual in the sense that I was requested, in the course of the committee stage, to provide some further information in answer to a few questions, and I might avail myself of the third reading debate to do that. I know it is a bit unusual, but that seemed to be the will of the Committee of the Whole, so I would like to just briefly provide that information in support of the third reading.

Hon Ken Travers: It will help us decide whether to support or not support the bill as it came out of the committee stage.

The PRESIDENT: Minister, have you moved that they be read a third time?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Yes.

The PRESIDENT: Okay.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Mr President, if you would prefer, I could deal with that matter, and then I could seek leave to provide the information.

The PRESIDENT: No, I need to put the questions separately, that is all.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Of course.

The PRESIDENT: If you could deal with the first bill on which you wish to make a few comments, and then the second bill. The minister has moved that the bills be read a third time; continue.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Thank you, Mr President; I am sure the house appreciates your indulgence. I will be brief.

The first matter raised by Hon Ken Travers related to the Australian Shipbuilding Industry groynes buyback, at \$560 000. It is not one of those places that the member and I used to work on. I could not place the acronym, but of course it is the Australian Shipbuilding Industry groyne that was bought back. The Department of State Development had been receiving ongoing appropriations of \$560 000 per annum for some time under the category of controlled grants and subsidies. It was there because the money was being provided to LandCorp, which in turn was entering into the buyback of that groyne. As it transpires, the last payment under the buyback agreement had been made in April 2008, so therefore this money was no longer required and therefore was not expended for that purpose.

The question regarding the suicide prevention strategy was: how much was spent under the \$6.25 million in 2009-10, and what was it spent on? I advise that nil funds were spent from this pool of funds in 2009-10. The funds were, however, drawn down and re-cashflowed by the Mental Health Commission and applied as part of a \$13 million program into 2010-11 and the out years. In relation to the question about Health and Indigenous Affairs, and Indigenous economic participation and whether or not this item was related to the Closing the Gap program, I am advised that the national partnership agreement on Indigenous economic participation, which was signed in December 2008, outlines strategies to halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people within a decade. It is not strictly health related, except in the way that self-determination through employment will contribute to better health outcomes, and therefore assist in closing the gap in life expectancy and child mortality, and some of the positions are in the health services field. The national partnership agreement has four elements: firstly, to create stable employment in areas of government service delivery that have previously relied on subsidisation through community development employment projects. Only this element is addressed in the supplementary fund, and only this element is addressed in the supplementary funding request. Secondly, it will strengthen current government procurement policies to maximise Indigenous employment. Thirdly, it will incorporate Indigenous workforce strategies into all new major Council of Australian Governments reform contributing to the Closing the Gap targets. Fourthly, it will review all public sector Indigenous employment and career development strategies to increase employment to reflect population share by 2015.

In terms of the landfill levy and the Department of Environment and Conservation budget, I was asked to provide the monthly budget versus actual revenue in 2009–10. I advise that the landfill levy is collected quarterly

in arrears. As a general rule, receipts are collected in July, October, January and April each year. The 2009–10 estimate is \$52 million, which, as we discussed in the committee stage, was based on collections of \$13 million a quarter. Delays in the implementation of legislation meant that collections for the March quarter, which were received in April–May, were the only revenues collected under the new regime. Therefore, total collections for the year of \$18.1 million included those collections from the March quarter, which, as we surmised during the committee stage, showed a total of \$8.9 million.

I was also asked whether the Waste Authority got all that it was originally budgeted to get. I am advised that the Waste Authority did get all that it was originally budgeted to get in 2009–10; that is, \$13 million from that landfill levy.

I was asked what was the Department of Environment and Conservation's budget versus actual appropriation for 2007–08, 2008–09, and 2009–10. In 2007–08, the appropriation was \$196.6 million, and the actual was \$2.3 million. In 2008–09, the appropriation was \$2 016 million, and the actual was \$215.6 million. In 2009–10, as we discussed yesterday, the appropriation was \$171.8 million, and the actual was \$210.8 million—I can confirm that. As a footnote, that figure incorporates the transfer of environmental protection services to the OEPA in November 2009.

Hon Sally Talbot referred to the wildfire suppression item for the Department of Environment and Conservation and asked whether there were any particular wildfire events that caused the extra wildfire suppression costs. I advise that the extra \$16 million of wildfire suppression costs in 2009–10 was not due to any specific wildfire event, but general wildfire suppression expenditure over and above the then base funding allocation of approximately \$4.9 million per annum. The base funding beyond 2009–10 has been increased to approximately \$20.9 million a year, escalated to reflect historical expenditure trends. I was asked whether any of the \$210 million provided to child health services was allocated in the south west. I am unable to source a definitive answer in the time available, but from all appearances it would seem that none of that money was allocated to child health nurses in the South West.

