

Mr Rob Johnson; Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Deputy Speaker; Mr Andrew Waddell; Acting Speaker; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Fran Logan; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr David Templeman; Mrs Carol Martin; Ms Andrea Mitchell; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr John Hyde

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) RECURRENT 2011–12 BILL 2011
APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) CAPITAL 2011–12 BILL 2011

Declaration as Urgent

On motion by **Mr R.F. Johnson (Leader of the House)**, resolved —

That in accordance with standing order 168(2), the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2011–12 Bill 2011 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2011–12 Bill 2011 be considered urgent bills.

Cognate Debate — Motion

MR R.F. JOHNSON (Hillarys — Leader of the House) [3.12 pm]: I move —

In accordance with standing order 169, I seek leave for the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2011–12 Bill 2011 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2011–12 Bill 2011 to be considered cognately —

The SPEAKER: Some people in this place may think they can do a better job than some other people in this place —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I formally call the member for Midland to order for the first time today.

I would like to make some progress today; I am sure the Leader of the House will help us do that.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Once again, I move —

In accordance with standing order 169, I seek leave for the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2011–12 Bill 2011 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2011–12 Bill 2011 to be considered cognately, and for the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2011–12 Bill 2011 to be the principal bill.

Leave granted.

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham) [3.13 pm]: The opposition appreciates the professional manner in which the Leader of the House conducts himself in this place and the erudite way in which he puts his case! We are very happy, because of the forcefulness of the argument put forward by —

The SPEAKER: Take a seat, member for Rockingham. I do not know, member for Rockingham, whether I am to assume this is your reply to what is before the house. I have heard that leave has been granted, so I am curious to know why you remain on your feet. I always give you an opportunity, member for Rockingham.

Mr M. McGowan: Mr Speaker, I am not on my feet!

Second Reading — Cognate Debate

Resumed from 19 May.

MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont — Leader of the Opposition) [3.14 pm]: The Premier's budget spin machine has hit warp speed in the past 10 days. We have had the war with Canberra and, heaven help us, we have had the people's budget. This is a people's budget the same way the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a democracy! Let us look at what this budget has done to Western Australian families; in fact, what three budgets in a row have done to Western Australian families.

Firstly, let us look at electricity bills. The outcome of this government's three budgets is a 57.3 per cent increase in electricity bills. The average bill has risen from \$963 to \$1 515. If we give this government three more budgets, this will be the cumulative result: an increase of 107 per cent in electricity bills. Electricity bills that were \$963 per annum when the government came to power will be \$1 995.50 by the end of the government's financial plan. Bills that were \$963—under \$1 000 a year when the government came to power—will virtually be \$2 000 a year by the end of the government's financial plan. Members opposite get a bit complacent about this. They do not think about the cumulative effect of their decisions. This graph shows the cumulative effect of this government's decisions on electricity prices until we get to this budget. There is the \$1 515 annual bill that will be the result of the latest budget decision.

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Secondly, we will look at water. The conclusion of three budgets gives Western Australian families a 45 per cent increase in their water bills. Note that I am talking about water. I am not talking about all charges the Water Corporation levies; I am talking about water. If we look at the figures, we see that the annual water bill was \$401 in 2008–09. In 2011–12 the annual water bill will reach \$582. Again, members opposite, please consider the cumulative impact of these decisions on WA families. Consider what is being done to WA families. There has already been a 45 per cent increase in water costs and a 57.3 per cent increase in electricity costs. We have to add all these charges together. I think people underestimate the total impact the state government has in its fees and charges on representative families. Many, many families will pay more than the examples I am giving but we need a representative household in order to make comparisons from year to year. This is what that comparison shows. Have a look at this chart: \$4 820 in 2008–09—a high enough figure, in my opinion—and \$5 893 in 2011–12. When we think about things like percentages, some members may say “it’s only five per cent”, but it is five per cent on top of what the government did in the past two budgets. The cumulative impact is now 57.3 per cent. Not only has the government done that to electricity, it has also substantially increased water charges. Included in these figures for total government charges are completely gratuitous decisions, such as the waste levy. The government created a black hole in the budget of the Department of Environment and Conservation and filled it with the waste levy. It also did it with the emergency services levy. In the last budget, government money was pulled out of the Fire and Emergency Services Authority and replaced with an extraordinary increase in the FESA levy.

The government talks about the cost of supply, it talks about not subsidising electricity and water prices, and it talks about debt. I want to deconstruct that notion. I asked my people to look at the total payments by the Treasury to the electricity utilities and compare that figure with the total payments by the electricity utilities to the Treasury. I wanted to see what the net figure was. I found that the operating subsidy in 2011–12 is predicted to be \$366.5 million, the total dividends are predicted to be \$244.5 million and the total income tax equivalent payments are predicted to be \$105.6 million. That leaves a net payment by the Treasury to the electricity utilities of just \$16.3 million. That is the extent of the government’s net subsidy to the electricity utilities next year—a mere \$16.3 million, which, in the overall scheme of things, with a \$23 billion budget, the government ought to be able to accommodate.

I go to the government’s financial plan. Next year, according to the financial plan, a net payment will be made by the electricity utilities to the Treasury of \$94.7 million. The following year, they will pay Treasury \$423.5 million, and the year after, they will pay \$618.4 million. Therefore, the government’s financial plan—its debt figures—are based on ripping more than a billion dollars out of the electricity utilities and putting it into its own Treasury for other purposes. When the government talks about subsidising and cost reflectivity, it should be honest enough to tell the people of Western Australia that over the next four years it plans to take a billion dollars out of the electricity utilities and put it into its Treasury. When I hear the Treasurer whinge about the cost of supporting the living standards of families, I know that he is not whingeing about a subsidy, but lost revenue. When he talks about the impact on debt, he does not mean having to pay a lot of money to electricity utilities, he means not being able to rake in as much money as he would have liked. If he does what we say he ought to do, there is lost revenue—he wants that \$1 billion for the Premier’s projects. At the same time that the Treasurer hits family budgets and forces harsh discipline on the budgets of working families, he boasts about his own government’s financial discipline. I cannot believe that boast; I cannot believe how brazen the Treasurer is to boast like that. This government has concluded three financial years, and spending is up 36 per cent and debt has quadrupled. Therefore, I do not see financially disciplined government; I see a government greedy for revenue, addicted to spending and drunk with debt at the expense of Western Australian families.

The Premier apparently bases his claim that this is a people’s budget on the \$600 million payment to non-government organisations over, remarkably, the forward estimates. What an interesting stance we have from the government. Everything good about the forward estimates we can believe; that is a government commitment, it is a promise. Everything bad about the forward estimates is a Treasury guess. The government cannot have it both ways. If the government wants to boast about \$600 million going to the non-government organisations over the forward estimates, it has to accept full responsibility for the negative aspects of those same forward estimates, such as electricity increases. I make two comments on the payments to the non-government organisations. First, there is a significant increase in demand for the services of those organisations. The government has caused a significant increase in demand through its harsh policies on utility costs. As I told the house last week, the St Vincent de Paul Society says that demand for its services has gone up 55 per cent. Other welfare agencies will tell the same story. Of course the charities need more money; they have to deal with more and more families forced into their arms by the harsh utility price policies of this government. Second, there is a 30 per cent gap between wages in the public sector and those in the NGO sector. Because of the federal Labor

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government's industrial relations reforms, Fair Work Australia is considering an application to fully or partially close that gap. I think that there will be a substantial closing of that gap in the imminent Fair Work Australia ruling. If there is a substantial closing of that gap, there will be a very large financial impact on non-government organisations. The Western Australian Council of Social Service's pre-budget submission stated that the financial impact of that ruling could be \$223 million a year. If that figure is taken across a four-year forward estimates period, that is \$900 million that the non-government organisations will need to meet that wages issue, not \$600 million. The Premier says that he has never been prouder of his party and his government for delivering this money, but the government has actually recognised a forthcoming budget pressure; it has tried to make a virtue out of a necessity. Once that Fair Work Australia ruling comes down, if the government does not come to the party, the NGO sector will collapse. The important point to note is that there is no money in the government's calculation for additional services from the non-government organisations. Once they meet the pressure of the increased demand from the people coming through their doors waving their electricity bills, their water bills and their local government rates bill, and once they pay fair wages to their employees, there will not be any money for additional services. So much for the people's budget; it is not a people's budget at all.

This budget, as well as being harsh on families, is also poor on promises. In the run-up to the last election, the coalition ruthlessly campaigned on the question of retaining Royal Perth Hospital. It gave no thought to the rationality or the economics of the successful reform of our expensive hospital system. We have now had three budgets with no significant funding to redevelop the hospital—only about \$10 million has been allocated for planning. The government said it would build the Ellenbrook railway line in this term of government. I know that the Premier will say he said something different, but his member and his then shadow minister said that construction would start in this term. We have had three budgets with no significant funding to build this railway line.

The government said that it would fast track the relocation of the Department of Agriculture and Food to the Murdoch University site. That is not going to happen. The department's current headquarters will be redeveloped. The government has another plan altogether.

During the election campaign, this government promised to support the introduction of a 60c gross feed-in tariff for residential solar power providers. I am acutely aware of the arguments that go to the issue of that payment being too high. However, the then opposition during the election campaign made a promise; it promised a 60c gross feed-in tariff. It then went ahead and introduced not a gross tariff but a net tariff, which is a substantial watering down of the promise. Furthermore, the government has now halved the net tariff rate to 20c a kilowatt hour. In two ways, in two successive decisions, the government has broken its promise on the gross feed-in tariff for solar power.

The government promised additional drug buses. We will now not get any additional drug-specific buses; apparently, we will now get two additional booze buses and not drug-specific buses. The government promised to reinstate school-based police officers. That is most unlikely to happen. In three budgets, there has been no progress on that promise. In late 2009, a six-month trial was held at Gilmore College. That trial is now finished and the government is now making vague statements about police and citizens youth clubs working closely with schools.

This government was ruthlessly political in its campaigning prior to the last election and it has been ruthlessly amoral about its promises and its responsibility to honour those promises. The suicide prevention strategy was to be a big strategy with a promise to spend \$13 million in the first two years in government. However, this strategy has been a complete shemuzzle. The money has not been spent and Treasury has had the advantage of keeping about half that money. This represents a complete failure by this government to keep a promise of which it made so much when in opposition. Even the government's post-election commitments have to be treated with a grain of salt. What has happened to the Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison? It has been delayed.

Mr C.C. Porter: No; it has not.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: It has not been delayed! How then is the government making a \$150 million saving? How does that come about? Is it going to be a smaller prison?

Mr C.C. Porter: We are using the private sector.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Right! So the promise the government is breaking is the promise that it made when it wrote to John Welch, the secretary of the Prison Officers Union, to say that it would not privatise any prisons. I understand! I just got wrong which promise the government is breaking.

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I refer to the government's commitment to the West Pilbara desalination plant. I did not think it was a very good decision and I criticised it. I asked the Premier to table the underlying financial analysis and he arrogantly refused to provide that analysis. In any case, perhaps the government listened to our criticism of that decision because that would have to be one of the shortest lived government projects in the history of Western Australia.

Another project, which was a government commitment but on which there is yet to be any significant action, is that of the 330-kilovolt transmission line from Pinjar to Geraldton. The Premier has said that the Oakajee port project is of national significance; that is, it is one of the most important projects for the entire nation. The port will service the Mid West iron ore industry, which is substantially based on magnetite. A lot of energy is needed to process magnetite. How can the government put all this money into Oakajee and then refuse to fund the electricity transmission line needed to provide the energy for the very iron ore industry that is supposed to use the port? Once again, I think this government is more interested in pet projects, in vanity projects, than it is in the core basic infrastructure needed to assist growth in an important region such as the Mid West.

That brings me to the question of debt. At 30 June 2008, net state debt was \$3.634 billion, by 2009, it had risen to \$6.688 billion, and a year later, it was \$9.896 billion. By 30 June this year, debt will be at \$13.387 billion. By 30 June next year, by the end of the year for which we are budgeting, debt is predicted by this government to be \$17.291 billion, and by 30 June 2015, debt is predicted to be \$22.4 billion. These debt levels are too high. This rate of growth in debt is completely unsustainable. The Premier is eating the future. He is denying the people of this state the ability to make important choices in the future about the infrastructure and services that they want because the debt level will be so high that the options available to future governments will be restricted. We are heading towards a debt level of \$10 000 per Western Australian. The Premier and Treasurer may be confident about the future of the economy. However, should anything go wrong with, for example, the Chinese economy, or should there be a sovereign debt catastrophe in the European financial system and a consequent impact on the Chinese economy and then a consequent impact on the Western Australian economy, WA families will stand exposed. Western Australian families will have to service that debt level in an economy that is not nearly as prosperous as it is today. Therefore, the debt level constitutes a significant risk for Western Australian families. Already we are looking at interest payments of \$1.7 billion per annum. That is virtually the same as the cost of a Fiona Stanley Hospital or a Mandurah rail project every single year—every single year! Debt levels such as this reduce the capacity of future governments to undertake future projects, to provide future improvements to services, to pay fair wages to public sector workers or to keep family bills and taxes at the lowest level possible. All those things are compromised by this enormous growth in debt. This is a risk for families. Bills will be higher now and in the future. There will be a requirement to pay back debt and to pay the interest on that debt in possibly uncertain future economic times.

The government has based its budget on a prayer that the Western Australian economy will not, for any reason, tank. Whenever I raise this issue, the Treasurer raises the issue of projects. Everyone loves projects. At least they love them—I warn the Treasurer!—when they are finished, and not necessarily during the period of construction. Everyone also knows, just as people know with their own finances, that there has to be a limit to debt. The only person who does not seem to appreciate that there has to be a limit to debt is the Premier. Why is he so complacent about debt? Why does he not care about debt, as he cared 20 years ago? Why does he just sail along with these huge increases in debt levels? He does that because he has a secret debt reduction plan. The name of that plan is privatisation.

Mr R.H. Cook: I thought it was going to be retirement.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: It is possibly retirement and then privatisation at the hands of the Treasurer. Where are we going? If this government is successful at the next election, it will say to the people of Western Australia that debt has got too high and that, in order to keep funding infrastructure, it will have to sell Fremantle port, Synergy, Western Power, the Water Corporation—you name it. It will have a privatisation plan after the next election if it is re-elected. That is the only way that I can see the Premier being able to handle the debt crisis that he is creating. That is the only way to understand why he is so complacent about this issue, when 20 years ago he made his initial political career on the back of a strong speech given from one of the seats on this side of the chamber about the alleged debt evils of the then Labor government. If members compare that speech from 1990 with what he is doing today, they will see that it is like chalk and cheese.

The budget is not only harsh on families, poor on promises and dodgy on debt; it is also a dishonest budget. There is a lot of risk in the way in which the government has planned the budget. At question time, we talked about the value of the Australian dollar and how that impacts on budget outcomes. The way in which this all works is that a 1c increase in the value of the Australian dollar against the American dollar reduces revenue to the government by \$60 million a year. It is obviously a very sensitive aspect of the budget. When we did our

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budgets—the eight successful surplus budgets that reduced state debt during the period of the Gallop and Carpenter governments—we did them by using a value for the Australian dollar based on the six-week average of the value of the dollar prior to the budget close-off day, and then we just flat-lined that figure right across the forward estimates. We made no guesses; we made no assumptions. We took what the market was telling us about the value of the Australian dollar and based our planning on that assumption. I am not sure exactly what this government has done; it is up to the Treasurer to explain. But it appears that the Liberal government has taken the value of the Australian dollar right now, which is not the six-week average prior to the close-off date—it looks more like an annual average, but the Treasurer can explain how he has reached that conclusion—and has assumed that the Australian dollar will gradually return to its long-run value over the forward estimates. Does anyone really think that that is a valid assumption? Does anyone really think that, in the current extraordinary economic circumstances, that is what is likely to happen? Yet that is what this government has based its budget on. If it is 10c out, that is \$600 million out of the revenue in this financial year alone.

I asked my staff to compare the budget assumptions with the current value of the Australian dollar. The current value of the Australian dollar is US105.6c. The budget assumptions are 97.5c for this financial year, 90.6c for 2012–13, 83.7c for 2013–14 and 76.9c for 2014–15. The government is basing its budget on the idea that the Australian dollar is going to fall below 80c. How credible and reasonable is that? If the Australian dollar were simply to maintain today's value across the next four years, it would cost the budget \$486 million this financial year, \$900 million the following financial year, \$1.3 billion the year after that, and \$1.7 billion the year after that. If the government has misjudged its dollar value assumption and the value of the dollar today stays where it is, the cumulative impact across the forward estimates will be \$4.4 billion. The government will have its arguments, but this is all about risk. This is the risk that the government is taking with our finances and with the budgets of Western Australian families. The risk is combined. The rate of spending growth is 36 per cent in three years. Debt has quadrupled in three years. If we look at the debt in the future and at the value of the dollar assumption, we can see that it is all extra risk. This risk will not be borne by the Premier personally; it will be borne by Western Australian families who will have to deal with this if it all goes wrong. It is okay to take a risk in one area, but when a risk is taken in every area, a problem is created for Western Australian families.

There is also another dishonesty in the budget. The government loves to talk about projects. That is the government's political strategy—projects, projects, projects. It announces projects, it has photo opportunities next to projects, it releases computer animation of projects, it releases artists' impressions of projects and it puts out more press releases about projects. That is the government's strategy. The problem is that the government cannot fit into the budget envelope all the projects that it talks about. The solution is to put planning money into the budget and to keep talking about projects, but not actually build them. The Pilbara maritime common-use support facility has planning money, but the government is not building it. The new museum has planning money, but the government is not building it. The State Records Office repository site has planning money, but the government is not building it. The Carnarvon fascine redevelopment has planning money, but the government is not building it. The Ellenbrook railway line, which the government is now calling the Ellenbrook public transport master plan, has planning money, but the government is certainly not building the railway line as it promised. The government is not building the major stadium, but it has planning money. The government is not building the Western Australian Institute of Sport centre, but it has planning money. The government is not building the Ashburton North Strategic Industrial Area, but it has planning money. The government is not building the Anketell Port Strategic Industrial Area, but it has planning money. The government has some planning money in the budget for the Albany gas pipeline—a Court government project and a promise made on the hop in the middle of the election campaign—which is a completely uncommercial project and which I do not think is ever going to happen. The government has planning money in the budget for three transport projects—the Portlinks project, transport network planning and transit concept and feasibility studies. Finally, the government is not doing anything with Royal Perth Hospital, despite the promise it made, but it has planning money in the budget.

In the run-up to the budget, I spoke about the way in which the government focuses on vanity projects and pet projects at the expense of core infrastructure. As we analyse the budget this week and next week, we will look very closely at every aspect of the basic core infrastructure that this state needs. We will look at the electricity network and the needs of the Mid West. We will look at water security and the needs of the West Pilbara. We will look at road and rail investments. We will look at broken promises and we will look at the obligations that the government has simply shunted to the future for some new government to deal with when the money has been exhausted and debt is at unsustainable levels but pressing needs for the people of Western Australia still have to be met. A classic example of the government's approach was the question of public transport. There were not enough trains but the government irresponsibly refused to order, despite public transport advice,

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30 new railcars in late 2008. Consequently, congestion has increased on our urban rail network. The government, after public embarrassment and Labor campaigning, has in this budget ordered, it says, 45 railcars. However, I will point to an issue that the opposition will pursue, and I give the Minister for Transport some warning. In answer to a parliamentary question, the Minister for Transport said —

The shadow Minister for Transport this morning urged the government to order 30 new railcars. Thirty new railcars would cost \$330 million. It is difficult to obtain \$330 million to invest in rail infrastructure.

I turn to the budget press release from that very same person, Mr Troy Buswell, Minister for Transport and for Housing, in which he says —

Key public transport initiatives include —

A few other things are included —

... and \$164 million for 15 new three-car train sets.

Therefore, when Labor suggests that we need urgently to order 30 new railcars, the cost is \$330 million, but when the government announces that it is ordering 45 new railcars, the cost is \$164 million. There is an issue here: either the transport minister was not telling the truth when he launched an attack on Labor's shadow minister or there is something funny about the budget allocation for the 45 new railcars. I wonder whether half the payment for these railcars is outside the forward estimate period; therefore, there will be a very, very substantial delay before these railcars are actually delivered.

Mr T.R. Buswell: You're wrong!

Mr E.S. RIPPER: The minister says I am wrong, but he needs to explain why in one week 30 railcars cost \$330 million and in another week 45 railcars cost \$164 million. The two figures just cannot be reconciled. Rubbish like that, off-the-cuff dismissive comments like that, do not cut the mustard, my friend. That sort of approach probably explains why we have had three Barnett government budgets delivered by three different Treasurers!

Let us now turn to another area for which I am very interested to hear the government's explanation. Capital appropriation for schools, which includes new schools and school maintenance, refurbishment and additions, has dropped from \$890 million in 2010–11 to \$661 million in 2011–12; that is a decrease of \$229 million. Mind you, the estimated actual expenditure in the last financial year was only \$462 million. I am very interested to know why the government would appropriate \$890 million in a financial year for important work in schools but end up spending only \$462 million. I think this is an issue that will be reflected in every outer suburb, where people will be disappointed that the school that they think is coming does not come; and there will be disappointment in many middle and inner suburbs as older schools simply do not get the maintenance that was expected.

I now come to the Premier's diversion. I have outlined a lot of the things that I think are wrong in this budget. Scrutiny of the budget has been compromised by the way in which the Premier has created this diversion—namely, the war with Canberra. What a beautiful political device for the Premier; all attention is focused on the evils of Canberra and no attention is focused on what the Premier himself is doing to the family budgets of Western Australians. I will make a few comments about this because I think it is an interesting issue.

The first comment I make is this: the minerals of Western Australia belong to the people of Western Australia. The legal constitutional position is that the minerals belong to us. We are not a unitary nation; we are a Federation. The basis on which we went into the Federation is that constitutionally we own the minerals. Our Parliament has the sole right to raise royalty rates—our Parliament; this Parliament here. No other Parliament has the right to interfere with our raising or lowering of royalty rates. The federal government has no right to interfere in our royalty decisions. Nevertheless, we are naive if we think that for any period in the recent past we have had the royalties solely to ourselves. Under the GST system, royalties have been redistributed away in effect to other states. They have been redistributed away by a reduction in our GST share. In practice, the history of the last decade or more is that Western Australia has in effect kept 10 to 30 per cent of its royalty revenue. Therefore, to pretend that there is not already a problem, to pretend that we keep our royalties now and that the nasty federal government has just taken them away, is to misunderstand the way in which commonwealth–state financial relations work. I have heard the Premier's argument that what he has done is simply remove a concession for fines. The Premier is saying, "I'm increasing the fines rate to the lump rate, which is also the standard rate in the Mining Act." In principle, removing a concession should not have any impact on our GST allocation; GST sharing is based on the revenue-raising potential of the state, not the revenue-raising actuality. Therefore, in principle, our GST share should already have been reduced for the fact that we had a fines

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concession. In practice, it does not work like that; there are 1 250 factors. Western Australia has such dominance of the royalty payment system that whatever we do in royalties ends up affecting our payments. During my time as Treasurer, the rule of thumb was that we kept only 10 to 30 per cent of our royalty revenue in the long term.

There has been a new development with the Commonwealth Grants Commission wanting to have two tiers of royalty payment considerations in its calculations. I am not sure of the exact detail, but the new development threatens to have us lose 100 per cent, or perhaps more than 100 per cent, of our royalty revenue through reductions in GST share. This is obviously a completely unfair and economically counterproductive system to apply to Western Australia. It creates a real issue between us and our people. How do we deliver benefits from the boom to our people when the benefits are equalised away to other states? We have to go back to see where this started. This goes back to the signing of the GST deal in 1999. Yes, horizontal fiscal equalisation had been in place for a long period before that, but 1999 was the opportunity to break horizontal fiscal equalisation; 1999, when Peter Costello was so desperate to get the GST system in and needed the support of the states for his wheeze of allocating the GST to the states, was the time to break the system that is now so damaging for Western Australia. But Richard Court and Peter Costello signed up to this GST deal. In fact, the now Premier was involved as well, because he was a member of the budget committee of the Court government when this deal was signed. He was a personal enthusiast for the GST deal. The GST is a deal that has gone very, very sour for Western Australia. This state needs a new formula for the sharing of the GST. When Labor was in power at the state level, we campaigned for a new GST system. We worked with New South Wales and Victoria, and we commissioned a report by Ross Garnaut and Vince FitzGerald that recommended a new system. They said in their report that the current system is not only bad for Western Australia, but also it is bad for the nation, because it reduces national economic growth. However, we got no hearing whatsoever from Peter Costello and John Howard. Peter Costello was absolutely negative. He said, smartly, but dismissively and arrogantly, "I will only do something if all the states agree." Of course South Australia is not going to agree. Of course the Northern Territory is not going to agree. Of course Tasmania is not going to agree. Even Queensland would not agree at that time. Therefore, Peter Costello completely dropped the reform bundle when it came to the GST system in 2002 and 2003. We have never had consideration from federal Liberals for a change in the GST system. But at last we now have a government that has promised a fundamental review of the GST. The federal government has not delivered the outcome of that review, and Western Australians will hold it to account for that, but it has promised the very type of review that was never given to us by John Howard and Peter Costello.

There is another aspect to this debate that needs to be taken into account; that is, that when we campaign for a change in the share of the GST, and a change in the formula, we might not win the main prize, but there is always a consolation prize that is available. That consolation prize is federal investment in Western Australian infrastructure. We are getting federal investment in Western Australian infrastructure from the commonwealth government. We are getting a lot more investment in Western Australian infrastructure from the federal Labor government than we ever got from John Howard and Peter Costello. The Premier whinges endlessly about the commonwealth government, and at the same time he endlessly claims credit for the very projects that are supported by federal funding. I do not agree with the infrastructure threats that have been made by federal ministers against Western Australia. Those threats are wrong. They are wrong politically. They are also wrong in policy terms. I say that because investing in a fast-growing state like Western Australia is in not only Western Australia's interests but also the nation's interests. It is better to invest in a fast-growing state than to invest in a slow-growing state. Therefore, those threats are also against the national interest, not just against the state interest. I do, however, dismiss those threats as part of the theatre of federal-state relations. I believe that in the final analysis, what is in the national interest will prevail.

I have to say also that in making those comments, the federal government has compromised its own very good record of investing in infrastructure in this state. The Minister for Regional Development has gained federal government support for the Ord project. The Premier has gained federal government support for the Northbridge Link and for Oakajee. The federal government is proposing to pay about 80 per cent or 90 per cent of the cost of the widening of Great Eastern Highway in my electorate. The federal government is proposing to pay—I have not done the calculation—about 60 per cent of the cost of the Gateway WA project.

What historically has brought Western Australia to this situation? What I have been concerned about is that the federal Treasury has noticed that there is a huge pile of money on the table that has not been collected by Western Australian politicians. In a sense, we should be looking at ourselves as state politicians and asking: Why did we not make decisions to collect more money from the booming mining sector? Why did we leave that money on the table for the federal Treasury to collect? Of course we always need to bear in mind that we cannot

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compromise investment or jobs. But we are now looking at two successive booms in which the mineral wealth of Western Australia has been taken away from us. What we need to ask ourselves is: why are we in this position?

In answer to that question, I want to point to two legacies. The first legacy is from Sir Charles Court, and the second legacy is from Richard Court. Under Sir Charles Court, mineral development in this state was based on state agreement acts, with concessional royalty rates. Once royalty rates are tied up in state agreement acts, they are extremely difficult to change. That has made it very awkward for successive governments, because they have had to wait until they have arrived at some bargaining position and they can extract more of the mineral wealth. The Premier has had the good fortune of the coincidence of the proposed mining tax and the proposed joint venture between BHP and Rio Tinto in his negotiations on these issues. The second legacy is from Richard Court, when he signed the GST deal in 1999, because even if successive state governments had managed to get over the issue of state agreement acts, in the end they would have collected only 10 per cent to 30 per of the dividend of all that political work. Therefore, I mention that as the two reasons that the political class in Western Australia has not collected the wealth from the mining industry that it should have collected for Western Australia and instead has left a pile of money on the table that the federal Treasury has moved in on.

I support the right of this state to raise royalties if it so chooses. There may be arguments about any particular measure, and the policy and economic sense of any particular measure, but I support the right of the state to raise royalties. However, I need to point out that there is a cash grab element to what has occurred, and it works in this way. If the Premier raises royalties now, he will get the money from the royalties now, in this budget and in the next budget.

Mr C.C. Porter interjected.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: However, the GST punishment will come later. The GST punishment will come in the next parliamentary term. Therefore, we are looking at a situation in which the bounty will be available for the Premier, but the greatly reduced GST revenue flows will be dealt with by the next Premier in the next parliamentary term. The Treasurer interjected to say, “I thought you guys were going to change the GST arrangements.” The government is basing its budgeting on the hope that something that has not been achieved in decades and decades will finally be delivered by a federal Labor government. It is not just the federal Labor government that has a role here. The Liberal Premier in New South Wales will have a strong position, no doubt. The Liberal Premier in Victoria will have a strong position, no doubt. This is not state Liberals versus federal Labor. This is state against state. It is just possible that the government’s Liberal colleagues in those two big states will end up frustrating the very reform on which this government has based its budget.

I have spent some time talking about the minerals royalties issue, and about federal–state relations. The debate about royalties has focused attention on future possibilities. However, what we should be looking at is what is happening in this state and what is happening to Western Australian families as a result of this budget. In the final analysis, the government’s spin and the government’s diversionary activities cannot hide the reality. This is a dishonest budget. This is a budget that is tough on families, and poor on promises. This is a budget from a government that is greedy for revenue, is addicted to spending and is drunk on debt.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.10 pm]: The health section of this budget provides a fascinating insight into the party room of the state Parliamentary Liberal Party. In the playing out of some Faginesque, Oliver Twist–like scenario, the state government has sent the Minister for Health out into the corridors to beg and pickpocket, to try to find extra resources for the health budget. He has had to beg the state Parliamentary National Party for a little largesse from the royalties for regions money, and he has had to go to the federal Labor government for a rescue package for the health budget. To be fair to the Minister for Health, he has been pretty successful at getting on his knees and begging the Minister for Regional Development for a little extra cash to make ends meet for the health budget, but, most importantly, he has been successful at waving the white flag so that the federal Labor government will come in and rescue the Western Australian health budget.

No other health minister in this state has been the beneficiary of this sort of extraordinary support from federal Labor. Members right across this chamber will be able to look back on this budget as being the one when a federal government started to really put its paw prints on a state health budget. As the expense growth of health budgets start to overrun the capacity of state governments, they will rely more and more on the commonwealth government to prop up health budgets to make sure that they can continue to meet the community’s expectations in the provision of health care. Indeed, the federal Minister for Health was in Perth last week to announce the commencement of some extraordinary contributions to the Western Australian health budget. The state Minister

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for Health was mentioned in the media release, but it is interesting that he has not talked about federal Labor's great contribution to the health budget in this place, so I will do it for him.

Dr K.D. Hames: I did say it to the television reporter when we did the interview together outside.

Mr R.H. COOK: It must have been a pretty unsexy press conference, minister!

Dr K.D. Hames: They did 30 seconds on it; that's the way it goes.

Mr R.H. COOK: I will outline some of the funding that will be provided for the health budget by the federal Labor government. Two additional operating theatres and a surgical centre will be provided at Osborne Park Hospital, the hospital most neglected by this government. There will be two intraoperative magnetic resonance imaging scanners provided at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, at a cost of \$15.6 million; the operating theatre capacity at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital will be expanded, at a cost of \$7.2 million; funding of \$4 million will be provided for the redevelopment of the ambulatory surgery centre at Royal Perth Hospital; and, private sector elective surgery capacity will be purchased for, particularly, Geraldton hospital, at a cost of \$3.6 million, and Bunbury hospital at a cost of \$1.3 million.

Also, the federal government will provide funding for 300 subacute beds and equivalent services to be delivered through \$166 million worth of funding. This will include 24 beds at Rockingham hospital, 16 beds at Armadale hospital and 18 beds at Bentley Hospital. There will be 86 bed equivalents for community services; 30 rehabilitation beds at Joondalup hospital; and 60 beds for rehabilitation and geriatric evaluation and management through the non-government sector, which will cost \$30.23 million. There will be improvements in the continuum of care at Bunbury and Albany Regional Hospitals by the provision of \$20 million for rehabilitation bed equivalents and a day therapy unit; and \$3.5 million for the establishment of two regional primary stroke centres. The commonwealth will provide more than \$7 million for 19 day-therapy services for paediatric rehabilitation care at Princess Margaret Hospital for Children. That is an extraordinary contribution.

While I am on my feet I will mention the federal government's contribution to the mental health budget, although I accept that that does not come fully within the health minister's portfolio. That contribution will cover a 22-bed unit at Joondalup Health Campus at a cost of \$3.2 million; six beds at the Broome Regional Hospital at a cost of \$4.4 million; an upgrade to the Bentley adolescent mental health facility at a cost of \$4.5 million, which is a most acute need as we have been made aware by public commentary; and the expansion of the Broome Regional Hospital emergency department facility, at a cost of \$8 million.

This significant contribution from the federal government will boost the health budget with an increase of \$686.4 million; \$133 million of that increase will come from the commonwealth. This minister, more than any other, will be the beneficiary of a great health contribution from federal Labor. It should also be noted that this contribution comes on top of unprecedented capital investment in health from a federal government, including half the capital costs for Midland health campus, and the full capital costs of the rehabilitation wing of Fiona Stanley Hospital. Never in the history of this state has a state health minister been provided with such a great contribution from the federal government.

I do not say that simply to take up time and to talk about the great national health reform agenda that is being managed by the Gillard Labor government—although that is what it is; I say that to also say that the time for excuses from this health minister is over. Under this health minister there has been an increase in the number of people on elective surgery waiting lists between March 2009 and March 2011—a blow-out of more than 2 000 people on our elective waiting list. There can be no more excuses. Under this minister there has been record ambulance ramping outside our emergency departments; a dysfunctionality matched by no other health minister in the history of this state. There can be no more excuses. This minister now has all the resources he needs and all the support he could possibly want from the supportive federal government, and no more can he simply turn around and say, "It's someone else's fault." No more can he say, "We're doing our best but we have limited resources", because this minister has more resources than anyone.

We should see a significant improvement in the level of services in our regions. The great contribution, through the southern inland health initiative, from the royalties for regions program is a terrific example of cost-shifting from local and commonwealth government to state government; one that the minister may look back on with some regret when perhaps the royalties for regions program is not so forthcoming with resources. It is an example of extraordinary cost-shifting so that general practitioners in that region are properly supported.

Why the health services of the Wheatbelt and southern areas of this state are more worthy than the health services to the north escapes me. There is an extraordinary alignment between National Party seats and seats that the National Party are targeting at the next election—an extraordinary alignment. I think it is very sad that this

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great opportunity for our health system—anything that this minister cannot do, he will go out and beg, borrow and steal from other areas—has been so badly let down by the unstrategic, cynical and overly political program that is the royalties for regions program.

It is disappointing that some opportunities have eluded us, but it is very encouraging that the minister now has every resource at his disposal to make sure that elective surgery waiting lists go down, that ambulance ramping is a thing of the past, and that emergency departments will continue to have all the resources they need to function properly. The demands on our hospital system continue to grow. The Minister for Health observed that the presentations in the emergency departments in the last financial year grew by five per cent, and that in the first quarter of this calendar year alone they have grown by nine per cent. It will be interesting to see how the Minister for Health uses the new and very abundant resources from the federal government to make sure that our hospital system is properly resourced to meet the growing demand.

I make special mention of Osborne Park Hospital. I express on behalf of the Labor Party our particular thanks to the federal Labor government for its support for the redevelopment of that campus. The reconfiguration and redevelopment of that hospital was put on hold in this government's first budget. The funding was begrudgingly put back into the second budget, but in the government's third budget some of the funding has been pushed out yet again. The reconfiguration and redevelopment of Osborne Park Hospital is very important for the progress of the mental health services of this state. The redevelopment and reconfiguration of Osborne Park Hospital must be undertaken so that important redevelopment and modifications can be made to Graylands Hospital. It is important to see that develop. It is sad that it has taken the federal government to put a rocket under the state government to make sure that that redevelopment takes place.

Dr K.D. Hames: We asked them for money for the project.

Mr R.H. COOK: The minister should have done that. However, he should not have asked the federal government for money in the third year of this government; he should have put his hand in his pocket in the first year and met the medical and moral imperatives of upgrading that hospital. The people of Osborne Park, particularly those with acute mental health problems, are being badly let down by the minister and this government.

I am sure that the Minister for Health will be acutely interested in the people who are feeling left out because of the complete lack of progress in the redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital. The Liberal Party, when it was in opposition, took great delight in its fear campaign about Royal Perth Hospital. The Liberal Party's lies at that time about the closure of that hospital had a great impact —

Withdrawal of Remark

Dr K.D. HAMES: I question whether the statement “Liberal Party's lies” is unparliamentary, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member was not referring to a particular person, but I ask the member to contain himself.

Debate Resumed

Mr R.H. COOK: I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The Liberal Party's lies that were whipped up at that time regarding Royal Perth Hospital tapped into a rich vein of community sentiment and were responsible for some important gains for the Liberal Party at the last election. I think the minister has boasted previously that some 35 000 people signed a petition to save Royal Perth Hospital. Each of the signatories was left with a very clear impression from the Liberal Party, and from the then shadow Minister for Health, that the Liberal Party would redevelop Royal Perth Hospital as a 400-bed hospital as a matter of priority when in government. There is not a member of the inner Perth electorates who does not believe that the Liberal Party undertook a solemn promise to develop the hospital as a matter of urgency. What have we seen in this government's third budget for that hospital? Absolutely nothing. The *Western Suburbs Weekly* reported on Tuesday, 4 November that the redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital would receive a \$20 million boost to cater for the planning and site works of a new wing during the state government's first term. That paper was expecting the hospital to be redeveloped.

Dr K.D. Hames: It is exactly what you said—“Planning in the first term.”

Mr R.H. COOK: The newspaper was expecting this government to put some rubber on the road and stick by the promises it made to the people, particularly those in the Deputy Speaker's electorate, that this government would redevelop Royal Perth Hospital as a new 400-bed facility. The minister might be right on the technicality about

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whether or not he said it would be done in the government's first term. However, the Liberal Party enjoyed popularity gains by creating that fervent impression in the community's mind. If I walked down the streets of Mt Lawley and asked some of the electors in the Deputy Speaker's humble electorate about it, I am sure they would say, "That's right; the Liberal Party did promise to redevelop that hospital. Why won't it get on with it?" It is typical of the government to talk up its development projects when all it does is provide computer-generated images, architects' impressions and planning budgets. It has had a planning budget for Royal Perth Hospital for three budget cycles, but it has not actually spent the full allotment. The government is sitting around contemplating what might be done in the never-never. The Liberal Party knows that it made a false promise to the people in the inner city electorates.

There are losers in this budget, despite the largesse of the federal Labor government and the pickpocketing of royalties for regions. Members would be aware of the history of medicine. At some point, oral health and general medicine parted company. For some reason, dental care and oral health is a real blind spot for this minister. Dental services continue to be neglected budget after budget, and this budget is no exception. A dental health clinic in my electorate is attached to Orelia Primary School and has about 2 000 children from across the area on its books. The clinic sees approximately half those children on a regular basis. I asked the clinic what happens to the other half and was told that the clinic just does not see the children until later when they present to the clinic with cavities, are in pain or have deteriorating oral health. Why is that the case? It is because we simply cannot attract dentists and dental clinical assistants to the service and ensure that we have the most appropriate resources available. In this budget, dental health services will increase by only 20 full-time equivalents right across the state to meet the escalating crisis in our community. We manage people's oral health as best we can, given the lack of resources for children while they are in school. Often children in grade 1 or preprimary are presenting to school with chronic dental problems already.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr R.H. COOK: To a certain extent, we manage their oral health fairly well throughout their schooling life. However, we lose them once they leave school and see them again only when they present with chronic oral health problems later in life. It is a sad indictment that oral health continues to be neglected in this state. We are blessed to have the resources and labour of an extraordinarily dedicated group of people who continue to practice in the public sector. More than ever those people in oral health care need extra resources. Members will be surprised to hear that the Oral Health Centre needs a computer. I think it is the only remaining government department, possibly in Australia but certainly in Western Australia, that has carbon paper on its stationery requisition list, such is the appalling state of neglect in its area. Its staff are paid less than those in the private sector and we continue to struggle to provide the dental health care that we need to provide. We believe it is important to invest again in dental health care. This minister says, "Fagin sent me out to talk to the commonwealth government about that, too!"

Dr K.D. Hames: All health ministers. It is a primary health care responsibility of the commonwealth government.

Mr R.H. COOK: It is a primary health care responsibility at one level, but it also has broader health implications for the minister's budget. An investment in dental health care is an investment in the ongoing care of people who might later present to a hospital with other related symptoms of comorbidity. From that point of view we should be taking it seriously.

I conclude my comments in relation to health by referring briefly to Fiona Stanley Hospital. The time lines and budget continue to grow. The project looms like a dark cloud on the recurrent budget of the Department of Health as the minister contemplates how he will fund both the Royal Perth Hospital—redeveloped or otherwise—and the Fiona Stanley facility when it comes on stream in 2013–14 and 2014–15. Part of the cost associated with Fiona Stanley Hospital will be hidden from us and the WA public as the government progresses down the path of concluding a contract with Serco for the provision of hospital services. This contract was due to be completed by December last year. This is the contract that costs the government many tens of thousands of dollars a day for every day it is delayed—or at least that was the government's excuse around the industrial action that took place.

The other negotiation concerns we have is there is a continuing level of doubt about the bona fides and the capacity of Serco to run a hospital in this country. We have no example of Serco running a hospital of any size, let alone this size, in Australia at all. Serco is a multinational company that has some experience in running hospitals in the United Kingdom, but none in their number have any experience running a hospital in Australia. It is a point that Serco itself is rather surprised and excited about, as we saw from the leaked memo from its

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ranks. Since the government's announcement that it will conclude a contract with Serco, we have seen examples of some of Serco's management techniques in its role as manager of the detention facility at Christmas Island and other places in this country. There is so much concern around Serco's performance in what would be considered rather straightforward service agreements that the commonwealth Ombudsman herself has launched an inquiry into Serco's performance at the Christmas Island facility. Indeed, the commonwealth government has also launched an inquiry into the management of the facility. Further still, over the course of the past few weeks we have seen a report into Serco's performance at one particular hospital in the UK—the Wishaw hospital—which raised very real concerns about Serco's capacity to manage infection and cleanliness at that hospital. Does this not remind us of another scenario—a scenario in the 1990s when we outsourced and privatised cleaning services at Royal Perth Hospital?

Mr A.J. Waddell: How did that work out?

Mr R.H. COOK: How did that work out, the member for Forrestfield asks. We saw rapid deterioration in the levels of cleanliness at that hospital, so much so they had to blitz the hospital with very harsh chemicals at the expense of around \$3 million to reduce the chemical infection rates. This government is throwing ideological caution to the wind with what will certainly be the newest but also one of the biggest premier hospitals in this country. This government is experimenting in the name of cost saving and in the name of its privatisation agenda simply to see how it goes. It is risking the major tertiary hospital for the southern suburbs simply to see how it goes. The government does not know how Serco will perform and it does not know how infection rates will be controlled. It cannot even tell us if it will save any money. When we have asked for the business case to support the Serco contract in the past, the minister limply came up with the business case the Labor government put in place in 2007! The minister then went about misquoting that document, trying to somehow describe the use of organisations such as the Cancer Council to run some allied services at the hospital as being akin to what it was proposing for the wholesale privatisation of hospital services at that hospital. Serco has an international reputation for secrecy. We do not want to see our new public hospital bound up in that secrecy. We want to see some accountability. We want to make sure that the staff, the professionals and the patients at that hospital are looked after in a manner where we can maintain oversight and care on behalf of the people of Western Australia.

We also do not want to see Midland hospital privatised. We are yet to see any evidence from this government that its privatisation plans will actually save us any money. This minister will simply ask the tenderers to put up some numbers. He will see how they look compared with what they think it might cost the public sector to run the hospital. That is not a public-private comparator. That is simply asking the hospitals for an excuse to privatise, which we all know the government is hell-bent on doing anyway. In the meantime the people of Midland continue to sit by and wait for a hospital, which has been delayed unnecessarily, because this government is obsessed with a privatisation agenda to make sure it can take off the balance sheet as much of the health budget as possible. There are two reasons: firstly, the government believes it will save money; secondly, and most importantly, it knows it can screw workers and keep the details away from the prying eyes of this Parliament and the people of Western Australia. It is unaccountable and it is wrong.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: It is not what the people of Midland want, that is for sure.