Finally, I refer to the Department of Education in the capital works bill schedule. I was asked: on which capital works did the Department of Education underspend in 2009–10? I advise that the 2009–10 investment program budgeted \$1.126 billion, and actual expenditure totalled \$925 million. The resultant underspend was \$201 million. This included \$38 million for budgeted asset investment expenditure transferred to the Department of Training and Workforce Development at the time of the merger. The net underspend reflects the total net position of all underspends, overspends and re-cashflows on almost 800 individual asset investment projects, including over 700 projects funded by the commonwealth under its Nation Building and Jobs Plan and the Building the Education Revolution infrastructure initiatives. It is not possible to provide a list of expenditure variations by project in the time requested. If that information is still required, it should be sourced directly from the asset investment records of the Department of Education, which has the most accurate and up-to-date records of those matters at this time.

Mr President, thank you again for your indulgence allowing me to keep faith with those members who asked for further information and took it on trust that it would be provided. I have now provided that information. I ask that the house now support the third reading of both these bills.

HON KEN TRAVERS (North Metropolitan) [5.15 pm]: I thank the minister for undertaking to provide that information, thereby facilitating the passage of these appropriation bills. I want to raise one other quick matter during the third reading debate about some of the comments I made during the second reading debate. In question time today, the minister suggested that I had been incorrect in my comments. Before we pass the bill on the third reading, I think we need to make the situation very clear. The minister has confessed during question time that the state is receiving record amounts of money from the commonwealth, but that the commonwealth determines where that money is spent. During the second reading debate, I spoke about the road and infrastructure projects that the federal government is funding; projects the Western Australian state government requested the federal government fund. The minister cannot say that the federal government directs where that money is to be spent. The federal government put money into the underground end of the Perth railway line because the minister's government requested funding for that project. The federal government is funding Oakajee because that is what the minister's government has requested. Even though the state government did not need to spend that money, it requested funding for that project. The minister has acknowledged that the federal government is putting in more money, but he has not acknowledged that it is putting that money into the projects the Western Australia government has asked it to. In fact, the federal road funding project is for the roads the Western Australian state government requested.

During my contribution to the second reading debate, I spoke about the minister hiding information about congestion. I also asked the minister about the asset investment program for the departments in his portfolios. Previously, when I have asked about that, I have been referred to the budget papers. We know the Public

Transport Authority's asset investment program is receiving commonwealth money for its underground railway project and I challenge the minister to show me where that money appears in the budget papers. It does not appear; that is why I asked the question and why the government refused to provide the information. It told me to look in the budget papers for that information, but it is not in the budget papers! I wanted to know, for each project in the asset investment program, how much was state money and how much was commonwealth money. In the sense that he does not want to make that information public, the minister was hiding that information. I do not think the government ever wanted to admit that Western Australia is getting more out of the current commonwealth government than we have ever got from a commonwealth government. Is that good enough for Western Australia? No; we deserve more. Labor agrees that Western Australia deserves more. But the government should acknowledge that the current commonwealth government is giving us a far greater —

Hon Simon O'Brien: They are killing us with GST relativities, and you know it! They are absolutely killing us.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Because of the agreement that Mr Court, Mr Howard and Mr Costello signed when the current Premier was a senior minister. That is the agreement it is based on.

Hon Sue Ellery: Would Howard agree to an amended GST?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: This commonwealth government is prepared to review that—something that Mr Costello did not want to do and something that Mr Baillieu does not want to do—that is, to give a better deal to Western Australia.

Hon Simon O'Brien: What has this got to do with this bill?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: The minister raised it!

Hon Simon O'Brien: Oh come off it!

Hon KEN TRAVERS: If the minister wants to come in here and use question time in that way, I will use the appropriate forum to respond—a debate on money bills. The issues the minister raised during question time related directly to the second reading debate of this bill; therefore, we should consider those matters before we decide whether the bill that has come out of the Committee of the Whole, should or should not be passed.

Even though the minister sits opposite with his pious approach and misinformation, the opposition will still support the bill as it is. We hear the Minister for Education blame her own failures on the lack of commonwealth funding—it goes on and on. This government cannot keep hiding behind and trying to blame the commonwealth government for its failures. Where there are legitimate problems with the commonwealth–state financial relationship, we will join with the government in speaking out, but do not try to turn it into more than it is.

Question put and passed.

Bills read a third time and passed.