Mr R.H. COOK: It is not what the people of Midland want, member for Midland. The people of Midland want a public hospital that provides public services in a manner they can be proud of and which they can have some accountability over. They do not want to see a private sector operator coming in and delaying the construction of that hospital. They do not want to see the performance of that hospital hidden behind commercial-in-confidence contracts, as we inevitably know it will.

Finally, I will make some comments in relation to the sport and recreation portfolio because there again we see a portfolio with a budget of missed opportunities and broken promises. We all know about the sad saga of the major stadium and the way that will limp forward with a government that really has no commitment to provide a future for WA football in this state. All the evidence is in and all the material is before it—the government has no excuse not to move forward with that proposal, but, once again we see the government stump up with a little bit of planning money to try to stave off the critics, with \$13 million to the major sports stadium. The WA Institute of Sport gets a measly \$2 million. This is a department or an area of government that has completed exhaustive business cases to make sure the facilities for our high-performance sportsmen and women in WA are up to standard to take advantage of the international sporting opportunities that should be made available to them. This government has dithered. This government continues to neglect that area. I am very disappointed on behalf of the sporting community to see once again a budget pass them by that fails the sportsmen and women of Western Australia.

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As I said, this Minister for Health has taken on a Faginesque-like character. He has pickpocketed where he could and begged where he can to prop up his health budget. Luckily for him, the federal Labor government has come to his rescue and started to implement the national health reform agenda, which will provide a strong future for health in Western Australia. The minister now has no excuses for his department's lack of performance, for the record ramping outside our emergency departments, for the escalation in the elective surgery waiting list or for the ongoing difficulties for people presenting to our emergency departments. This minister must now take the opportunities and the challenges of this budget, keep his promises to the people about Royal Perth Hospital and ensure that we can safeguard the future of WA's health system. He must do this not through ongoing bickering with the federal government, but by working closely with it, so that we have a strong and successful public health care system that is free of privatisation provided by a state government that works in a true partnership with a federal Labor government.

MR A.J. WADDELL (Forrestfield) [4.41 pm]: How do we sum up this budget? The only word that comes to my mind is "disappointment". It could be opportunity lost, or opportunity missed, but it is just a disappointment. This budget is certainly a disappointment to my electorate, because it has delivered nothing but pain. I do not think a single person in the seat of Forrestfield will sing words of praise for this budget. The government might say that it has invested in the non-government sector, with over \$600 million for charities, and surely that is something that people will be very pleased about. That might look attractive on the surface, but we need to ask ourselves a very fundamental question. What kind of place do we live in? Is this not one of the wealthiest states in one of the wealthiest countries in the world? Yet, one of the wealthiest governments in the world thinks that one of its greatest achievements is to give money to charities so that those in need can get assistance—assistance that they need because this government has repeatedly bashed them about the head with higher fees and charges to the point at which families on dual incomes are now unable to manage their household bills. This government has not delivered a bonus to those people; it has delivered a begging bowl. The government has said to those people, "Here is your begging bowl, now go to the charities so that the pittance that we have passed on to them can be passed on to you on a needs basis." The Premier says that this budget makes him very proud; it is certainly not something that would make me proud.

We see in this budget the continuation of increases to many fees and charges. Of particular note is the 45 per cent increase in the overall cost of water to a household since the beginning of this government's term. Water has to be considered one of the most fundamental needs of life, and it is incomprehensible that we try to reduce demand for water by increasing its cost. There was an article in the media today quoting, I think, the Centre for Water Research, and indicating that drinking water supplies from dams will run out by next summer, even with decent rainfall, which does not appear to be on the horizon. That means that from that time, we will become entirely dependent on water supplied from the Gngangara mound aquifer and the desalination plants in Kwinana. That is certainly worrying the people in my electorate. They are looking for action; they are looking for a government that sees a problem on the horizon and takes decisive action, not for a government that will float another thought bubble or another debate on whether there should be a pipeline that would essentially deliver some of the world's most expensive water to Perth. They are looking for real solutions. One of the most immediate things we need to do is to seek ways to reduce or conserve our water consumption. I do not think we need to do that by constantly whacking people in the pocketbook. It is time we started seriously looking at reinstating the Waterwise program to encourage people to adopt appliances and methodologies that will reduce their overall water consumption. It is about time we got with the program to do something about grey water. In WA, grey water can be used if it is bucketed about, but other than that, approvals from the local council and the Health Department must be sought. It is about time that we said it was okay for people to flush the toilet with the washing machine water without them having to jump through three layers of red tape. Whatever happened to that red tape reduction by the way? I saw no mention of it in this budget.

Electricity charges have increased by 57.3 per cent since the beginning of this government's term. It is only the beginning; more increases to electricity charges are on the horizon. Even beyond those charges, nothing has been said about the 30 per cent increase to electricity charges in this budget, in this year, for some large businesses. Let us look at that. Can government members imagine the outcry from its federal colleagues in Canberra if the federal Labor government put a tax on a resource that would result in a 30 per cent increase in electricity prices? We would have birthday cakes everywhere! We would have analyses of how much it would add to the cost of a candle, to the cost of the cake and to the cost of the icing. People would be drawing up tables everywhere to examine the impact it would have on every aspect of consumption. The federal government might say that the tax will not be levied directly on consumers; it might be levied on only the top 1 000 businesses. I do not think that that would stop the federal opposition from going right off the rails on that tax; it would be breaking it down in every small aspect it could. That is what we, as an opposition, also need to do. It is a question of what that

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30 per cent increase in electricity prices to large business will deliver to families in WA. The increase will result in higher prices at the cash register. It will mean that some businesses will have difficulty maintaining their operations. It will mean a loss of jobs.

The Forrestfield United Soccer Club, which is in my electorate, is very proud of the fact that a number of years ago it managed to get money from the federal government and the local council to put up big overhead lights at its ground so that matches could be played at night. The club is the biggest sporting club in my electorate and does an amazing job at keeping youth involved in sport and developing a spirit of community. A few months back, the president of the club commented to me how much the electricity price rises had affected the club and how much it was costing it to run the lights. I suspect that the club will fall into the category of the larger businesses that attract the 30 per cent electricity price increase. That increase will make it near to impossible for the club to continue its operations. Is the government really about slapping small sporting clubs? Will local councils incur this 30 per cent increase in the cost of running their streetlights? Will this affect rates? Will this continual gouging of electricity charges hit families paying rates? What is the government doing about it? It throws a few more dollars at the hardship utility grant scheme and it throws a few more dollars to charities so that, yet again, we can get our begging bowls out and ask for help when we cannot afford to pay basic costs for necessary services.

The other really disappointing thing about this budget is the hidden announcement of the reduction, from 1 July, of the net feed-in tariff for solar cells to 20c—a reduction of half. I do not recall the Treasurer mentioning it in his budget speech. This year I had solar cells installed on my roof, so I will be in that lucky category of people to whom the higher rate applies. It was quite a hard sell to convince my wife to install solar cells. She very much fixated on the bottom line and wanted to know the return on investment and whether it would be worthwhile. In my view, it was worthwhile if only to do our bit to stop carbon emissions; that is pay-off enough, if we do our bit to save the environment. However, my wife manages the family budget and is much more hardline on these things.

Mr M.P. Whitely: You are not claiming the moral high ground off your wife, are you? It is a very dangerous thing to do!

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Indeed; the member for Bassendean is correct. I will pay for it later!

However, the reality in a lot of households is that not many people look at this from a purely environmental perspective. I think many will look at the bottom line. Essentially, the government's decision to reduce that tariff is telling people to forget about installing solar cells because they will not make back their money. It is telling people not to worry about the environment. The government is forgetting the proliferation of solar cells on roofs across Perth. It has given in. It expects more carbon to be belched out burning coal in the future, and that is its contribution to that future. Between the tariff increases and the reductions in solar incentives, we have heard the Premier say quite clearly that the government has to increase the industry margins such that the private sector can enter the market. This decision is really saying, "Blow the consumer!" It forgets the ordinary Western Australian. It forgets the environment. This decision is about helping yet another big industry to make a few dollars.

Transport is another issue that has a big impact on my electorate—both public transport and road transport. This budget quietly announces the purchase of a small number of additional buses. We have, for some time, been crying out for increased bus services in the Forrestfield and High Wycombe areas. I doubt any of these new buses are pencilled in for my electorate, but I wait with bated breath to see whether there will be some additional services.

I again raise the government's plan for health services in my region. The privatised Midland health campus will be the major provider of medical services to those living in my electorate. My office is located some five kilometres from the still undeveloped Midland health campus site. The problem is that there is no effective way to get to that site by public transport. There are no direct bus services, or those few that do exist are so infrequent as to be not useful. It will be easier for someone in High Wycombe, five kilometres from the Midland health campus, to catch public transport to Royal Perth Hospital than it will be for them to catch public transport to the Midland health campus—if that campus is finally constructed. That is a real concern because I am speaking of people who are not necessarily able or well enough to use private transport or, indeed, to stand for a long journey on public transport or put up with lengthy waits for the appropriate bus to turn up. It is critical. There is no sense in building a facility if the government does not build the infrastructure required to allow people to use that facility. I call on the minister to seriously reconsider the option of public transport. It has been said that demand is the difficulty—that there is no demand for public transport. Demand for public transport will not be there until

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there is reliable public transport for people. It is a case that we have to build it and they will come. People will not stand at the side of the road waiting for a mythical bus that will never arrive. They will make alternative arrangements when they can.

I have previously mentioned the Gateway WA project, which recently received a \$480 million boost from the federal government. That boost is greatly appreciated, but I was hoping the state government could come to the party and provide its fair share. The Gateway WA project is critical to my electorate. Increasingly, more and more businesses have opened in the area and the large commercialisation around the airport precinct is adding incredible strain to the road system. The Gateway WA project is probably the best hope of relieving some of that strain. In the upcoming financial year, the state government will provide a total of \$8.972 million for the Abernethy Road onramp and \$3.84 million to upgrade the Leach Highway to Roe Highway section. That is a total of just under \$13 million. When we compare that with the federal contribution of \$480 million, it is a drop in the ocean and yet again shows the lack of commitment by this government. There is more money in the forward estimates, but I do not think that we can trust the forward estimates when the Premier is wont to say, "It's just a guess"; it is only a Treasury estimation and might or might not happen. We certainly cannot trust the word of a government that has a particularly poor record of delivering on transport promises—I reflect on the Ellenbrook rail line and Roe 8 and the many other projects this government has made a big deal about but has no interest in delivering. Thought bubbles, once again. That brings me back to my theme; namely, that this government is really quite disappointing. It makes lots of promises, but provides very little in the way of detail or delivery.

When looking at a budget, it is very easy to become caught up in the minutiae—in the numbers from one year to the next and how the budget is tracking. I have tried to see where the gains are being made and where the effective management of the public sector is delivering benefits to the people of Western Australia. Where can we see that the public sector is doing the same job this year, but for less than it did it last year? I am not an accountant—I am certainly not a forensic accountant—and I had a great deal of difficulty identifying real savings in this budget. It seems to be an underlying assumption that each year it will become more and more expensive to do the same things and that is anathema to me. I come from the information technology, or IT, sector that actually delivers productivity gains—that does the same job year after year with less and less. I am certain that the government's large information and communication technology sector must be delivering some efficiencies to the government sector—efficiencies that are, no doubt, being gobbled up somewhere else, possibly by inefficiencies.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr A.J. WADDELL: That made me think: how is the government managing the IT sector in the WA public sector? In reality, it seems to be in a very piecemeal way with no thought. We need to recognise that information and communication technology is critical and central to the way in which we do business in the twenty-first century. Yet our institutions seem to be modelled on a nineteenth century Victorian steam model! It is about time we recognise that a considerable percentage of the government's expenditure is in the technology area and rests upon the success of technological projects. In reality, the government is very quick to blame technology when it does not work. It is very quick to blame cost blowouts on ICT projects that go astray, yet where is the decision to manage these projects? It is time that the government recognised the need for and created a cabinet position for a minister responsible for ICT—an essential government area. Not a single *Fortune* 500 company today is without a chief information officer; that is, someone who reports directly to the board or who is a part of the board, and who looks at all aspects of the company's technological infrastructure—where the company is going, its strategies and their implementation. If it is good enough for a *Fortune* 500 company, it is good enough for the state of Western Australia. It is about time we started to examine this in earnest.

One can only reflect on several audit reports over the past few years that have highlighted significant system failures in the information and communications technology area. I recall going to a briefing last year on the Department of Health and a replacement for, I think, its patient information system. It is a rather critical system. The Auditor General explained to us that it was known in 2000 that this system required replacement and that the department had failed year after year to properly plan for and source what it needed to do to replace it. Now the department is reliant on a single company to provide support for the system. The hardware that the software runs on is no longer available, so the department has people scouring the world looking for second-hand parts. This critical health system is being run with second-hand parts that are being sourced from junkyards all over the world, and the department is reliant on a couple of people to support it. It is absolutely frightening that the department has allowed itself to get into such a state. This is the sort of problem that can arise when people do not have the skills on board or are not thinking about the risks if they get the IT systems wrong. That is why I

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think we need to give some serious consideration to the idea of an ICT cabinet minister. Of course, I may have a vested interest in wanting that job in a couple of years, so members can take that with the appropriate pinch of salt.

The other thing that really pleased me about the budget—it is not all brickbats; there is a bouquet—was the announcement that air conditioning would be provided in all Western Australian schools. I have spoken to many members opposite and we all agree that this is a critical problem in Western Australian schools, particularly as it seems to be getting warmer every year. I do not know whether I am getting older, but it really seems to be getting warmer every year. Those of us who enjoy living in suburbs or regions that are away from the ocean suffer particularly badly. Children have poor educational outcomes if they cannot concentrate simply because it is too hot in their classroom. I certainly welcome that announcement. I think it is terrific, except that \$11 million has been allocated to it in this year's budget. The total promise is \$52 million. The bulk of that \$52 million—\$30 million—will not be delivered until after the next election. It is \$52 million. We are talking about our kids. Seriously, there was a huge opportunity to have brought that expenditure forward. A lot of schools are ready to go with it right now; they just need the cheque. It is a slight disappointment. I will certainly be out there shaking the can for the schools in my electorate. Hopefully, Edney Primary School, which has been on my case about this for some time, will get a guernsey from the first \$11 million.

Another disappointment in the education area relates to year 7 students. This issue is close to my heart and I spoke about it a while ago. I do not think there is any mention in the budget of the transition of year 7 students to high school; there is not even an allocation to examine the issue. That is unfortunate. Private schools have moved almost entirely to a year 7 entry to high school. Other states have gone down that path. It is only a matter of time before it happens in Western Australia. We need to start working out how that transition will occur. I know that at the moment it is causing a considerable amount of grief for a lot of people who are transitioning their children from the public sector into the private sector at the end of year 6. These children are being denied a number of things, including the traditional graduation. It is a small thing, but it makes a big difference to children who have spent six or seven years in a school community if they are no longer treated as though they are leaving, much as a year 7 student would be treated.

The big thing in the education portfolio that I would like to talk about is gifted education. I have mentioned in the past that I am the patron of the Gifted and Talented Children's Association of WA. I would like to inform the house that the Department of Education considers gifted children to be at risk. It seems absurd that bright children should be considered at risk, but the research shows how much they are at risk, simply because they have a different learning modality from that of other students. If this budget provided nothing for the children who would ordinarily be left behind—that is, children with learning disabilities and behavioural problems—the government would rightfully be criticised by the community, yet that is precisely what the government is doing to this particular at-risk group. There is nothing additional in this budget to look at this issue. There is nothing in the way of additional money to start training teachers to deal with this unique class of students. Probably the most disappointing part is that nothing has been allocated to increase the number of select schools that are available. In 2006, I think, the then Premier, Geoff Gallop, changed Perth Modern School to a select school for gifted students. That is proving to be a huge success. The school has developed a number of innovative programs to allow students to accelerate and compress their programs, take on university courses while they are at high school, and integrate with students with similar abilities and similar problems. The question I would like to pose is: what do we do for those kids before they get to high school? The answer is that we do very little. We let these poor kids, who are seven, eight, nine or ten years of age and who are clearly very different from their peers, simply wither on the vine.

If the minister were in the chamber, she would point me to the primary extension and challenge program. The PEAC program is an excellent program. It is designed to provide extension for children who are more advanced than their classmates. The program is not designed for gifted students; it is designed for advanced students. But there is a fundamental problem with PEAC. The fundamental problem is that it is based in a couple of small centres. A student who is accepted into a PEAC program will attend it for half a day. There are no transport arrangements in place. A student from, say, High Wycombe Primary School might have to attend a PEAC program from lunchtime onwards on, say, a Thursday. If that student wanted to attend, one of their parents would have to be able to drive them from their school in the middle of the day to somewhere quite distant from home for the PEAC program and then pick them up a couple of hours later. That is great if the student has a stay-at-home parent who has the ability to do that and who does not have other responsibilities, such as picking up other children. Unfortunately, that is an increasingly unusual circumstance in the world we live in today. Students who could attend a PEAC class are unable to do so because there is no transport for them, and that is really the problem. The PEAC program is for half a day out of a week. It is not enough for a gifted student. We

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seriously need to start moving towards developing some programs that recognise the unique learning needs of these students. I have spoken to many parents of gifted children and I know that the big demand is for select primary schools. If we had half a dozen select primary schools around the state that catered specifically for primary school-age children in that range, their parents would be quite prepared to drop them off at the school in the morning and pick them up in the afternoon. It would be much like attending a private school in that respect. Those schools could customise themselves to the needs of those children. It would mean that those children would not be left behind to wither on the vine. In 1984, Singapore set up a Ministry of Education program that was designed to do precisely this. Since then it has continued to expand. The little island of Singapore now has nine primary schools that provide this particular program. It has been deemed to be quite a success. Anyone who looks at the educational outcomes of the Singaporean students would agree that they have a program that simply works.

To conclude, I give members an example of how different these children can be. I was told by a parent of one of them today that his daughter when she was six years old had their next-door neighbour, who was also six, over to play. The next-door neighbour said, "Let's play Barbie dolls." This girl sort of looked at her strangely and said, "I've got a better idea; let's play fractions instead." The next-door neighbour asked, "What are fractions?" This little girl took her into the bathroom and got out some cups and started filling them up with water to show what a half is, what a quarter is, what one-third is, and how a half can be divided into two quarters and so forth. For this girl, it was fascinating because for her learning is fun. For her that joy of simply taking on new information is the joy of the educational experience. Unfortunately for that girl—I spoke to her parents today—she does not necessarily get that out of her school because she is absorbing information two or three times faster than her peers and therefore finds herself in a constant mode of repetition that does not suit her learning. It is a shame to lose that talent.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): Members, the question is that the motion be agreed to. I call the Member for Cannington.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [5.11 pm]: Thank you very much, Mr Acting Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Sorry; the question is that the bill be read a second time.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The subject of the question is not going to change the essence of my speech.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I hope not.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Fortunately, this is one of the few times that we can talk broadly about issues that affect Western Australia and our electorates, and I am very pleased to do that.

I would love to welcome the great benefits that this budget brings to the people of Cannington, but, sadly, again, the specific needs of Cannington have been ignored. I bring to the attention of the chamber a matter that I raised in my contribution to the Premier's Statement debate earlier this year—that is, the Cannington greyhound track. The Cannington greyhound track needs to be relocated within the Cannington showgrounds. That will allow the Canning Agricultural, Horticultural and Recreational Society to get on with the necessary works that it wants to put into the infrastructure at the showgrounds. It is time that the Cannington greyhound track facilities were upgraded, so these necessary works would be for the benefit of Greyhounds WA Cannington as well. It will also allow for the opening up of land for projects, for both the future of the agricultural society and a road project along the edge of the Western Power facility behind the Carousel shopping centre that would then allow for the proper use of the Gerard Street bridge across the railway line. Without the Cannington greyhounds being relocated, none of those other infrastructure opportunities will be able to come into play.

Also, I note that the Minister for Transport recently referred to the upgrades of the Queens Park and Beckenham train stations. I would be really pleased to see those upgrades occur. In every budget that I have been in this chamber for, the Minister for Transport has announced those works. Now that the upgrades have been announced four times—they were also announced before the budget in 2009—it will be great to see that work actually commence. It will be interesting to see whether the minister is capable of managing the contracting arrangements for those stations. The former Minister for Transport, Hon Simon O'Brien, had to declare defeat on that project. Despite the fact that the Queens Park train station upgrade has been funded since the 2008–09 budget and the Beckenham train station upgrade has been funded since the 2010–11 budget, we have not seen any work at either station. They are very tired stations that need that work.

I raise the issue of the work of one of the local groups in my electorate—namely, SERCUL, the South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare. It does a great job in managing environmental projects in the area and assisting with the many volunteer groups that provide so much important work for the local community in my

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area. I raise in the house one of the issues that Julie Robert, chief executive officer of SERCUL, has raised with me. In her email to me she stated —

For many years it has frustrated the Landcare & Environment Employees and employers that there is no “Industry Sector” in the Government Bureaucracy that covers these highly valuable employees.

There must be more than 1,000,000 employees across Australia in this industry sector and yet when we fill out ATO forms, government registrations etc there is no recognition that the Environment Industry exists. I wonder if this is the reason that the sector is so poorly funded. The fair work act did not include the Environment as a new area requiring an Industry Award and fair recognition through the employment areas as a valid employment industry. Currently in WA our staff are employed under the Minimum Conditions of Employment but a number of the Landcare and Regional NRM groups use the Public Service Agreement as a fair guide of what to pay our NRM employees.

I am seeking some assistance to find out how I can progress this issue through the government circles.

One of the commitments I made to Julie was that I would raise the issue in this debate. The government has made a great play about having funded over five years \$200 million for the non-government organisation sector in the social welfare area, but Julie Robert raises the fact that there is no similar generosity towards the environment and land care sector. She has a real point. I am in awe of people who work in the social welfare sector. I am proudly a member of the Australian Services Union, the union that has been campaigning for many years for wage justice for the social welfare sector. I am very pleased that the state government has recognised the inevitability of the wage justice campaign that the ASU has been running on behalf of employees in that industry by delivering that \$200 million, which will go part-way to fund the necessary wage justice for ASU members and other workers in that industry. Now that the government has recognised the importance of wage justice, on behalf of SERCUL and the local environment groups in my electorate of Cannington, I challenge the government to look at this issue as well and to come to recognise that there is a wage justice issue for those employees who work in the environment sector. It will be interesting to see how it progresses over the next couple of years as the environment and land care sector starts to work for wage justice for its employees.

The next issue I raise is that for the third budget in a row there are no tax cuts. I do not know what has happened to the \$300 million promise that the government made at the time of the election, but for three budgets in a row not a single tax rate—not one rate—has been cut. I remember when the Labor Party was in government that we could not have a budget without the Liberal Party screaming about how unreasonable the levels of taxation rates in this state were—that the taxation rates paid by businesses and citizens in this state were too high. However, for three budgets in a row, not a single rate has been cut. The Premier will probably interject, “Oh, yeah; but don’t forget the rebate we gave to those businesses for payroll tax.” That was announced at the time of the 2009–10 budget but paid in the time of the 2010–11 budget. However, if that is the Premier’s intention, of course, that was a rebate; it was not a reduction in tax rates. Every single rate that this government inherited from when the member for Belmont was Treasurer is still in place now. Not only that, there is effectively no capacity to cut taxes in the future because we know that the government actually put taxes up when it reneged on the legislated changes to reduce taxation on small business in this state. Those changes had actually passed the Parliament. If the government had done nothing about those changes, they would have been benefiting businesses in this state. However, the government reversed those changes, and that \$500 million of tax benefits for small businesses in this state was cancelled. That was the only rate change that this government has made.

There is also a challenge here for the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia. I have gone back over media clippings of post-budget commentary. It is very interesting to compare the post-budget commentary of the CCI when we were in government with the post-budget commentary of the CCI over the past three budgets. It always surprises me why so many small businesses pay membership fees to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, when the CCI does not represent their interests. This is another example of that. The CCI has put out some media releases. But that is not what I am getting at. What I am getting at is that the CCI is not doing anything in the media to highlight the fact that this government has broken its promise on taxes. The tax rates in this state are exactly the same as the tax rates that were left to the government by the member for Belmont when he was Treasurer. These are the same tax rates that the Liberal Party said were too high when it was in opposition. But now that the Liberal Party is in government, it believes that these are fair and reasonable rates of taxation. In fact, the government claims in the budget papers that the tax rates in this state are among the lowest in this country. In saying that, I draw members’ attention in particular to budget paper No 3, *Economic and Fiscal Outlook*.

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In question time today, a question was asked about the Australian dollar–United States dollar exchange rate. The government is entitled to establish a new process for estimating the exchange rate. No-one has a problem with that. However, the Labor Party believes that should be a consistent process. I am not sure what the Treasurer was trying to argue in question time. I think he said that the estimated exchange rate for the budget was the rate at the close of the budget, which was 20 April. At that date, according to the budget papers, the rate was 97.5 cents Australian to the US dollar. However, it was actually \$A1.06985 on that date. If the basis for that estimate is the six-week average—which as I understand it is the procedure that was used by the former government—on 9 March, the rate was 98.959 cents to the US dollar, which again is above the 97.5 cents in the budget papers. I have not had time since question time to do the full average. But clearly the average between March and April was much higher than 97.5 cents. If there is some other way in which the government has estimated that figure, that would be interesting to know. But it is interesting to note that the estimated actual for 2010–11 is 98 cents, and the budget estimate is 97.5 cents. No-one is saying this is a target. However, in question time today, the Treasurer defended himself by saying that when the Labor Party was in government, our estimates were always wrong. Yes, of course they were wrong. This is not something that a state government has any control over. What a state government does have control over is the rate that it writes into the budget papers, because that tells us what will happen to revenue and expenses. The point is that if a government writes into the forward estimates a higher value for the dollar, it will get less royalty revenue; and because it will get less royalty revenue, it will have a higher debt level and a smaller surplus, and it will perhaps even have a deficit. That is really what has happened here. The Treasurer said that he did not tell Treasury to write in this figure or that figure. But I bet the Treasurer did tell Treasury the parameters within which it was to do an estimate. It will be interesting to see how that all comes out.

At page 81 of budget paper No 3, *Economic and Fiscal Outlook*, the government sets out its GST revenue. The government's estimate for GST revenue is \$3.7 billion less than the federal government's estimate for GST payments. As I understand the government's argument, it has put up royalty rates, and it has then estimated the effect that will have on GST payments. If that is the case, that is fine. However, I then cannot understand why the Treasurer has said that the government has written that estimate into its budget, but it is not going to happen. Either that is the government's estimate, or it is not. If that is not the government's estimate, why has it written that figure into the budget? An amount of \$3.7 billion is an amount that we would notice. Every year in which this government has been in office, it has underestimated in the budget papers the revenue that it will receive from the GST. No-one knows what will happen until after it has happened. But we know the history of these things. Therefore, it will be interesting to see what does happen.

Many people have discussed the GST over many years. I would like to quote a person who was in July 2006 a commentator. He states in an article in the July 2006 issue of *IPA Review* that —

The GST was in fact flawed from its inception, and perhaps intentionally so.

He goes on to state —

These flaws were, in turn, exacerbated by the political process. From the start, the GST was promoted as providing a 'growth tax' for the States—a tax base that grew in tandem with, or at a faster rate than, the economy as a whole. This the GST did. What is more, the Commonwealth quarantined the States against down-side risks, but gave them the unconditional access to up-side risks. That is, the Commonwealth offered a set of guaranteed minimum payments so that no State would in any year be worse-off financially from the introduction of the GST, but was silent on whether the States could raise other taxes or what they would need to do if the GST turned out to be a bonanza.

He then went on to argue that the GST was a bonanza. He concluded the article by stating —

It is tempting to argue for the renegotiation of the GST deal. But the fact is that the deal is effectively set in stone. It is the subject of an Inter-governmental Agreement which, in turn, is enshrined in Commonwealth law. Under this law, any change to the tax base, or to the rate, or to the means by which it is distributed to the States requires the unanimous support of governments at both levels and of both houses of the Australian parliament.

That was said by the member for Riverton. The point I am making is that the GST was a dud deal for Western Australia from the start. We can see from the parliamentary debates in Western Australia at the time the GST deal was done what the different sides of politics were saying. The Liberal Party was saying it was a good deal; the Labor Party was saying it was a dud deal. That is the reality of the GST deal in Western Australia.

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I want to deal now with Roe Highway stage 8. I very much welcome the decision of the state government not to proceed with the construction of Roe Highway stage 8. That is a very good decision. However, it is a decision that the Liberal Party should have made before it came to government. The Liberal Party should have been honest and said to the people of Riverton, and to the people of Wilson, in my electorate, before the election that it would not build that road if it came to government.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I must say, though, that I cannot believe that the government will still be spending millions of dollars on a public relations exercise in the southern suburbs, to push-poll its way around those electorates and try to pretend that it is still doing some work on this project. However, the fact that Roe Highway stage 8 is no longer listed in the budget papers as an intended project of this government is a great decision. I am very pleased that cabinet has decided not to proceed with this project, and to write it out of the budget papers completely so that there will be no opportunity for this project to now be said to be on the books. However, that decision must have come as a bit of a surprise to the member for Riverton. I refer to an article in the *Canning Examiner* of 20 March 2009, which states, under the headline, “Bulldozers warm up” —

The bulldozers will be turning up the ground on stage eight of Roe Highway before the next state election, according to Riverton member Mike Nahan.

Well, that is not going to happen. Under no circumstances will this road construction project commence before the 2013 election. I welcome that; the government has made a great decision. I am very pleased that it has come to its senses and ditched this “road to nowhere”. I am not quite sure how it reconciled its decision to abandon the project with its election promise, but given its attitude to election promises, I am sure it has no problem with that. For example, the election promise to build the Ellenbrook rail line in the Swan Hills electorate has been ditched, as has the member for Southern River's election commitment, which was to work hard to bring the rail line to Canning Vale.

Mr P. Abetz: I am still working hard on it; you know that!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: So hard, member, that it is not even at the planning stage. This government has more planning processes than it makes decisions, yet it cannot even enter into the planning process for the Canning Vale railway line. Is the member proud of the fact that his government ignores him, as it did on his electorate's need for an ambulance station, as reported in the newspapers a little while ago? That is another project that has been ignored by the government. If the member is proud of being ignored by the government, he should speak up for himself.

Mr P. Abetz: Watch this space!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: He should speak up and say that he has not had any influence or been able to deliver anything for his electorate, and be proud! Most of us, member, try to get things delivered for our electorates instead of just saying we are going to do something or talk to somebody. Most of us want to take action.

Mr P. Abetz: I've had the commitment to not sell that land.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I want to go further with the issue of roads. It is interesting that, again, funding for roads has been cut by this Liberal government. The estimated actual outcome of own-source roads funding for 2010–11 will be 44.8 per cent of the funding allocated by the last Labor government in 2008–09. The budget estimate for 2011–12 is that it will go from 44.8 per cent of the Labor Party's funding level to 55.5 per cent of the Labor Party's funding level. In last year's budget the government estimated that it would allocate \$520 million to road projects in this state, but the actual was \$426 million—\$90 million less than it said it would spend. Although I say that the roads funding allocation in the budget will go from 45 per cent, in round figures, of the Labor Party's commitment to roads funding up to 56 per cent of the Labor Party's commitment to roads funding—then, of course, it will fall back to 53 per cent of the Labor Party's commitment—I do not actually think that amount will be spent and that we will find, at the end of the financial year, that the government has not increased the actual moneys spent on roads.

It is good for the government to have pet projects and high-profile things that it wants to put a big stamp on, but for the ordinary person in this state who wants the regular services of government—the regular benefits of living in the richest state of Australia—roads funding is critical. The fact that the government has cut, by over 50 per cent, the allocation made by the Labor Party to roads in this state is a demonstration of this government's failure to prioritise. That lack of priority is no more clearly demonstrated than by the fact that the government will not fund the northern reinforcement line. The member for Geraldton is in the chamber, and he knows that

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the northern reinforcement will be required for industry in the Mid West. Mid West industry cannot develop without that powerline; in fact, the Oakajee port cannot be up and running without the powerline to bring energy to that industrial precinct and to those mining projects. This government's third budget allocates no money to the development of the northern reinforcement line.

Members can contrast that with the \$400 million the government is investing in the Perth Waterfront project, which will create traffic chaos for everybody in the eastern suburbs. It is a badly thought out and badly planned project that will see construction traffic clogging city streets for 11 years. I do not understand the government's priorities. When the Labor Party was in power, the government had to decide between developing either the Northbridge Link or the waterfront; it could not do both at the same time. The former government chose the waterfront project as its priority. The incoming Liberal government said that that was not the priority; the Northbridge Link was. This government is now not going to fund roads infrastructure—the funding has been cut by 50 per cent—and no funding has been allocated for the northern reinforcement line.

Mr I.C. Blayney: There is planning money.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No funding has been allocated to construct the northern reinforcement line—none at all. The member is saying there is planning money; that is nice, but there is no money to construct it.

Mr F.A. Alban: You said we need to do the planning first, so what do you want?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, member, that is not what I said; do not misquote me.

Mr F.A. Alban: You said we don't do any planning, and now we are doing planning.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, what I said was that the government does more planning on projects than construction.

Mr F.A. Alban: You did a lot of planning.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): Member for Swan Hills, you will get a chance to speak.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: What I have said about the waterfront is quite clear. The waterfront project has been badly thought out, and the first part of the waterfront project to be built should be the Indigenous cultural centre because it is the central component of the waterfront. The government cannot spend \$400 million building a skate park and call that a waterfront project. The first coffee shop in the Perth Waterfront project is scheduled to open in 2016.

Ms R. Saffioti: We will have run out of coffee by then!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: We will.

After 2016, there will be six more years of construction traffic going past the coffee shops and skate park. That is a ridiculous way to plan a project. Tourists will not be able to get into that area because there will be cement trucks queuing around the block to pour concrete for 150 000 square metres of office space. This project is bizarre! No waterfront project anywhere in the world is like this one—not one of them! It has been badly thought out, it has been badly planned, and it is being built backwards, with the most important element built last instead of first.

If members go and have a look at the Cockle Bay development, they will see that the government infrastructure was built first, and only after the government infrastructure was built did the private sector start to invest. That is the way this project should be done; the project should be completed, and then the private sector should be given an opportunity to take advantage of the infrastructure built by the public sector. The government cannot do that because it is doing the Northbridge Link at the same time. That shows a fundamental lack of planning and lack of thought. This is not just my idea; the Committee for Perth agrees with what I have just said, as does the Royal Australian Institute of Architects. The most important component should be built first, and the little bits—the trinkets—can come later.

This is a clear example of the problems with this government; it wants to have the headline, but it is not so worried about what actually happens. Members can see the government's sensitivity in the Minister for Regional Development's criticism of the Grattan Institute report that stated that it is appropriate for the taxpayers of Australia to examine the effectiveness of the expenditure of taxpayer money. It is not exactly a radical thing to say that, before money is spent, thought should be given to whether it will have an effect and whether it is worthwhile to spend it. Call me old-fashioned, but I have no trouble with value-for-money reviews. In one way or another, the Grattan Institute has been criticised by government ministers on the basis that it is some out-of-touch organisation. It is interesting to see the people who comprise the board of the Grattan Institute. It includes

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such prominent anti-Establishment activists as Hon Dr David Kemp and Marius Kloppers. Other members of the board are the chairman, Allan Myers, QC; and Patricia Cross, a non-executive director of the National Australia Bank, Qantas Airways and Methodist Ladies College, who is another obvious radical who is obviously not to be trusted. There is also Professor Glyn Davis, the vice-chancellor of the University of Melbourne, and Professor John Funder, AO, who has been involved in medical research for more than 40 years.

Mr D.A. Templeman: A known anarchist!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Obviously! Obviously!

The members of that board had the temerity to say that the City of Mandurah is missing out, while the Wheatbelt gets extra!

Mr D.A. Templeman: Absolutely! That's true!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I know it is true, member.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Mandurah has the highest population growth in Australia—5.4 per cent last year.

Mr F.A. Alban: Do they have TVs?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is a really good interjection from the member for Swan Hills. It rates with his interjection that the people in Ellenbrook are whingers. We all remember that one too.

Mr F.A. Alban: Who said that?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The member for Swan Hills did.

It is always interesting to go behind that type of funding. There is nothing wrong with suggesting that there should be a proper assessment of the royalties for regions expenditure. A slush fund for the National Party to bankroll its candidates in various electorates is an affront to democracy. Members should read the second reading debate to see the National Party's form on this. We all remember the rort it had in place when it was a member of the federal coalition government. The National Party has form on this, and that is why it does not want anyone to analyse what it is doing. That is why it has made a direct attack on the Grattan Institute, which is simply saying that there should be a proper assessment of how the money is spent, instead of the minister standing up and saying, "Don't you support regional expenditure?" That is rubbish. That is not what this debate is about; it is about effective expenditure. The idea that the National Party should have a \$1 billion slush fund without any accountability is wrong. The Acting Speaker (Mr P.B. Watson) would agree that the people of Albany have been duded again because the gas pipeline will not be built.

Mr C.J. Barnett: He is very happy about his new hospital.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The Liberal government said that the Labor Party would spend too much on that new hospital. What is the Liberal government doing? It is spending the same amount of money.

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn) [5.41 pm]: I rise to make my contribution to the debate on the appropriation bills. I have broken my contribution into two parts. The first deals with local issues and the second with elements in my portfolio responsibility. I would like to put on the record my thanks to the Minister for Environment. Unfortunately he is not here today. I thank him for the appeals decision he made about Cockburn Cement, which is in my electorate. I believe his decision was very comprehensive. He clearly listened to the complaints of residents and looked very carefully at the issues that were raised by the appellants in the case. He listened to the issues and acted on them in the right way. He said in Parliament that it was a difficult decision to make. I agree that it would be difficult to take on Cockburn Cement, which is part of the Adelaide Brighton Group, a very large company in Australia. The minister's decision has had a substantial financial impact on that company. It is a difficult decision for any minister to make, but he has done that, and I think that the way in which he structured the decision was very good indeed. It certainly has been well received by the residents of Cockburn. They are very, very pleased with the minister's work.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It is a good example of a local member well representing his constituency.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I thank the Premier. As I said, I appreciate the minister's decision. However, there is a little hole in the decision. I have raised this matter with the minister and he accepts that. As the Acting Speaker (Mr P.B. Watson) knows, the issue at hand is the emission of lime dust and odour from kilns 5 and 6 at the Kwinana plant, which are the two biggest lime kilns. A decision was made to use a technological method to reduce the output on kiln 5. I argued that a baghouse filter should be used. The company has agreed to put a baghouse filter on kiln 6. That is proven technology that has been around for a long time; we know it will fix the problem. I had

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hoped that the minister would require the company to use a baghouse filter on kiln 5. However, the minister has left it up to the company to decide on the type of technology that it will use for kiln 5. That might be okay on the basis that the company uses technology that is either equivalent to or better than a baghouse filter. However, because of my dealings with Cockburn Cement over the years, I believe it will probably try to find the cheapest possible technology to put on that kiln, which is a worry. If it is not directed to do it in a certain way, I am concerned that it will find a way around the decision and do something on the cheap that will not have the outcome that the minister is expecting. That is the only concern I have about that decision.

I also put on record my thanks to the Minister for Education because I raised with her the state in which the old South Coogee Primary School was left. The school was built in the 1930s but has been abandoned for nearly seven years after it was replaced by the new South Coogee Primary School. Over the years, vandals have got into and completely destroyed the school.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I drove past it yesterday and was dismayed when I saw it.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: It is shocking. Asbestos is everywhere inside the school, which was open to the general public. The vandals have ripped down and broken every asbestos panel. The old school oval is right next door to the school and is used by the South Coogee Junior Football Club.

Mr J.E. McGrath interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I am sure the member has; it is a very well-known spot. Most of the people who play sport there are young children. One could literally throw a ball from the oval to the asbestos. The children had complete access to the asbestos, which is highly dangerous and a public health nuisance. After a number of emails and calls to the office of the Minister for Education, the entire site was eventually secured by a very large fence so that the public is now unable to access it, and I appreciate that.

I also appreciate the Minister for Education's decision about air conditioning in schools. I had numerous campaigns running in my electorate about the problem of air conditioning, particularly in primary schools. Coogee Primary School received money from the Building the Education Revolution program and attempted to put air conditioning into the new classrooms but was unable to do so because of the behaviour of the asset section of the Department of Treasury and Finance that controls the assets of the Department of Education. Its manic and obsessive control over the school's assets is bizarre. The shadow Minister for Education, the member for Victoria Park, has raised this matter on many occasions. Eventually the member for Victoria Park got the Minister for Education to agree to spend the money that was made available by the BER program on air conditioning for those primary schools. We had a win at Coogee Primary School.

Yangebup Primary School had raised money, and was given additional money by the state government, for air conditioning for the remaining classrooms that had no air conditioning. It received three quotes to install air conditioning at a cost of \$2 500 for each classroom. However, the Treasury asset group said that the school had no right to do that. The asset group got its own estimates of between \$3 500 and \$5 000 per unit. I do not understand why there is such a great difference of between \$1 500 and \$2 000 per unit for the quote from Treasury's asset group and the quote that the school received from The Good Guys. Who is benefiting from the mark-up? I would say that it is some of the contractors who are being used by the asset group within Treasury. Finally, Success Primary School also campaigned to finalise its air conditioning. When the Minister for Education indicated all schools in Western Australia would be air-conditioned, certainly all the parents who campaigned from primary schools in my electorate were very pleased indeed. I admit that Labor's position not to do that work during its term in government was a mistake. We rolled out air conditioning for a significant number of schools but it was a mistake not to do all schools. We should have done it while we had the time in office and we should have done it while we had the money. I am very pleased that the current government has made that decision. It is for the benefit of children, teachers and parents in Western Australia.

I now come to my shadow portfolios of water, corrective services and industrial relations. I will particularly deal with water and corrective services issues. After three years of this Liberal-National government, we are starting to see the true intention of the government with respect to the privatisation of services. That is now starting to come to the fore. Over the next 12 to 15 months we will see more of the drip-feed of work and assets from the public sector to the private sector both in this budget and in next year's budget. I hope we can stop this flow of assets and contracts to the private sector at the 2013 election. There has been a significant number of complaints about the proposed contracting out of services at Fiona Stanley Hospital to Serco.

One thing that slipped through quietly was the awarding of a \$300 million-plus public-private partnership to a company named Helena Water for the new Mundaring pumping station, which, funnily enough, is still listed in

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the budget papers at a total cost of \$330.9 million, given that it will be delivered by a consortium of the Royal Bank of Scotland, Acciona Agua and United Utilities, who are Degremont, and Brookfield Multiplex, on a 35-year BOOT program—build, own, operate and transfer. I am still at a loss to understand why that is in the budget papers given the whole financing and operation of the project will be handed over to the private sector.

Mr C.J. Barnett: My understanding is that the contract usually means, in terms of public accounting, that we have to show it as a liability-to-debt factor.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I understand that, Premier; that is right. It certainly has to be shown for accounting purposes on Treasury's books. If it goes wrong, government has to accept responsibility for the project. It is unusual, though, that it is listed as a line item in the budget. It is usually accounted for in Treasury papers, as opposed to being a line item for a particular corporation. I will ask that question of the Water Corporation. Maybe it has to account for it in its books as well. That Helena Water award slipped through relatively quietly.

There will be much more privatisation and contracting out to come as this government quietly drip-feeds public sector projects and departmental work out to the private sector. With respect to water, in February this year the Minister for Water indicated in a press release —

“... 95 per cent of the Water Corporation's ... capital works program over the next few years will be delivered by the private sector.”

That could be simply a PPP project or it could be a complete build, own and operate proposal under which the entire asset is owned and run by the private sector. What is that 95 per cent of the capital works? What does that mean? Will the Binningup stage 2 desalination plant be run by the private sector? Will water to the West Pilbara be run by the private sector? Will the east Rockingham sewerage plant be run by the private sector? What else that was touted for construction by Labor under its forward estimates for the Water Corporation will be contracted out to the private sector?

We again have had this quiet drip-feed out of work in corrective services to the private sector. Some of these projects are already in private sector hands, but more are coming. For example, the Acacia Prison contract between Serco and the government was rolled over in February this year. No notice was given to the general public in that regard. There was no press release about that. There was no ministerial announcement by the Minister for Corrective Services. As we know, the Minister for Corrective Services loves to come in here and carry on at length. When delivering a ministerial statement, he tends to ramble on for a long time if the subject is really good and it is something he is happy and proud to stand and pronounce. However, if the subject is a little tricky and he might be criticised, such as with the rollover of the Acacia Prison private contract, we do not hear boo out of him.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Silence.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Absolute silence. There is no press release and no ministerial statement—just a contract quietly rolled over to Serco for another five years.

The final tenderer in the prisoner transportation contract—wouldn't we know it?—was Serco again! What did we get from the Minister for Corrective Services? Not a lot. There was no fanfare about a great contract to move from GS4 over to Serco because he knows it is a bit tricky. He knows that the general public do not like public sector services privatised. The minister wants to be popular. He wants to be re-elected and he wants his government to be re-elected; therefore he will not stand and admit what his government is doing.

The transformation of the Rangeview Remand Centre in Murdoch to a new facility has not yet been completed. It is a facility for young Indigenous men. That will go to the private sector. That will be very similar to Acacia Prison. I would be very surprised if Serco does not get that contract as well.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison is included in this budget. It will be operated by the Department of Corrective Services. It will be a build, construct, design and owned project by the private sector. The Treasurer, when criticised about delivering this project late, said it is not late. The member for Kalgoorlie contests that strongly. In an article on the front cover of the *Kalgoorlie Miner* this week the member for Kalgoorlie attacked the Treasurer and the Minister for Corrective Services for extending the building of the eastern Goldfields prison by 18 months; he indicated that the new prison was needed. If we go back to the press releases of the Treasurer, who was also Minister for Corrective Services at the time, he said that the prison will

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be delivered in two stages—the first completed in 2013 and the second delivered in 2015. Now it appears that the entire project will be delivered in 2015, but he denies that there is any delay.

The other cat let out of the bag recently about privatisation was a draft copy of the proposed corrective services bill, which is yet to be introduced to this house. It was leaked to the media.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I will continue where I left off. I was dealing with the budget impacts on my shadow portfolio responsibilities. In particular, I was dealing with the issue of water. Over the term of this Liberal government we have seen the forward capital works budget of the Water Corporation absolutely slashed to ribbons. When we left government in 2008, \$1.75 billion was allocated in the forward estimates for the Water Corporation's asset replacement program and new build program. That was in 2008–09. In the 2009–10 budget that figure was slashed by \$600 million to \$1.132 billion. That was in the government's first budget. The then Minister for Water, the member for Esperance, was unable to defend his own portfolio from his nemesis the then Treasurer, the member for Busselton. He was unable to defend his portfolio and had it slashed to pieces by the Treasurer.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: And he paid the price for his weakness ultimately. In the 2010–11 budget the Water Corporation went backwards again, and the capital works program was cut to \$1.025 billion—a cut of over \$100 million. What is this year's capital works budget going forward? It is \$860 737 million. That is down \$164 million from last year; it is another slash to the Water Corporation's capital works budget from last year.

This will have a drastic impact. All those tanks, pumps and capital works projects that were supposed to be put in place around Western Australia in the country, in the bush and particularly in the metropolitan region—there was a list of the programs in last year's budget papers—are all gone. The ones that are left have no out-years money attributed to them. Most importantly, the Premier and the Minister for Water had a thought bubble earlier in the year. When questioned about what they were going to do, given that the state is continuing to dry out and that the Binningup desalination plant will probably provide our supply of water until only 2015—it was supposed to last right up to 2020; it is certainly not going to be able to achieve that because of the extreme, dry winter we had last year and probably will have this year—the thought bubble from the Premier and the Minister for Water was, "Oh well, we'll expand Binningup; we will go to Binningup number 2. Once the southern seawater desalination plant is completed, we will go straight into the expansion for a second desalination plant." There is no money in the budget for it. I do not know how they are going to do that.

I remind members what the minister said back in a February release. I have a view on where that money is coming from. As the minister said, 95 per cent of all forward capital works programs of the Water Corporation will be done by the private sector. The reason we are seeing a massive decrease in the capital works programs for the Water Corporation is that this government is contracting out all those projects to the private sector. It is shifting all the financial responsibility on to the private sector and slowly bleeding the Water Corporation to death. It is slowly drip-feeding all the assets and all the work over to the private sector. It is privatising our water by stealth. That is what is happening; that is what this government is doing. Make no bones about it: it is all there in the budget papers from this year and going back to 2009. What do we get in exchange for that? Are we actually benefiting from the transformation of the Water Corporation from a public works utility to basically a shell? This year water costs have gone up by a further 14 per cent. The Treasurer tried to hide it by saying it has only gone up by 8.5 per cent, but that is if one takes the three costs of sewerage, services and water and averages them out; it does come to 8.5 per cent. The bills people pay for their water have actually gone up by 14 per cent. Compounded over the time the Liberal–National government has been in power, it is a 47 per cent increase in the cost of water.

On the one hand we have the forward works program for the Water Corporation being slashed by \$1 billion, and on the other hand a capital works project that was designed to actually deliver us more water and more effective and efficient services—that is what that capital works program was about—has been slashed by up to \$1 billion, and in exchange we have a 47 per cent increase in the cost of water.

One of the things I would like to know from the Minister for Water—and it is a question I put to the previous Minister for Water, who, as members know, simply fumbled the question and made himself look a complete and utter incompetent; and I do not expect anything different from this current minister—is: what is the real cost of water? We have been told that water costs have to go up 47 per cent, compounded since 2008, because we have to get to the real cost of water. If you remember, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr A.P. O'Gorman), I asked the previous

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Minister for Water and I have asked the present Minister for Water on numerous occasions the question: when will we know when we have got to the real cost of water? How much per kilolitre is the real cost of water? We have got nothing back from the minister. We have just got garbled nonsense from this minister and the previous minister. They did not have a clue how to answer the question, and they did not understand the issue.

Meanwhile, the Water Corporation's profits continue to increase. They are heading towards \$400 million, with a massive dividend returned to the government. The minister is saying that the cost of water has to go up to meet its real cost. He will not tell us what the real cost of water is. The Water Corporation's profits go through the roof, and the dividends are being sucked out by this government, which go back to Treasury. It is a tax.

Mr M. McGowan: Tax by stealth.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: It is a tax by stealth. What do we have in water? We have privatisation by stealth and taxation by stealth. That is the legacy of the Liberal–National government in water.

As I explained earlier, in corrective services there is a further drip-feed of work and assets from the public sector to the private sector, whether it is with Acacia Prison, prisoner transportation, Rangeview Remand Centre, the funding of the Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison or the possibility that parole and probationary services will go out to the private sector. We are seeing a drip-feed of public sector work to the private sector. Meanwhile, public sector assets have had to expand to deal with the prison population, which has gone up by one-third, from 3 500 to nearly 4 800, over the period of the Liberal–National government. The government had to undertake an expansion program because it had nowhere else to put the prisoners, but the assets themselves are being run down. Roebourne Prison was described by the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services as a disgrace. It is one of the worst prisons in Australia. Temperatures at Roebourne Prison can get up over 50 degrees yet there is no air conditioning and the maintenance of the prison is appalling. Staffing problems at the prison are terrible and staff morale is shocking. The Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services said a significant amount should be spent on that prison or it should be replaced. What is in the budget papers? Nothing. Public sector assets are being run down while public sector work and assets are being slowly and quietly drip-fed out to the private sector. That is the legacy of this Liberal–National government. That is what is happening.

Mr T.K. Waldron: Roebourne Prison has been like that for quite some time.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: It has. I accept that, but nothing has been done about it.

MR J.C. KOBELKE (Balcatta) [7.12 pm]: Before I comment specifically on the budget I will use this opportunity to raise an issue brought to me by a constituent about the abuse of court processes. In our state, achieving justice often relies on the injured party being able to access the court system. There are many instances in which people do not have the financial resources to pursue their case and gain a just outcome. To enable people to uphold their rights, the state provides a range of means by which people can have their complaints dealt with expeditiously and at low cost. However, my complaint to the Attorney General tonight relates to the ability of a troublesome individual to get access to the courts far too easily in order to attack the rights of other citizens. My concern is that someone can abuse our court system, causing huge detriment to other people and resulting in a massive waste of money and time in our judicial system.

A particular case has alerted me to the costs, financial and personal, to people who are the target of vexatious litigation. There is also a considerable waste of taxpayers' money in such an abuse of the court system. Mr Louis Prefumo was recently declared a vexatious litigant and thus had restrictions placed on his ability to initiate legal proceedings against a range of people. I became aware of Mr Prefumo's abuse of the court system through a representation from his sister, Ms Arriadne Bradley, who is a constituent in the Balcatta electorate. Mr Prefumo is a disability support pensioner and is therefore able to initiate court action at a very low cost by using concessions available to people on low incomes. He is obviously smart enough to personally lodge the applications required to initiate court proceedings and to serve required documents. These court actions have resulted in costs to the defending parties and the courts running into many, many thousands of dollars. Mr Prefumo's former wife, Mrs Sutton, escaped an abusive relationship with Mr Prefumo, and in obtaining a violence restraining order in 1997 gave evidence that Mr Prefumo had psychological issues and was prone to violent outbursts. She divorced and moved interstate about 12 years ago to hide from him and to avoid further threats. Mrs Sutton went to some trouble to conceal her whereabouts from her former husband. Ms Bradley, who had supported her sister-in-law through these crises, was also fearful of her brother's temper. She also sought to hide from Mr Prefumo's aggressive and violent behaviour by having a silent phone number and a silent electoral enrolment. However, Mr Prefumo is very resourceful and was able to obtain residential addresses by using Landgate's publicly accessible records. About 2007, Ms Bradley started getting harassing mail from her brother.

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With Ms Bradley's address, he was able to pursue legal proceedings against her. Fortunately, Landgate has since provided a means for people to make their ownership records unavailable to the general public.

I am advised that Mr Prefumo is the holder of a health care card and thus was able, at practically no cost, to lodge 21 court actions in 10 months. Each of these actions was taken seriously by the courts, placing obligations on the plaintiffs to respond to a range of correspondence and to appear before the courts through the various proceedings. In March 2010, Mr Prefumo commenced eight legal actions against Mrs Sutton and Ms Bradley. These included two defamation writs in the Supreme Court of Western Australia, five proceedings in the District Court and a restraining order in the Magistrates Court. While Ms Bradley initially retained the services of a solicitor to handle these actions against her, she soon found that as a single working woman she could not afford the thousands of dollars involved and had to resort to representing herself against the actions of her brother. This required her to represent herself in court on numerous occasions. As a result, Ms Bradley lost her job due to her frequent absences from work to meet the requirements placed upon her by the courts. These frivolous actions have caused Ms Bradley incredible personal stress, cost her thousands of dollars, which she cannot recover, and caused her to lose her employment, which she relied on to financially support herself. Mr Prefumo has no responsibility to recompense the defendants for their costs when he loses in court as he can claim to be indigent. Mrs Sutton, living in another state, has had considerably higher costs in retaining a Perth lawyer. This pressure did not help her to cope when she was at the time also dealing with a serious health issue and looking after a young family.

Complaints to the police about Mr Prefumo's behaviour were redirected to the mental health services. The mental health services would in turn say that they were legal and police matters. The only recourse was for Mrs Sutton to apply under the Vexatious Proceedings Restriction Act to put an end to these persecutions by Mr Prefumo. I would like to thank the Attorney General for taking an interest in this case after I brought it to his attention, and the State Solicitor for his assistance as *amicus curiae*, or friend of the court, in helping to finally bring an end to these unwarranted court actions. The State Solicitor may have had an interest in also representing Transperth and other state agencies, which Mr Prefumo may have commenced legal action against. It is my understanding that Mr Prefumo was successful in an action against his local medical practitioner for keeping him waiting in his surgery. It is understandable that a busy medical practitioner would find it less costly to pay up than to defend such an action in court. On the other hand, if Mr Prefumo is a pensioner as he claims, it is not likely that any claim for loss of wages could be substantiated.

In a recent television interview, Mr Prefumo upheld his right to take legal action to seek redress. While he may have a genuine belief that he is the victim, his actions have caused loss and harm to others. The court decision under the vexatious litigant provisions and the reports I have received from the victims of Mr Prefumo's legal attacks suggest that the legal system must provide greater protection from such attacks. We must be able to prevent an individual from causing such huge distress and personal cost to others, and save our busy courts from a large waste of public resources when numerous proceedings, which have absolutely no substance, are lodged with the courts. I ask the Attorney General to look at how we can ensure that although we protect the rights of people to take action through the courts, we do not allow the huge waste of resources and the tying up of court time, along with the pain and cost that this can cause to plaintiffs who are the target of vexatious litigation. People should not have to go through almost a year of being victimised before the court before we are able to establish that these matters have no substance and the court realises that it is being abused by someone simply using it to wage a vendetta against someone else or a whole group of people. I trust that the Attorney General, who has taken some interest in this case, will look at how we can have an inquiry or an investigation into the adjustments needed to the law and to court procedures to provide protection for people who become the subject of such attacks. I trust that by putting the matter on the record, and with the support of the parties I have mentioned, some action will be taken.

I now comment on matters specific to the budget.

Mr C.C. Porter: I know that you have been following this and I applaud your good efforts. One thing that I have discussed, by correspondence, with the Chief Justice in matters like this one is that, generally speaking, the court has a blanket rule whereby it waives the fees for in-person litigants. It does that to be generous, to ensure that people who are just individual unrepresented litigants come to court and do not pay their fees. The Chief Justice put a suggestion to me that with the types of individuals you are talking about with respect to Mr Prefumo, that it might be best to have discretion not to waive the fee so it that can be more costly for people in court who, at the court's discretion, are determined to be vexatious. I think he has a very good point. I have given my in-principle agreement. It is a small advance, but I think it will provide at least some disincentive to the

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types of people you are talking about—albeit in Mr Prefumo’s case probably no, but it may be of some assistance.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I thank the Attorney General for his interjection and urge him to look very seriously at that potential way to help resolve at least part of the problem. Hopefully, the Attorney General will be able to proceed with that fairly expeditiously. I thank him very much for his interest in the case and for the comments he has just made.

I return to the budget that is before the house tonight and the fact that in Western Australia we have so many wonderful opportunities. We have many good things, and much needs to be done to build on those and provide even more opportunities. A lot of good things are in this budget of nearly \$25 billion, and a lot of good things are happening in Western Australia. We have recurrent expenditure of nearly \$25 million and, on top of that, record expenditure on building infrastructure. Each year, almost every government, whether it be a Labor government or this government, sets a record for capital expenditure on major infrastructure. The issue I have real concern about is that this government seems to have some very wrong priorities. In trying to sell its budget and in trying to put the particular spin that it wants on it, the government often finds itself lacking in honesty, and this is apparent when we look at the budget papers. If a government is not honest with its books, we are in a really difficult situation. We will find that a range of problems arise, which will have to be dealt with and fixed by a later government; whereas if we have an honest set of books, and if the government puts into the accounts what it says it is going to, we will be able to manage those accounts much better. First, I will speak about the wrong priorities, and I will then come back to some of the spin that the government has put on the budget in time to sell it, which I believe amounts to being dishonest.

The major problem that I see with the budget is the huge hit that it gives families and pensioners with the increases in state government charges and taxes. This builds on two years of almost record increases in taxes and charges. People will find it more and more difficult to cope when we have another round of increases in this budget. The Premier has put a spin on the budget, saying it is a people’s budget. Did he mean that it was actually a budget to attack people, which is different from saying it is a people’s budget? When he uses the term “people’s budget”, the connotation is that there is something good in this budget for people. As I have said, with \$25 billion there must be a few good things, but the impact on many people will be as a result of the increased price of electricity, the increased price of water and all the other charges that the government has increased. They do not see this as a people’s budget; they see it as Colin Barnett’s budget, with his hand in their pocket taking their money.

Let me give a couple of clear examples. In the first two years of this government’s term, it increased electricity charges by 46 per cent; this budget adds another five per cent increase. If we calculate from the base for the average household, we find that, cumulatively, electricity prices have gone up by 57 per cent in three years—an increase of well over half the price of electricity before the Barnett government was elected. That is clearly a wrong priority. The Premier tries to shift the heat by saying that the increase is all to do with electricity systems, with disaggregation—things the last government did. But he does not tell people that the last government had put aside nearly \$800 million in its budget so that the increase in electricity prices could be cushioned. We said well before the election that electricity prices would have to go up but that we would look after people. We put nearly \$800 million in the budget so that the price of electricity could rise gradually. This Premier had different priorities; he wanted the \$800 million for other priorities; therefore, he has hit people with an increase in electricity charges of well over 50 per cent in three years.

We then come to water, and the situation is really not much better. In the first two years of this government’s term, water charges for residents increased by some 30 per cent. In the third year of this government’s term, the increase, if we look at the fine print, is another 13.9 per cent. Therefore, cumulatively, in the three budgets that the Barnett government has brought down, water prices have increased by 45 per cent. The government is concerned by this, but does it tell the truth? Not this Premier, not this Treasurer; they try to hide it. On the page in the budget papers that shows the representative household charges, water charges are collapsed so that water, sewerage and drainage come under one figure—8.5 per cent. Therefore, all the TV stations ran the story about an increase in water charges of 8.5 per cent. Journalists, busy on the day, did not go a page or two further and read that the increase in water charges was 13.9 per cent, not 8.5 per cent, bringing the cumulative price increase over the government’s three budgets to nearly 45 per cent or, in other words, an increase of nearly half in just three years.

The government pulled another little trick. In calculating the standard representative household, which is a measure of how much government charges are impacting on ordinary families, the price of water used to be based on a family using 300 kilolitres. The government said that people were using less water, so it reduced that

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base figure to 270 kilolitres; it shifted the base, which is reflected in the fine print of the budget. I think it was also alluded to, but not spelt out clearly, in the Treasurer's speech. When the government said that water charges had increased by 8.5 per cent, it really meant 13.9 per cent, and in fact it is more than that because, in setting up this comparative, representative household to be able to compare costs, the amount of water being charged for has shifted. According to the budget papers, in that standard, representative household, the increase in the collection of government charges is 4.6 per cent overall. If we take into account the impact of water being charged for from a lower base, that figure, on my calculation, should be 4.8 per cent, but let us accept the figure of 4.6 per cent. We find that in the three budgets that have been brought down by the Barnett Liberal government, the increases in household costs have averaged 7.5 per cent per annum. I repeat: government taxes and charges for that standard representative household have increased by about 7.5 per cent per annum, but in the last eight years of a Labor government, that figure went up by about half a per cent per annum. That is because Labor governments were very much attuned to keeping costs down for ordinary families, pensioners and people who are really struggling.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: This idea that this is a people's budget is not the truth when it comes to the direct impact on the living standards of ordinary people. This government cannot control petrol prices. It does little or nothing to control house prices and rents, which are very big issues. This government has hiked up the cost of basic charges like water and electricity, and the emergency services levy. This government has put an extra tax on rubbish so that it can collect money from ordinary families to meet its priorities. Its priorities are big projects, which might be well and good, but they do not help ordinary families to make ends meet and to have a decent life. The government really makes it tough for people when it has its hand in their pockets, trying to take as much off them as it can. As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, that money and those other payments go back to government so that the government has the money for its priorities. Families and ordinary people are not the priority of this government. This government has been less than honest when the Premier tries to sell this as a people's budget.

I will take a statement from the Treasurer's budget speech that highlights how dishonest the government is with this budget. The Treasurer states —

These new measures I am announcing today build on the Government's track record of disciplined financial management.

The Treasurer is claiming "disciplined financial management". Does he provide any evidence of that? I do not think so. Let us go to the budget papers and look at what evidence there is for that. Let us look at the profligate expenditure by this government. I will use as the base 30 June 2008, which was the last year of the Labor government. The election was called about two months after that date and the Barnett government came in, so it had most of that year to get the accounts into whatever order it decided would be its priority. All the Barnett government did was to increase expenditure. In the first year of the Barnett government, 2008–09, there was 13.5 per cent growth in government recurrent expenditure. After two years, cumulatively, the growth in expenditure was up to 26 per cent. In just two years the recurrent expenditure of this government grew by 26 per cent, and the Treasurer claims that is "disciplined financial management". Most people would say that was splashing money around, not disciplined financial management.

[Quorum formed.]

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I was making the point that the Treasurer's claim to disciplined financial management does not fit with the facts. As I was indicating, in the first two years of this government the growth in expenditure, cumulatively, was 26 per cent. If we go to 30 June this year, the government anticipates that expenditure over that three years will have grown by 36.5 per cent, which is an increase of well over one-third. If this budget proves true, by 30 June next year, in four years expenditure will have grown by 47.2 per cent, yet this Treasurer claims disciplined financial management. There is no management in throwing money at everything! A lot of good things are happening, but that is increasing our debt. We have had reasonable growth in revenue through that period; we have not had the situation in which over those two to three years revenue has dropped off. Revenue grew by 13.9 per cent in two years cumulatively, and by 30 June this year, over those three years revenue will have grown by nearly 23 per cent. There is good revenue growth; however, when we compare that with expenditure growth over three years of 36.5 per cent, clearly this government is spending more than we can afford. That is reflected in what has happened with debt, because as of 30 June 2008 debt was \$3.6 billion. After the first year of the Barnett government that had almost doubled. After two years it was up to 2.7 times the starting debt at nearly \$10 billion; and on 30 June this year, the government predicts that, at \$13.4 billion, it will

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be nearly four times the debt that existed in the last year of the Labor government. If the government sticks to its projections in this budget, over four years debt will have gone up nearly fivefold from what Labor left in its last full year in government. That huge growth in debt is driven by lack of expenditure control. There are issues about revenue, but they are not the major issues because revenue has been growing. The major issue is the total lack of control over expenditure by the government, yet the Treasurer says he has disciplined financial management.

Let us look at each individual budget to find whether the government can stick to the budget it brings down in May each year. The 2008–09 budget was brought down by Labor, but for most of that year the Barnett Liberal–National government was in power. The predicted budget estimate for growth for 2008–09 was 7.7 per cent. We ended with growth in that year of 13.5 per cent, which is three-quarters again on top. If members go to the first full budget of the Barnett government in 2009–10, they will see that the prediction was for expenditure growth of 6.6 per cent. The actual expenditure growth by the end of the year was 10.9 per cent. That is 65 per cent higher than the Barnett government had predicted. This government, which talks about disciplined financial management, brings down its own budget predicting growth in expenditure of 6.6 per cent, yet its expenditure growth was 10.9 per cent. That is huge growth. There is a lack of control and no financial discipline, yet we have a Treasurer who claims to have disciplined financial management.

Let us look at the current year, 2010–11, in which the government predicted expenditure growth of 3.9 per cent—that is, if the budget papers that are before us are accurate. The budget was only signed off for June, which is next month, and the government is now saying that expenditure growth is not going to 3.9 per cent, but will be 8.4 per cent. That is more than double the expenditure growth predicted in this budget. To me, and to most people, there is no financial management in that and there is certainly no disciplined financial management. This government does not present an honest and accurate set of books that it has tried to stick to to make sure that it delivers on what it is promising. We see all these promises with a bit of money in the budget, for example, to do some planning for the stadium and to do something here and there, but the government does not actually put the money in the budget. Therefore, we have departments running around without a clear guideline for the expenditure that has been allocated to them and the constraints they should be working under. If ministers and the government do not constrain themselves within the budget they bring down, why would the different agencies and departments want to be disciplined and stick to the budget? We will not get disciplined financial management in the agencies and departments if we do not have a government which itself exercises financial management. The point is that while the opposition has real concerns about the government’s priorities and the huge impact it has had on ordinary families, the government’s attempt to sell the budget is full of so much spin that it is not honest.

The government is saying things that are simply not true. The chickens will come home to roost when we have continuing growth in expenditure such as this and debt blowing out. As the Leader of the Opposition was saying today, the next government will have very little room to move because it will have to handle a very large debt and there will still be huge demand for a range of services and facilities. Its whole emphasis will be paying off debt. This is not fiction. When the Labor government was elected in 2001, one of the first things we found out was the bad news from Treasury because Colin Barnett, a senior minister in the Court government, and other members in the Court government had made commitments to spending a whole lot of money that was not in the books. Hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of liabilities and commitments were made that did not show up in the government’s accounts. We not only had to find the funding for the promises we had made—we delivered on those—but we also had to patch up the books because of all this expenditure by the last government that it had not taken into account. We should remember that it had five budget deficits in its eight years in government whereas the eight budgets brought down by Labor were all clearly in surplus because we had disciplined financial management, something that this government may talk about but when we look at the facts, it certainly does not have any idea how to deliver it.

There is grave concern that while this budget has many good things in it, this government’s management is very, very poor and its priorities are quite wrong. We really need a government that will give greater certainty to people by reducing the cost burden on them and better managing our debt so that we do not leave a heritage to our children and grandchildren that will take decades to pay off.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [7.41 pm]: I am pleased to contribute to this debate tonight and express the view that this is not a family friendly budget or a budget that is friendly for couples or singles. Indeed, it is a budget that represents a missed opportunity. When we should be looking towards our state budgets as a means of driving us on a journey of social progress, we find that this budget is driving many people in our community to a circumstance of greater need. Others have outlined the nature of the debt that is building up in our state, that is,

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\$22 billion worth of debt. Potentially, we are looking at each Western Australian having \$10 000 assigned to their names and interest of \$2 billion to pay. There are all sorts of fragilities around the budget, especially in relation to the global economy. If there was a slowing of the Chinese economy and fragility brought on by sovereign debt issues in the European Union, there could be some serious problems for the Chinese economy that would then have a knock-on effect in our economy. Western Australians could face a very hard time servicing such a huge debt.

The centrepiece to this budget is an increase in funding to the not-for-profit sector—non-government organisations providing social services to our community. While that appears attractive at first glance, the reality is that this sector will probably be called upon to deliver more and more services, so we are not really meeting that sector's needs at all; we are barely helping it deal with increasing demand. In fact, the reality is that Fair Work Australia said that we have to pay this sector a whole lot more because of the 30 per cent wage gap that exists between those who work in the NGO sector and those who work in the government sector doing exactly the same work. As a rule of thumb, there is a 30 per cent wage difference. Fair Work Australia said that we had to provide around \$223 million per year to close that gap. That is of grave concern when we hear that the NGO sector has somehow been a major beneficiary of this budget.

The Leader of the Opposition also said that this budget will eat into our future. The impact of the royalty revenue may not hit us this year but it will hit us in years to come. Another example of the fragility of this budget is the fact that exchange rates are calculated in such a way that if there was a 1c change in the rate of the Australian dollar, it would immediately have a \$60 million impact on the budget. That is the broad framework of this budget.

I want to turn to issues that relate specifically to the Gosnells electorate and the sorts of things that should be looked after by a state budget, particularly the high schools in my electorate. Thornlie Senior High School is about to celebrate its fortieth anniversary this year. It has provided 40 years of excellent service to the community. When I was shown around the school by the school council and the parents and citizens association, I was shown a school with built infrastructure that has certainly seen better days. The buildings of the school are looking a bit tired and shabby. They are not standing up to the rainfall events of last week. Admittedly, it was a good downpour, if only it was a promising start to a wet winter. I will turn to the issue of water later in this speech.

As a consequence of the rain that we had last week, Thornlie Senior High School experienced flooding all over the place. Walkways had suspended ceilings washed out and electrical points were exposed and wet, posing a risk and making life unpleasant for staff and students. There is a dampness about the school. The brickwork around the school is showing signs of fretting away. Some of the bricks that were used in the original construction 40 years ago were not really up to scratch. There were problems with the composition of the bricks. That has now caused the bricks to rot. There is an urgent need for an extensive redevelopment program at the school. That is visible to anyone who walks around that school. There is a lack of seating for students at the school during recess times. The student services area has been converted from a locker area. There is a dampness about that environment. It is not that pleasant for the students or the staff who provide those services to be in that situation. A building condition assessment report shows that well over \$1 million worth of works are urgently needed at Thornlie Senior High School. The staff, parents and students have been stoical about making do with what is there. I think the time has come for the Minister for Education to recognise that after 40 years of service, a school such as Thornlie Senior High School really does need some major refurbishment and good investment to ensure that it is brought up to the standard we expect, a standard that is in keeping with the quality of teaching that goes on there and in keeping with the aspirations of its students. I enjoy attending the graduation ceremonies at the school. Over 130 students graduated last year. They are proud of their school but they need to have the right sort of facilities that will help them achieve the learning outcomes that they desire.

While I am on the subject of education and the implications of this budget on education, I would like to draw the house's attention to the voluntary contribution scheme for students in years 8, 9 and 10. The Labor government had a subsidy that facilitated the collection of the contribution. The cancelling of that subsidy has meant that the success of the voluntary contribution at Thornlie Senior High School is down to 32 per cent. That was a serious mistake. It is not the right way to go about ensuring that contributions are made for the different services required.

Broadly speaking, it is clear from the budget that the government is going to allow our schools to become run-down and will not maintain them properly. The state government is failing in that duty. It is clear that there is a capital budget downturn of some 25.8 per cent for maintenance works throughout the education system. That is extremely disappointing. However, there is a double blow for high schools. Principals of schools that are in

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urgent need of maintenance also face the possibility that year 7 students may be coming into their high schools, and they are going to have to find classroom space for them. There are all sorts of issues around that, and as recently as earlier today, the Minister for Education was unable to clarify whether year 7 students would be moving into high schools. From what I have seen at Thornlie Senior High School, there would definitely be problems finding suitable classroom space there for year 7 students. At the other senior high school in my electorate, Southern River College, there would perhaps be enough space to accommodate year 7 students, but it is worrying to have one senior high school that is clearly struggling for space and at the same time struggling to provide the quality of accommodation we should be able to expect in our high schools in Western Australia. All this is in the context of an asset investment program of some \$850 million, which is 11 per cent of our state budget, yet it is not doing the job for schools such as Thornlie Senior High School. I call on the government to reassess its priorities in asset investment.

Another issue of concern to the constituents of the Gosnells electorate is traffic congestion. People are constantly facing difficulties going to work in the mornings and coming home in the evenings. I have an email from Emily Stockden, who lives in my electorate in the suburb of Thornlie. She points out how difficult it is to get onto Spencer Road in the mornings because the traffic is nose to tail all along Spencer Road to the traffic lights at Yale Road. That sounds like a relatively ordinary matter, but it is a very irritating thing for people in my electorate to have to deal with each day. They face the prospect of that situation getting worse, but if the government were to do the right thing by investing in public transport and in roundabouts and traffic lights, there would be more flow in our traffic. However, at the moment that is simply not happening.

I have received a number of other messages from people in the electorate who have raised concerns about the transport situation and the general situation with our roads. Louise Duck of Langford raised the matter of bottleneck problems getting in and out of Canning Vale during peak hour; that needs urgent attention. She also complained about glass littering the cycle paths and roads, making cycling unpleasant, and she called for the introduction of a container deposit scheme. That was in fact a priority of the previous government, but it seems that this government has prioritised all sorts of other issues and no effort whatsoever has been made to deliver a container deposit scheme. Mrs Jenny Fitzclarence from Thornlie said that it was vital to have signalisation at the roundabout of Yale Road, Nicholson Road and Garden Street, and that we need a bridge over the freight railway line at Nicholson Road. She also said that we need to extend the Thornlie spur line, and have 40-kilometre-an-hour flashing lights to slow down traffic around all our schools. I know that we urgently need those lights around Yale Primary School and Huntingdale Primary School. Some schools have acquired such lights, but those are two schools in particular that need them quite urgently. Mrs Fitzclarence summarised very well some of the transport priorities for the electorate of Gosnells. In particular, the government really needs to help us with the roundabout mentioned by Mrs Fitzclarence, because the traffic snarls occurring around there are very taxing upon people's commuting times. The recurrent theme of the extension of the Thornlie spur line is an issue that I will come back to; the member for Southern River has also spoken about that issue on a number of other occasions in this place.

Melissa West of Thornlie also called for the installation of 40-kilometre-an-hour flashing lights outside various schools. We were fortunate enough to have these lights placed outside Gosnells Primary School and Wirrabirra Primary School, and they have improved safety enormously around those two schools. However, Yale Primary School and Huntingdale Primary School still desperately need such lights in the very near future. Nelly Maarssen of Debenham Street in Thornlie calls for a railway station at Nicholson Road to relieve the parking problems at Thornlie train station. I know that the Thornlie train station car park is usually full by 7.00 am, and building a train station at Nicholson Road would alleviate that problem somewhat. Robert Parsons of Gosnells said that we need more police in Gosnells and around the train stations; I will return to the issue of policing as I move on. Any number of my constituents have called for roundabouts, an extension to the spur line and better safety around schools. These are the constant themes among the requests that I get, both from the people I talk to around the electorate and from people who pass through the electorate.

I have mentioned on numerous occasions the need for an extension of the Thornlie spur line. I know that the Mayor of Gosnells, Olwen Searle, has been calling for that extension for many years. Indeed, the City of Gosnells commissioned a study into the financial viability of extending the line to Nicholson Road, and the study quite categorically found that there was merit in the project going ahead. The Public Transport Authority conducted its own study and found that there were additional costs beyond those anticipated by the study commissioned by the City of Gosnells. We have two reports saying different things; if that is the case, it is really incumbent on the government to commission a further study. We are tired of hearing the excuse that the transport master plan has been delayed. It was promised back in 2009; I recently posed a question on notice to the Minister for Transport about the transport master plan and was advised that there were still further delays

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involved in releasing the document. That is just not acceptable; we must have that document available for public comment so that we can see what the government's plans are for public transport development in Western Australia, especially in the Perth area.

When we talk about transport, we are also talking about our train stations and security, and how safe people feel around train stations. I spoke this evening to a constituent of mine, Mr Barry Bousfield, who is very concerned that we are not making the most of the Gosnells town centre. This is an issue that I have touched upon before; there are derelict buildings on Lissiman Street, right next to the train station, but the landholder does not want to develop them and does not seem to have the entrepreneurial flair required to make the most of them. They offer so much potential, but unfortunately the landholder wants to just sit on the properties; they are not being let, they are just degrading. We need some sort of mechanism in the planning process that will allow for either compulsory acquisition or for the landholder to be pushed to do some form of development.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: I share those views expressed by Mr Bousfield. The shocking state of the buildings in Lissiman Street makes people in the Gosnells area feel that their area is being let down. We deserve better than those sorts of shabby, degraded buildings in the town centre. An area of shabby buildings can lead to crime because they can harbour all sorts of undesirable people. That is exactly what has happened in the past. The Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Minister Collier, said on 6 April to Paul Murray on 6PR that the Nyoongar Patrol would be re-established in Gosnells. He said that he would look at the Nyoongar Patrol being funded through the state budget. I have not seen in the budget papers whether that is the case, so I am concerned that it has been forgotten about, but I hope that we have received funding for the Nyoongar Patrol to be extended to Gosnells. If so, everyone will be greatly appreciative. People also want to see transit officers working at train stations and on trains during the day, and not just after 2.45 pm, which I gather is the situation currently. We need them during the day because, unfortunately, undesirable elements realise that transit officers start at 2.45 pm and they take advantage of the situation. This leads to people's concerns about the lack of security on our trains.

The latest instalment of an ongoing saga—this is apparent in this state budget—is the Barnett government's approach to feed-in tariffs. The Barnett government was elected on the basis that it would provide a 60c per kilowatt hour gross feed-in tariff. Then we were told that it would be only a net feed-in tariff of 40c per kilowatt hour. Now we find that has been wound back to a net feed-in tariff of 20c per kilowatt hour. Even that has an expiry date. Presently, we are generating some 70 megawatts from photovoltaic panels on suburban homes. When that amount hits 150 megawatts, it will be all over; there will be no more feed-in tariff. That will be a terrible situation, and will send the wrong message to people. If there is a case for a more cost-effective way of developing a renewable energy system, let us hear that argument. If it is a matter of upgrading the network or the wires so they can absorb the greater amounts of electricity that are coming through in this diffuse generation system, let us look at that problem. But it is not good enough to say that a cap of 150 megawatts is the lot; that is all we will have in Perth from photovoltaic power. It is an insult to those people who are not quite in a position to invest in a photovoltaic system at the moment but are contemplating doing so in the next few years, because they may well miss out. I am worried also that some people will try to rush their system through before 1 July this year so that they will still be eligible for the 40c per kilowatt hour tariff. They may not be able to do their sums properly or get the ideal contractor to do the works. All sorts of risks are involved in forcing people to rush. The same could apply when people realise that the 150-megawatt ceiling is approaching. The worst of this is that we are sending a terrible message that in Perth there is a cap of 150 megawatts on photovoltaic power generation. That is a pathetic total to cap photovoltaic power generation at and it is extremely disappointing.

Turning from electricity to water—those fundamentals we need—I think we all have cause for concern here. The winter is not looking as though it will be the really wet winter we desperately need. In fact, all the predictions are that we will probably have a drier than average winter, which, of course, means the dams will not be replenished and the replenishment of the Gngangara and Jandakot mounds will be below what we really need to increase the groundwater levels. In the division in the state budget on water, there is an emphasis on engineering solutions to our water supply problem, but I can see nothing for water conservation. There is no expansion of the Waterwise program. Some excellent people in the Water Corporation work on water conservation, and I acknowledge the good work they do, but we have to give them a reasonable budget to work with because there are huge savings measurable in gegalitres that are achievable through water conservation initiatives. If we do not fund those programs properly, we cannot achieve the savings we need. Instead, we are looking at different engineering options. We are doing that timidly; nonetheless, some are apparent. I urge the government to reconsider that approach and look at providing significant funding towards water conservation initiatives. For example, if we

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were to give people just a few hundred dollars to convert a portion of their lawn to native plants, that could save many gegalitres. Those sorts of things should be done urgently. I note that our urban waterways renewal program has received some funding, but it will run out almost immediately after this financial year.

In the brief time left to me I want to quickly look at the environment division of the state budget and touch on one of the Barnett government's big-ticket environment items; that is, of course, the Kimberley science and conservation strategy. I was intrigued to see that about, I think, \$4 million a year has been made available for this. Of that amount, the significant amount of some \$3 million will go to the Geological Survey of Western Australia in the Minister for Mines and Petroleum's portfolio. We are trying to have things a bit both ways here. We are saying, "Yes, we are about conservation in the Kimberley, but we want to find out the mineral wealth of the Kimberley." I fear that that wealth will be the ultimate determinant for the conservation initiatives in the Kimberley. It seems that the Barnett government wants to appeal to those who want to extract petroleum and mineral resources from the ground, and at the same time it is trying to appeal to those interested in conservation by saying that some significant conservation strategy work is going on in the Kimberley. The reality is that the Kimberley science and conservation strategy will be driven by people who are interested in extracting mineral wealth from the Kimberley. That can be verified; members can check it by looking at page 175 of budget paper No 2, volume 1. It is quite clear that a significant amount of funding will go to the mines and petroleum area for the exploration work that will be conducted by the Geological Survey division of the Department of Mines and Petroleum. The government may be able to say to people that there will be some marine conservation work and I certainly hope that is true. However, the test will be in the size of not the actual declared park, but the sanctuary zones. That will be the real test and that is when we will know what is going on. I was very concerned to read Hon Norman Moore's comments about the Kimberley science and conservation strategy when he said the Department of Mines and Petroleum's \$3 million for Geological Survey of Western Australia work would be used to make final land use decisions. I think those comments tell us what is likely to be in store for the Kimberley region. I think many people will be disappointed when that comes about and people realise the actual circumstances.

I was hoping that we would be seeing a state budget that would drive progress in Western Australia, but, unfortunately, I fear that this budget is one that drives the state of need in Western Australia, particularly among those who are on lower incomes, to a situation in which people may need greater assistance from non-government organisations that work in the social services area. I fear that we will see non-government organisations' services called upon much more and we will see a great more people struggle in our community.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.M. Francis): Member for Mount Lawley, I remind you that the floor of the chamber is not a great big rubbish bin.

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [8.11 pm]: I will start my budget response by focusing directly on my electorate and, in particular, the nine kilometres of the Swan River that make up the south eastern boundary of my electorate. I have spoken before about how near and dear this topic is to the hearts of my constituents. Residents in my electorate use the Swan River for recreational, social and cultural purposes. I am sure that many of us here have had occasion to sail, fish, canoe, row, kayak, waterski, jetski, windsurf, kitesurf, swim or any one of a number of things on our river. In addition to these sporting and recreational activities, the thing that I enjoy most about the Maylands electorate is that people take advantage of the foreshore, which does not cost them a lot of money. These days, with the cost-of-living increases we have seen driven out of this government, there are precious few things people can do at a fairly low cost. The people of Maylands love walking and riding bicycles along the riverbank and picnicking on the foreshore, which are activities that can be done at a low cost. However, if members speak to anyone who is a committed river user, the general consensus is that there is now great congestion on the river and conflict between the river users. People standing on the riverbank can sometimes even hear and see some of the disputes that occur. The growth and activity on and around our river has produced quite a few consequences, some of which are quite damaging. These consequences include increased foreshore erosion, increased destruction of the riverbank vegetation, reduced water quality, an increased threat of chemical or fuel spillages, and increased destruction of aquatic fauna. The number of aquatic species and the prevalence of species that inhabit our river have declined over the years. Increased recreational boat use is also contributing to some pretty grave safety issues. I am sure many of the members present read about the two serious accidents on the Swan River last December. Unfortunately, both accidents involved jetski riders.

Given the seriousness of these issues, I am pleased to congratulate the government for undertaking a comprehensive review of aquatic activities on both the Swan River and the Canning River. The review that the government is undertaking is called the aquatic use management framework study. A whole series of different categories of interests have come out as a result of this review. The interest that I would like to touch on first is

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the use of the channel—that is, the deep, central part of the river. A number of issues have come up about the channel. A very important issue is that the actual size and layout of the channel in our river is not well defined, which creates situations in which different types of recreational boat users come into close proximity with each other and sometimes high speed boat users end up being a bit too enthusiastic and travelling too close to the shoreline or closer than is safe. I am advised that in my electorate there are a few areas where the channel could be more clearly marked. I understand that the installation of additional navigation aids will be considered as part of this review. That is a good thing and I certainly support that approach.

There are varying speed limits inside the channel. I do not know how confusing that is for boat owners, but it is extraordinarily confusing for me to work out what speed boats are allowed to travel in different sections of the river. I was out there a couple of weeks ago with one of my constituents to have a firsthand look at what happens. The speed limit changes several times between Wyndham Bridge and the upstream end of the Belmont ski area. Complicating the river traffic flow is the fact that the Maylands boat ramp is located just upstream of one end of the ski area. Currently, between sunrise and sunset from Mondays to Saturdays boats travelling between the bridge and the upstream end of the ski area are allowed to do open speed, but then they must change to five knots. I hope members know this before they go boating: on Sundays, at least between 1 October and 30 April between 10.00 am and 8.00 pm the speed limit is eight knots from the Wyndham Bridge to the downstream end of the ski area and then open speed to the upstream end where, as I said earlier, the speed limit drops to five knots. Are members confused yet? It gets better. The eight knots speed limit starting at the bridge on Sundays is to accommodate one of my favourite clubs, the Maylands Yacht Club. The Maylands Yacht Club is a great club and it conducts its training and racing during that seven-month period. Those boat speeds have been specifically amended to cater for the yacht club, particularly its learner classes. There is currently no requirement for boat users to travel inside the channel. Introducing this kind of requirement may have merit, but we would have to balance it against the need for recreational boats to get onto the riverbank to fish or beach their boats.

Members can imagine that the issue of speed limits and how they should be applied to the river is a fairly hot topic. The suggestion was made through the aquatic use study that an open speed limit should be put on the channel. Personally, I think that is unrealistic, because 60 knots in a boat is the equivalent of a car travelling at 110 kilometres an hour. I do not think that is a particularly sustainable way of changing the boat speeds on the Swan River. A more moderate view is that 20 to 30 knots might be a safer limit if, and only if, certain conditions are in place. These conditions are that the boats would have to be travelling in a clearly defined area of the channel, probably in a straight section of the river where there is absolutely no congestion. Given that those ideal conditions are pretty unlikely, it is not surprising that the suggestion was also made to set a limit of 15 knots inside the channel. This speed limit would not apply to the upper reaches of the river where the speed limit drops again to five knots.

Speed on our river is a very topical issue. I turn to the matter of speed outside the channel. The speed limit outside that deep channel is, in general, about eight knots. However, that could also be a problem, because, as we found out from two recently released Swan River Trust reports, eight knots is called the hump speed for many boats because it is the speed at which boats generate waves capable of carrying tremendous amounts of energy, which causes foreshore erosion. It is for this reason that the government last year introduced a five-knot maximum speed limit starting at the upstream end of the Belmont ski area. I am very, very grateful for that. The speed limit was one of the top issues raised at my Swan River community forum last year and I am very pleased that the Minister for Environment of the day did not delay, as she had threatened to do, and moved ahead with that. I suppose one of the most contentious areas is the Belmont ski area. It is not actually in my electorate, so I will not spend a lot of time on it.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Belmont?

Ms L.L. BAKER: Belmont ski area.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: That is all right; it is Belmont!

Ms L.L. BAKER: The Belmont ski area is in the Leader of the Opposition's electorate, but it is on the river. It is hard to separate one part of the river from the rest of the river, so I will mention it. The people who attended the aquatic use framework study focus groups said that the Belmont ski area is the number one safety hot spot on the Swan and Canning river system. I understand that the majority of more than half the 524 infringements handed out in the Maylands–Belmont section of the river were for speeding offences related to the ski area. The general consensus, therefore, is that there are serious problems in this area—namely, congestion, conflict between different users, the narrowness of the river at that section and damage occurring to the riverbank as a result of powerful boat waves. This is an area that is bound to be topical and fairly hotly contested.

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One constituent of mine, Dave Gervas, has a small 5.6-metre yacht that he launches twice a week, year round, without fail, from the Maylands boat ramp. He has sent me some comments about the Belmont ski area and copied to me an email he sent to the Department of Transport. According to my notes, a short piece from Mr Gervas's email reads —

Over the last 10 years this ski area has become increasingly busy with boats in action every day of the summer and is still busy well into autumn ...

Mr Gervas said that this section of the river is simply too narrow to accommodate waterskiing and other recreational and commercial boat users who are forced to travel through there. According to my notes, he goes on —

The width of the river at this zone varies between 180 and 220 metres which is quite narrow for a ski area with recreational and commercial river traffic having no option but to negotiate a passage directly through all the action.

He makes the point that it is too narrow, and it also actually goes against the rules of safe water; waterskiing is meant to be done within 90 metres of the shore. According to my notes, he goes on in his email —

Your own water skiing rules specifically exclude trick skiing within 90 metres of the shore.

He therefore raises the issue —

How does this work when the river is only 180 metres wide and there is traffic in both directions which must stay 45 metres clear of each other?

From the issues raised by Mr Gervas, it appears that if the Belmont ski area were to close, fewer power boat owners would travel upstream past Windan Bridge. We can well understand why some constituents who went to the focus groups raised this as an issue. It is very topical, as I said, and it will probably take a fair bit of working through. It is estimated that if the five-knot speed limit were introduced at Windan Bridge, it would add just five minutes more to the travel time to get to a ski area. I intend to ask my constituents what they think of that proposal for a five-knot speed limit to start at Windan Bridge.

I want to talk about another fairly topical aspect of the Swan River in my electorate—that is, the use of jet skis. This issue carries the same kind of intonation that I used when I stood in this place and talked about trail bikes, because jet skis on the river seem to provide about the same level of angst in the community. Many river users call jet skiers the “hoons of the river”. Although I acknowledge that probably a reckless minority of jet ski users are noisy and pesky and go outside the gazetted areas, some are in fact dangerous law-breakers and have caused accidents on the river, as I cited earlier. There is a risk in the use of a jet ski. One of the complaints from river users and river lovers in my electorate is that jet skiers frequently snub their nose at the rule that says they are allowed to freestyle only in gazetted areas. I invite the Minister for Transport to spend an hour or so on any weekday or weekend day on the foreshore in my electorate.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: He is the member for Vasse, member!

Ms L.L. BAKER: He would not come for a ride on the train with me, so I am sure he will not come and sit on the water with me.

Mr M.P. Whitely: I'll come with you; okay?

Ms L.L. BAKER: Okay.

However, the Minister for Transport would most likely see and hear a jet skier hooning dangerously up the river. Jet skiers, like all boat users, must have a recreational skipper's ticket. As one jet ski shop owner said, people do not require a recreational skipper's ticket to purchase a jet ski. In some states there are special licences for jet skiers—a move that the Department of Transport, I understand, is currently looking into. I commend the minister and his department for looking at this kind of action.

I would be very interested to hear what the Minister for Environment thinks of jet skiers, too, because it seems to me that they are not very compatible with the waterbirds that live and, hopefully, breed on the river. The speed and erratic nature of jet skis mean that they are anathema to waterbirds, particularly large birds such as pelicans and swans, which require a very large take-off area. The shallow draft of jet skis means that they are able to travel very close to the riverbank, and indeed they do, which is where the birds feed.

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Lastly, on the subject of the Swan River, there are some ecological no-go areas from which any sort of power boat should be excluded. Berringa wetland reserve, located upstream of Bardon Park, is certainly one of them. I believe the area contains up to 56 bird species. Surely they should not have to dodge jet skis!

Mr D.A. Templeman: In your experience on the Swan and Canning, have you seen any of those aerofoil boats at all?

Ms L.L. BAKER: Not to my knowledge; not yet.

The issue I would like to finish on regarding the Swan River is nutrient seepage through the main drains. The run-off is causing dreadful nutrient pollution in the Swan River. I understand that either later this week or next week the Minister for Environment will meet with Mayor Terry Kenyon from the City of Bayswater to announce the allocation of some money that he has found in the budget to be directed towards nutrient stripping in the Bayswater and Ellenbrook main drains. There is \$500 000 in the 2011–12 budget for nutrient intervention systems at Bayswater and Ellenbrook. I am sure we will look forward to that; I certainly know that the City of Bayswater will. In the out years—although the Premier does not think they matter that much—there are allocations of \$900 000, \$1.2 million and \$600 000. I have no idea how those allocations will be balanced across the Bayswater and Ellenbrook main drains. However, there is an urgent need for direct funding to help the City of Bayswater manage an inherited problem with leaching from those drains. In conclusion on the subject of nutrient leaching, we must balance the investment that the government has made in this budget with the fact that the former Minister for Environment saved an awful lot of money by wiping out the waste recycling levy a couple of years ago. Millions of dollars could have been directed to this problem had they not been directed into funding offices in the department.

Finally, it is urgent that the government funds the aquatic use study implementation and that the study does not just sit on a shelf with nothing happening. It is urgent that money comes in for that, if not in the state budget this year, in the out years. I must admit that I have not been able to find anything in the budget that is specifically directed at the implementation of the aquatic use study framework recommendations, but I hope to see it in there. It is an essential issue and one that attracts very keen interest from residents in my electorate.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms L.L. BAKER: I want to refer to several other aspects of the cost of living that stem directly from this budget and impact on ordinary Western Australians. Several weeks ago the issue of school maintenance was brought to my attention. Schools in my electorate contacted me to talk about the poor state of affairs they found themselves in. There is \$1.6 million worth of maintenance work required in my seven government schools. One school, John Forrest Secondary College, needs \$1 million in maintenance work. Hillcrest Primary School needs \$342 000 worth of maintenance work.

I want to read members an account of an incident that happened at Hillcrest last week. I received an email to notify me of a breach of security. It states:

Last Thursday an incident occurred with two louts/hoons entering the school grounds terrorising students, staff by riding bikes on the school verandas, into the covered assembly area in the bituminised quadrangle shouting obscenities at the staff and head cleaner.

When challenged the youths rode at the teacher attempting to intimidate her all the time shouting profanities and obscenities.

The teacher took photos and the lout attempted to smash the camera.

The incident has been reported to the local police and school security was contacted but did not attend.

The same louts then went on to John Forrest Secondary College and repeated their actions.

I am raising this because Hillcrest has for some time approached the department to try to get a fence around the school, because these kind of security incidents are happening more frequently. Last year, Hillcrest students witnessed vagrants and intruders and drunken people coming through the school grounds during school time. Truanting students from other high schools cut through or hide on the grounds. New bikes were stolen from the bike racks. Over the year there were numerous incidents of breaking and entering into classrooms and the computer laboratory; innumerable instances of vandalism; and needles and bottles and cans left from underage drinking on the weekend. Cleaners have found faeces and urine in the stairwells. Cleaners have found bongs and drug utensils, spray cans and the like used for sniffing. There have been many upgrades of security, including security screens on nearly all the buildings at the school, at the school's own expense.

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The school has requested that the department provide it with a record of all the money that is being spent and the requests that have been made for repairs in an attempt to figure out what an incredible waste of investment all the screens and repairs have been when there is no fence around the school to protect the school or students.

I want to touch on a couple of other issues in this budget. The Premier speaks about the \$600 million that is going into non-government organisations, but I fail to see that there will be any new services at all in my electorate out of this funding. The \$600 million is not going to go very far if the wage case comes up with a figure of \$900 million for required investment over the same period. Having worked in the community sector, I am well aware that agencies spend 80 per cent of their budgets on staffing, so 80 per cent of the increase needs to go straight into keeping the staff that they currently have in place, who for 10 or 15 years have been paid 30 per cent less than everyone else in similar jobs. That does not leave an awful lot of money for a new service. It certainly is not enough money to hire premises to set up a new service in my electorate. There is no way that could be afforded with what would be left of the 15 per cent or the eight per cent that the government has given in the first year.

The Shopfront, a small charity in my Maylands precinct, constantly has to find funding to help homeless people, help families that cannot pay their electricity bills, which are being thrown out of their private rental accommodation and cannot find public housing, and people who are really struggling. An increasing number—up to 55 per cent—of people are being turned away from emergency relief. It simply is not going to be possible to have the services in this funding. There is a great need for the Premier to not back away from his commitment to try to make some sort of effort to balance what he has done to the families of Western Australia with this appalling increase in utility costs. The cost of living is so extraordinary that in my office—and I am sure it is similar in all other members' offices—every day we are trying to cope with helping people who simply have nowhere to go, nowhere left to turn.

Over the last few weeks I have mentioned the issue of car parking and the lack of train carriages on the Midland railway line. That is in *Hansard* as recently as last week, so I will not be spending a great deal of time on it. I am sure my position on this is very well known now. We need at least 300 to 500 car parking bays. The minister has claimed that up to 700 are available in this budget to be shared between three railway lines. That is certainly not going to meet the needs of my constituents. It is certainly not going to meet the needs of everybody who catches the train from Midland to Perth. It will take two or three years for the rolling stock to become available. We have heard the minister say that on record. I have asked the minister to try to get on the train and see what it is like trying to park a car and catch a train into Perth some day. I have been met with a stony silence. I really do not think the minister wants to try to squash onto a train.

I have a couple of final points to make in the five minutes that I have left. The first is the lack of any visible commitment by this government for yet the third consecutive year to do anything about the problem of illegal trail bike riding in this state. I feel sorry for the recreational trail bike users, for the associations and for the children and families who desperately want somewhere to ride their bikes. I feel even sorer for the people who have to live in areas where the illegal use of trail bikes is the norm. It is appalling. I do not know why the government cannot see that it is a relatively minor investment and one that has huge community support. Most of that support seems to be in this house, and yet the government still cannot be bothered to stump up the dollars to get this strategy underway. Is the government stupid? The strategy is a winner. What is the government doing? Absolutely nothing.

The final comment that I want to make is on a subject which is near and dear to my heart and other members' hearts as well. I wish to talk about the animal welfare unit, which until this budget was housed in the Department of Local Government and Regional Development. I am extremely pleased to report that this budget appears to have funded the six full-time positions that that unit requires to do its job. The details of how it will work and how it will fit within the Department of Agriculture and Food are still a mystery to me. They are of great concern to the animal welfare lobby across not just Western Australia but Australia. I remind members in this house that this unit has been moved to the Department of Agriculture and Food. I just pulled off the website an article from *The Sunday Times* to demonstrate why the community is very concerned about the new location for the animal welfare unit. The article is entitled "Dead Sheep 'a cover-up'". It documents the story of 62 sheep in a government scientific trial run by the department of agriculture that were left to die. The article states —

The department has refused to reveal any details about the deaths, but sources say the sheep most likely ... eaten alive by maggots.

The deaths were investigated by the Department of Local Government's animal welfare branch. The article continues —

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But in a leaked Department of Agriculture report the deaths are blamed on a lack of due diligence by management —

We are talking about the management of the Department of Agriculture and Food here —

which is also accused of breaching the Animal Welfare Act and “misleading” the agency’s Animal Ethics Committee, which is meant to oversee trials.

The report by animal research program manager Greg Sawyer to then acting director-general ... stated: “While a significant reform process has been implemented since this event happened, it is still, in itself, a very serious incident likely to call into question the department’s competence.”

The government has put the animal welfare unit, which is integral to the protection of animals in this state, into the Department of Agriculture and Food, which was under investigation for neglect and cruelty. Government members might ask themselves why the animal welfare lobby is concerned about that action. Again, it is not rocket science, guys. I expect that this move needs to be reviewed and watched. The government has to be scrupulously focused on the Department of Agriculture and Food. It is a bit like putting Dracula in charge of the blood bank in this case, because the Department of Agriculture and Food’s position on animals is more about animals in the food chain or as stock in the supply chain than about their welfare as sentient creatures. On that note, I end my presentation.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [8.41 pm]: I would like to make a contribution this evening on the budget, about which I have a very specific view. I will start by saying that for the first time since being elected to this place, I did not attend the Treasurer’s presentation of the budget last Thursday. Instead, I went to a funeral. I went to the funeral of three members of my community, the Spies family—Brett, who was the father; his son Ben, 16; and his daughter, Georgie. I had met Mr Spies on a couple of occasions and had met his son once, but it was Georgie whom I knew well. Georgie was on a micro board of which I am a member. Members in this place may also be members of the adopt-a-politician scheme. I am on the micro board for my adopted family, which is the family of Daniel Nunn, as was Georgie. She was a remarkable young girl. It was intensely sad to see so many people grieving what was essentially an unnecessary and tragic end to their lives. There were many, many young people at the funeral who were grieving for their classmates and friends. There were many families, many teachers and many community members there. In many respects, it also made me very proud. I have lived in my community for over 23 years. It was a very moving experience to see my community come together to demonstrate their support for this family who had been involved in what was a great tragedy, but there was also a great sense of resilience amongst the young people in particular. It was very moving. Only the week before I had attended the funeral of a young girl who had been in an accident back in February on Pinjarra Road while on her way to school at Austin Cove Baptist College. She unfortunately passed away after a number of months battling to survive. Those sorts of events, particularly when children are involved, are a very sobering experience. They highlight not only the importance of one’s own family, but also how important it is that we remind ourselves of how precious life is.

I am not here to attack or blame anyone for those deaths—I am not going to do that. The Spies case is particularly tragic. The dad, Brett, was doing his very best. He loved those kids. When I saw the photos of him with his daughter and son, I could tell the absolute love that existed between that father and his children. It was so touching to see those photographs. He was a battler. He always put his kids first. He always wanted to make sure they were looked after. They had moved out of a rental home and were looking for another one, and in the interim were staying in a caravan park in Mandurah. The great tragedy was that a fire occurred very early in the morning, engulfing the tent. Ben passed away onsite and his father, Brett, and sister, Georgie, passed away the next day. It was a great tragedy, but it epitomises that we have families who are genuinely doing it tough in a state that is supposed to be so wealthy and going through such an optimistic boom. This is happening in all parts of Western Australia. Members come to Parliament over a number of weeks throughout the year to make decisions, debate and have a go at each other, but it is really the people who are doing it tough whom we must always hold foremost in our minds. I am talking about families who do not have a proper roof over their heads or who are battling week to week to make ends meet. They are the ones we should all be concerned about.

One of the great tragedies for me was that it took a great tragedy like the one involving the Spies family to focus my community and me as an individual—indeed, as one of the community leaders—on the fact that we have to do better in this state. Western Australia has so much to offer its population but, quite frankly, it is not delivering. This budget is a classic example of a budget that is not delivering to those families in our communities who are doing it tough. These families get an electricity bill every two months, and every two months it costs more than the last time and they are left scratching around to find how to pay that electricity bill.

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Then the water bill comes in, which costs more than last year and more than the last quarter. Then the gas bill comes in and they ask the same question. If they are on fixed or low incomes, there is not a lot that this government is doing to help them out. That is the truth. We may have grand visions of foreshore developments in Perth. I do not give a tinker's cuss about those sorts of things. There may be great, grand visions of having what the Premier calls an appropriate state building for him and his ministers, or for him in particular, on the hill above us—the Premier's palace—but that pales into insignificance when we have 25 000 families in Western Australia who do not have access to affordable housing. Sorry, that project pales into insignificance and is not a priority of government when we have 25 000 families who cannot find a home.

I want to go through a couple of examples. I spoke to Graham Fitzgerald of Mandurah again this morning. I said, "Graham, I'm going to mention you in Parliament; are you happy for me to do it?" He said yes. Graham and his partner Natasha, and three children, are living currently—I will not identify the address—out the back of Natasha's sister's rental property in a tent. I rang Graham today just to verify whether he was still in the tent: "Yes, David, I am. We have been out again today looking for rental accommodation. We can't find any." He and Natasha are disability support pensioners. For eight years they were in a rental property in central Mandurah, but a few weeks ago that house was condemned by the City of Mandurah. The owner basically said they had two days to get out. They had nowhere to go, and that is still the case. Tonight we will all go home to our beautiful warm beds, wherever that may be, and some members opposite will claim \$255 a night to stay in their own homes—I will not, but some members opposite will. But the Fitzgerald family will be lying huddled up together in a tent wondering where they are going to be living tomorrow night or next month. That is the reality of what families are experiencing in Western Australia today and tonight—not just in my electorate but probably most electorates in this place. Some members in this place will go home tonight and claim 255 bucks. I might say that some members do it justly, which I support, but some members in this place, whom I have mentioned in this house before, do not deserve it. Members in this place should think about the Fitzgeralds when they go home tonight.

I want to tell members about another family, and I will mention only their first names. Victor and Sonia live in Greenfields. They left Sydney in 2001 after getting a court order to take care of their two grandchildren. They are grandparents looking after their grandchildren. They are among a growing number of families in Australia where the grandparents are parenting for a second time. They are parenting their grandkids. Victor and Sonia are the proudest people I have ever met. I went to their home in Greenfields and sat down with them. They explained to me the difficulties they have. They have a court-ordered guardianship of these beautiful kids—they are beautifully loved and looked after kids—and they are finding it very tough now to pay all the costs for those kids as they grow up. One of the kids, the young girl, Ebony, is a fantastic swimmer. She is in the top two in the state in her age group, and her grandparents are finding it increasingly difficult to support her in that sport. When I went to their place every light was off. They are watching every penny. Members opposite mock and laugh and everything else when the opposition raises issues about families out there. This family is real. This family is genuinely finding it increasingly difficult to pay their electricity bill when it comes in, to keep their car on the road, to make sure that those kids get a proper education and to ensure that they can do the things that most normal, average kids of that age should be able to do. They tell me they do not go out any more. They even have to watch their food budget. There are certain things that the kids would love to have but they cannot have it! Why? Because the government continues to load on this family, like other Western Australian families, increasing pressures on their capacity to exist. Members opposite might say that this is me scaremongering or being theatrical or just making a bit of a thing about this. It is not—it is true! I have sat at their kitchen table and I have looked at their bills and what they are getting each fortnight from their pension payments and what they are expected to pay for. They are an average family in Western Australia, the so-called best state in the country that is booming now and is going to boom into the next decade and a half or more. We have to ask ourselves: where are our priorities? Is it not more appropriate that Western Australian families are given the relief that they now are desperately crying out for in their household budgets? That has not happened in this budget. There has been another increase in electricity charges in this budget. There has been another increase in water charges in this budget. There has been an increase in public transport costs in this budget. These families are at breaking point. I am not exaggerating this: they are at breaking point. I do not even know what to do to help Sonia and Victor. I have written to the Minister for Sport and Recreation asking whether we can do anything for a kid that shows this great promise but the circumstances of her family will mean she cannot continue with her sport. That is where it is almost at.

Those three examples I have given are in many ways not just relevant to or only existing in Mandurah; they exist in parts of the metropolitan area and other parts of regional WA. That is why I want to talk about royalties for regions. One of the things that the National Party in particular, but many other members opposite, likes to do is

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try to paint the Labor Party as being anti-royalties for regions. We hear the National Party leader, the Minister for Regional Development, goading various members on this side quite often here in question time and other times, asking “Don’t you like the program?” The Labor Party has never said it is against the royalties for regions program. In fact, we voted for it when the legislation was presented to this Parliament. The opposition, and also backbench government members in metropolitan seats—all of us—should be looking very closely at where and how that money is spent. Some members opposite ridiculed the report from the Grattan Institute that was highlighted in *The West Australian* this morning. I know there was a question asked during question time about the report and the minister said the report got it all wrong. I am sorry to have to tell members opposite that it is democratic and important that we look at programs that literally cost billions of dollars of Western Australia’s money to ensure it is being spent appropriately. Members need only go to the royalties for regions snapshot 2010–11 that was so magnificently launched by the Minister for Regional Development a few months back and already we can see where the inequity is. Which region in Western Australia has the highest population? It is the South West region. Which region has the second highest population? It is the Peel region. Let us look at the regional funding for each of the nine regions. By the way, this is not a region-versus-region issue: other regions have more than me and I am peeved about it! We have to very carefully look at not only how much money is expended but also look at the needs of each region. I will tell members a few things about my region and why I believe that my region is missing out dramatically from royalties for regions funding. According to the philosophy of the National Party’s royalties for regions policy, the Peel region should be one of the top two beneficiaries or at least in the top three! The Kimberley region received funding in 2010–11 for projects totalling more than \$146.6 million. The Pilbara received \$334.7 million; the Gascoyne, \$42.2 million; the Mid West, \$27.1 million; and the Goldfields, \$44.8 million. I was born in Northam in the Wheatbelt, and I am very proud of it. The town of Northam and those smaller communities deserve to get a fair go. They got \$56.9 million. I am not 100 per cent sure of the population of the Wheatbelt region.

Mr M.P. Whitely: According to the minister, it is 70 000.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: We should bear in mind that the City of Mandurah, one of five communities in the Peel region, has a population of 80 000 people.

Mr M.P. Whitely: That is the entire Wheatbelt.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes, that is fine, but the entire Wheatbelt got \$56.9 million.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I will not say what Peel received yet, because members will be flabbergasted when they hear what that region received. I am glad the Premier is in the chamber. The South West, which has the biggest regional population, received \$28.2 million, the Great Southern received \$39.9 million and Peel received \$8.4 million. Members on both sides always have a go at me because they say that Mandurah is not regional.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It’s not.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am sorry but I absolutely disagree 100 per cent with the Premier.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It is part of the suburban rail network.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The Premier is wrong.

Mr M.J. Cowper: It is the third largest mining region in WA.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Absolutely. If the government is going to give the royalty-producing regions of the Pilbara, the Kimberley and the Goldfields money such as that, it should give it to the Peel, which creates the third highest amount of royalties for the state of Western Australia. Where is the equity? The Premier does not have any. He sits there pontificating about his \$20-odd million palace. How much will that cost him? Will he put a lift in that for \$500 000? I would love a \$500 000 lift somewhere else! Is the Premier going to do that as well? Projects like that are bunkum. I wish the Premier had been in the chamber when I first started talking about the experience that I witnessed in my electorate last week. He puts those sorts of projects on the books when he has 25 000 families in Western Australia who do not know whether their accommodation needs will be met in the medium term.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Are you going to take partial responsibility for that, given the rise in house prices over the period of the Labor government?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member for Riverton is a stupid man. If that goose had been in this place listening to my speech, he would have been listening to what I said at the start. What an absolute fool he is. He

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continuously demonstrates how stupid he is. He is a stupid, stupid man and he should close his mouth and start thinking before he opens it.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I will not take any more interjections from the member because he is a stupid person.

We must look very closely at royalties for regions and ensure that the money is distributed with equity because at the moment it is not distributed equitably. Indeed, that distribution discriminates against many of the fastest growing communities not just in the state but in Australia generally. Mandurah is one of those communities. It experienced growth of 5.4 per cent last year. Bunbury is another city experiencing growth. It is absolutely essential that we ask the proper questions. I do not care whether the Minister for Regional Development, the Leader of the National Party, goads us about whether we support royalties for regions. I support royalties for regions but I want to ensure it is equitable. I want to ensure that a community such as mine, which has a population of 80 000 in its major city and over 100 000 in its major population, gets its fair share. It got just over \$8 million in the last carve-up compared to the Wheatbelt's \$56.9 million. This must be exposed. I want to expose the Leader of the National Party for his ongoing discrimination against the pensioners of Western Australia, particularly those who live in Mandurah, with regard to the Country Age Pension Fuel Card. The country fuel card is not distributed equitably to all regional citizens of Western Australia. About 95 per cent of the population in my area does not get it. The rest, who live over the Serpentine Bridge, do get it, and good luck to them.

Mr M. McGowan: Are they the ones in the metropolitan area?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: None of us is in the metro area.

Mr M. McGowan interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am just talking about my electorate. Residents in the two suburbs in my electorate that are part of the Murray shire, Barragup and Furnissdale, get it. When we go further down, those in postcode 6211, which is at the southern end of the electorate of the member for Dawesville, the Deputy Premier, get it. I have a letter from Mrs Carmel Smith of Dudley Park, which is not in my electorate but in the member for Dawesville's electorate. It is a stone's throw from my office. The letter is addressed to me, thanking me for answering her last letter regarding the fuel card. She writes —

I also wrote to Brendon Grylls, but with no reply. My husband has a melanoma & is now in hospital having an operation. We went to Mandurah Community Health Centre in Lakes Rd & applied for P.A.T.S. & was successful to their help for funding to help with fuel. BUT you have to have 4 visits to your specialist first before they pay any money.

We have not seen the increase in the patient assisted travel scheme in Peel. The Premier bragged about it being in the budget but we have not seen it down there. The letter continues —

We have just received \$20 cheque, with thanks, but our fuel bill is considerably very high.

Her husband will be able to travel to Perth in the community bus provided by the community health centre. By the way, that bus is always full and people need to book to get on it. Some people are told that if they cannot get on it, public transport is available. I am sorry, but if a person has cancer and they are suffering, I do not think they would want to sit on a train or bus to Fremantle. The Premier might like this. He is not mentioned personally in this letter but he recently visited Mandurah. The visit is mentioned. The letter continues —

But I was very interested to read in our local paper Mandurah Coastal Times page 3 Cabinet opens purse to Peel, that in a paragraph The \$780,000 Royalties for Regions funding was announced at Greenfields Primary School. It raised my interest if we in Mandurah come under Royalties for Regions then we pensioners must be entitled to the fuel card, don't you agree.

Yes, I do. She continues —

My husband & I feel the pain in the price of fuel here, jumping all over the place, up 5c 10c 12c 15c a litre, so if I have enough money left I have to fill up on a Tuesday or Wednesday, ...

She goes on to talk about what they have to do. Some members in this place say, "You've got a train; just jump on the train." It is not that easy for this couple. That is not an option for cancer sufferers seeking treatment. PATS, as it applies to many in Mandurah, hardly assists.

All of us in this place need to understand that governments bring down budgets and governments make policy decisions that have real impacts on families and people who are doing it tough. At a time when this government

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could have made a real difference to household budgets and stemmed the bludgeoning of the taxpayers of Western Australia over the past three years, it did not. Instead, the Premier made an announcement about boosting support to non-government agencies, which is a wonderful thing; but then today during question time he answered a dorothy dixer about some of the programs and projects that are going to be funded. When he was asked to table the figures, he said, "I can't do that. I wouldn't want to table something that might be wrong." Why would the Premier walk into this place with figures for his trumpeted funding for non-government agencies if the figures might be wrong? In fact, he did not trumpet that funding; he jumped out in front of the Treasurer the day before the budget was handed down, trumpeting what was supposed to be the masthead of the budget. But then he came into this place today and refused to table the figures giving the reason that they might be wrong! What a ridiculous thing to do during question time! The Premier today during question time demonstrated an arrogant disregard for this place and for the people of Western Australia. If he was so confident of those figures, he should have tabled them and made sure that every member got a copy. Instead, when the member for Rockingham asked him why he would not table the figures, he replied, "I wouldn't want to do that because they might be wrong. I wouldn't want them to be wrong." Why did he walk in here and trumpet those figures? He organised the question before he came into this place, so why would he not provide the figures?

Mr C.J. Barnett: I tell you what, I'll come down to Mandurah and announce the grants in Mandurah with you.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The Premier would be very welcome, but only if he comes with his purse and his mate from the National Party, whose purse has a bit more than the \$9 million my region gets. If the Premier starts showing some equity, I will welcome him down there!

Mr T.K. Waldron interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: What's wrong with you?

Mr T.K. Waldron: You're a good one to talk about equity!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am not going to waste my time on that.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Well, you've wasted the last 40 minutes of our time.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: No, you are a waste of space, Premier. The sooner he gets into his castle up there on the hill and prepares it for whoever might follow him, the sooner the people of Western Australia will judge him on the priorities he has put forward as government priorities. When they judge him, they will see that he has wasted money and simply built monuments to himself; that is all he has done and all he will do. He will retire from this place on a fat pension for the rest of his life, while the people of my community will not benefit from what is supposed to be their money.

MRS C.A. MARTIN (Kimberley) [9.12 pm]: I refer to the science and conservation strategy. The whole process started in 2008, and it was virtually one of the first things the government did when it came to power. A survey was conducted by former Senator Chris Ellison, who actually came to my office and insisted on interviewing me, so I made a contribution. The importance of it is that it is about the future of the Kimberley. The people who have participated are pretty well happy with it, and so am I; approximately \$40 million will go directly into the region. Some of it is for exploration; I accept that, but we have to be realistic about what is happening up there, and development is one of the things that will enable us to move forward. We have projects such as the Browse Basin moving along as best it can for the time being; we also have the Ord River scheme. Again, that is a good news story. The government did not stop the cane toads, and we are a bit upset about that! We need more funding for that; not for the Stop the Toad Foundation, which is a Perth-based mob. There is another mob called the Kimberley Toadbusters. It is a local organisation that really wants to make a difference. This is the organisation that needs more funding, and usually does not get it, although it did get some money. It has won awards and some good local people are involved in it. The Stop the Toad Foundation is not the same mob as Toadbusters, so I ask the government to not get them mixed up when it is thinking about providing funds, and to do the right thing.

While the Premier is here, I ask him whether he could talk to his mates in the federal government and ask them about mobile coverage for Highway 1 users. Is it not ridiculous, in this day and age, that we cannot get coverage? I do not have a satellite phone, and I do not have coverage through most of my electorate. This is a little ridiculous. The Minister for Education is also here. Some of the transportable buildings at the Halls Creek District High School are ready for demolition and should be condemned; they cannot be used. Halls Creek really should be the jewel in the crown of the good things that are supposed to be happening in the Kimberley, but it is not working. The important things, like housing and education, are falling short of the mark.

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There is also the Kununurra bypass road; that part of Highway 1 will remain open, instead of having traffic lights over the bridge that actually impede access to Kununurra and the rest of the Kimberley. Sometimes that bridge is closed for two hours; what is that all about? I know it has been there since the 1960s, but the bypass is really important. I put it on record that it is coming along, but a couple of people are not happy; I can provide their names! But everybody else is up for it.

Mr M.J. Cowper interjected.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I am doing the good stuff; bear with me!

Mr M.J. Cowper: No Lake Carol?

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: No Lake Carol and no Martin Dam; got it? We are over that!

I turn now to the Warmun flood. The Minister for Regional Development is not here, but I have to say that the Kimberley Development Commission, along with the Minister for Regional Development, the Premier and the Deputy Premier did a brilliant job for the 270 people who were displaced. The only reason there were no fatalities was that the flood happened during the hours of daylight. If it had happened in the dark, we would have lost at least half the children of that community. This could have been one of the worst disasters, but the response from the government was quick. The people whom I have spoken to up there are mainly happy; they want to go home, and I understand that that is in progress, and that they should be back by June, which is great stuff. Geoff Gooding from the KLC commented on how the clearance process was actually fast tracked, and he did a brilliant job of bringing everyone together. I should also mention the chief executive officer of the community, Chris Clare, who also did a great job. If members get the opportunity to have a look at Warmun, they should check out the arts centre. That was the community's hope for the future; it was going to drag them out of poverty, but now they are back to square one because the insurance company will not come up with the goods.

Mr M.J. Cowper: Is the swimming pool okay?

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: It was great! Blue as! The pool is on the high ground, and the oval is fine; the airstrip is a bit funny around the edges. The roads are all a bit suss in the East Kimberley, because they had rain for five months, virtually every day. Of course that would have an impact. Big McPhee Bridge, which was brand new, is stuffed, but they are fixing it up; it will take a while. I just wanted to put that on the record.

I turn now to the report of the Grattan Institute, which we heard about this morning, in which it referred to \$1 million wasted. I have to say that it is not wasted; I know that the Kimberley has benefited a lot from the royalties for regions program. I like to have a go at the Minister for Regional Development simply because he does not put on the record what I want to hear him put on the record; that is the only reason. This is just another form of accountability, and every minister understands that. Whatever criticism is offered in this report is an opinion and it is there.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: There is a copy if the minister wants it. It is just somebody's opinion about where money is spent in Western Australia. It is a billion dollars spent in Western Australia. So what? It is in Western Australia.

Mr D.T. Redman: Do you support the investment that has been made in the Kimberley?

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I do, yes. As I said, what I am not happy about is that there is no policy for me to refer to if I want to pick a fight. I am not happy about that. Put it on the public record and I will be happy. Does the minister see what I mean? I am a politician like the rest of the members. I want to know what the government's policies are. The government cannot keep saying to people, "Oh, it's whatever you want." That is more like a harlot's response! But we will not go there.

The member for Mandurah was justifiably a bit angry earlier and I can see why. I have to say that the demographics in Mandurah are equivalent to the poverty rates in the Kimberley. The suicide rates are the same. Did government members know that? It is not the same as in the metropolitan area; this is what happens in regional WA. The member for Mandurah's kids, like my kids, are in crisis. Country kids are in crisis. The demographics are the same. We have housing problems; we have addiction problems. Everything we have in the Kimberley, they have in Mandurah. There is not much difference. Please check out the demographics. Members opposite can say they are not regional areas, but they are. I can remember when Maree De Lacey was the head of the Peel Development Commission—I have known that woman for a very long time—I sat with her and she told me that the demographics were the same. I believe her. Why would I not? She was my boss about 20 years ago.

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When I spoke to her about it I was shocked to hear it. There are arguments here for Mandurah to be seen as the same as the regions. Why not?

A government member interjected.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: Because it is. Look at the demographics. The demographics do not lie. Members should check the figures, check the youth suicides and check all the things that eat at the heart of their communities, and they will find they are in Mandurah—the things they knock my community about.

All right; here comes the other part of my speech. A couple of things need to be raised and one is access to low-income housing. We have an issue with it. I will give an example. It happened only last week. I am talking about a young couple who live across the road from my son and daughter-in-law, who were having dinner one night when the young couple asked, “Can we stay with you for a couple of days? We’ve got to move out.” My son said, “Yes, whatever.” The young couple moved in with their new baby and after three days my son asked, “Where are you going now?” They said they were going back to Perth because they could not afford to live up there. They had relocated and been there for 18 months; they had their baby there. Only one of them was working and they found that they could not afford to live there, so they have come back to Peel, as a matter of fact. What do they have to look forward to down there? There are the same problems down there as we have up in the Kimberley. It is horrible. We need affordable housing. We used to have the Country Housing Authority. Something like that could be used for employee housing, but it does not exist. What do we have to replace it? In that case to which I referred, the young man is a glazier, but companies do not pay a lot to people who are working in a town. The girl had been working at Target. These young people do not have sufficient opportunities. My son works in the mines, but that young fellow did not want to work in the mines. A lot of people do not want to go out to the mines; they want a reasonable lifestyle. We have to find out what is happening with housing and find a way to fix it.

I understand there is a line item in the budget for the Fitzroy Crossing Police Station, but it is for refurbishment. It is a hellhole; it needs to be fully replaced. That place should have been condemned years ago.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Is it in the area of the floods?

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: No.

Mr M.J. Cowper: It was built in 1983.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: The Fitzroy Crossing Police Station has not changed; it is the same. It is a little dog box; it is horrible. The officers are trying to work in that environment. It is just not on. It is a bit like Derby Police Station, which the government keeps refurbishing. Derby Police Station is still a dump. The Haynes Oval in Broome has been there forever, and it does not have proper lights. Everything goes to the Broome Recreation and Aquatic Centre. The shire will support the BRAC to get more funding; it gets everything, and the old footy mob gets nothing. It has its clubrooms and everything else, but still it gets nothing because the shire will not support that club. It will not hand over the land to the footy club so that it can put in for its own stuff. It is a real issue. It is a wasted space.

The other issue, of course, is the archive program in Derby. The history of the Kimberley is in a couple of sea containers. They do not belong here in Perth. It took years to get most of the documentation back. If it is to be housed up there, it should be in Derby. This information is very important. It is an accumulation of documentation for native title. Some of it is Kimberley Land Council stuff; other stuff is for local government. A lot of it is based on historical documents, records and photo collections. We need funds for that. If the minister wants some ideas for royalties for regions, I thought I would chuck that in.

The other issue is youth programs. Our kids are out of control. We had a Helping Young People Engage program in Broome for a while that worked really well, but our police and citizens youth centre does not have a lot of resources at the moment, nor does HYPE. Whenever HYPE is operating, fewer kids are on the streets, but with few services, the situation builds up again. We are back to square one with this one. We need to get these sorts of programs in all the towns and major communities such as Kalumburu, Oombulgurri, Bidyadanga and Balgo. It is not just the towns; it is the communities also. Coconut Wells, which is only 14 kays out of town, desperately needs power. Town power would be helpful, but it is more than that. Now that there is development out there, maybe there is a way to provide power before the developers start building in the precinct. The people there are all using generator sets. Again, in this day and age, it is ridiculous. The Bidyadanga multifunction community centre is really a cyclone centre. Bidyadanga and Djarindjin are two big Aboriginal communities. Bidyadanga is the biggest Aboriginal community in the state and it does not have a cyclone shelter.

Dr M.D. Nahan: How many people live in the community ?

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Mrs C.A. MARTIN: About 600. It is the same in Djarindjin. Whenever there is a cyclone on the peninsula, everyone comes into town. We need somewhere that people can shelter. It makes sense for it to be Djarindjin because there is an all-weather strip there. It is not an issue. Nobody is arguing about it, but we need the funds for it. They are communities; they are like towns and they need facilities.

The other thing is that Broome has a 64-bed hostel and we need a 100-bed hostel. We need to keep more of our kids at home. That hostel has worked well. It has been one of the best things that has happened in that community. The kids who are there are having a great time. Look at some of the statistics for the education levels at the high school there. It is taking out national awards for education. Again in Bidadanga the community needs a culture and arts centre so that it can create some enterprises. The people there also need something that brings the community together—a bit like Warmun, which is going great guns. Those people were getting their art onto international markets. They were exhibiting their work overseas. But they have lost all their stock. When I stood near the high-water mark, it was up to my eyebrows. The water came in, swirled around the building and ripped off the wall at the back, so it went straight out the other side. It is all open at the back. There was an area there for safe keeping of the title deeds and some of the native title determinations. Some of the artwork in there was significant because the artists were deceased and their work had to be stored away from the public for a number of years before their families could bring it out.

[Member's time extended.]

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: All that stuff was lost. One of the chairmen, Kenneth Rivers, told me that he and his dad had gone fishing about 55 kays away on another tributary and found artwork there. People suggest that 20 per cent of the artwork has been found. Where is the other 80 per cent—up trees? Fridges are up trees. Members should see it; it is amazing stuff. They need an art centre down at Bidji.

I know that we have some funds put aside for our slipway and boat launching facility in Broome, which is really important, but facilities are also needed up in Kununurra above the diversion. There are two points in town that are accessible and a couple of points that are not that accessible, which really need to be looked at. We need to do a proper survey up there, similar to what we have done in Broome. I know that it will be expensive, but that is what is needed.

We have coastal parks and all sorts of wonderful things happening around Broome, but we do not have facilities. If someone wanted to go out to Crab Creek, the road is stuffed. The road is always stuffed and corrugated. It does not matter what we do to the road; it will always be like that unless we seal it. At the national park at Exmouth there are proper roads and when people pull into a parking area there are facilities and ablutions. At the moment there is nothing out there, yet we sometimes get 40 000 people in a week coming into Broome. What are we doing with them? Those people want to go out there and have a look, but the road is stuffed. It is a bit dangerous and it does not take much to flip a car; I see flipped cars all the time. Tourists want to have a look, but how do they do it safely? We really need a concerted approach to look after the safety of tourists so that they can go and see these places. We also need ablutions facilities. That issue is really about environmental health, because we do not want people using our country as a latrine; that will not work. If we can do it down in Exmouth, we can do it in my electorate. I was really very impressed when I went down to Exmouth. I thought if they can have it, so can we. It is not an issue.

Then we go out to Willie Creek. I urge those members who have not been out to Willie Creek—if ever they come up to Broome—to go to Willie Creek and check out the pearl farm. The Banfields always make people feel welcome. However, we need a road out there. If someone goes out and is not sure about the road, they will get stuck because of the high tides. Getting stuck out there is not fun. If people go out on the bus, they are fine. If we had a proper road that allowed people access, it would make everybody's lives easier for one, and, two, it makes more sense; it is safer. We want more tourists up there, but how will we get them if we do not have the roads?

I turn to the Cape Leveque Road. This road is the biggest pain in the neck that any of us will ever have. What is there? There are 80 kilometres left. I can guarantee that when someone takes their car up on that road, things will fall off. The bulldog on my four-wheel-drive fell off. I have not put it back because I am frightened it will fall off again and I will lose it. However, that is what happens. Can members imagine what it would take to vibrate a piece of equipment, such as spotlights, off a car? I was not speeding. People cannot speed on those roads. This is the sort of road that is within cooee of Broome. Why is this still happening in this day and age? We have Kooljaman, One Arm Point and all these little tourist places on the way, but how do we access those places safely? We cannot. We are really losing opportunities there. We definitely need that road upgraded. It would only cost about \$40 million. It would be a good investment.

Mr J.E. McGrath: Is that north of Broome or south of Broome?

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Mrs C.A. MARTIN: North.

Mr J.E. McGrath: That is where the new gas hub is going to be.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: No, it is beyond that. It is the other side of that.

Mr J.E. McGrath: It is past that?

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: Yes. Even with the gas hub there it is probably about another 60 or 70 kays. It is not that much.

Mr M.J. Cowper: It is a lot better than it used to be.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I am not going there. It does not need to be that way.

Mr M.J. Cowper: It took me three days to go 200 kays on that road.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: These are not new things. These are things that have been needed up there for a very long time. It is 110 years since the Beagle Bay community started. It is not something that has just happened. The road needs to be fixed. We cannot simply leave it; things have to happen. We have eight kilometres on the Bidyadanga Road from the main road to the community. That road is also corrugated and when it is raining it is slippery and dangerous. We have a couple of prangs every few months. It is only eight kays. I know that it is the shire's road, but the shire says that Main Roads needs to help them and that sort of stuff. Is it \$12 million or \$14 million for eight kays? This is the biggest Aboriginal community in the state. Do not get me wrong; these people live there all the time, but it is only a little road. Something really needs to be done. I think 1.6 kilometres is being done this year. The community needs a road so that they can go shopping.

Mr M.J. Cowper: Your government didn't do it.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: That is what I am saying. That is why I am putting it on the list. This is my list.

Mr M.J. Cowper: Your list has just gone about 20 times the Peel budget.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: There is all this money from royalties for regions. I am sure they could give us a bit.

There are all these other roads up there. I have this vision of being able to drive out to Manari and check out the reef. We could give tourists one of those little maps such as the ones they give people at the roadhouse in Exmouth. In Exmouth they give tourists this little map. Tourists pay \$12 for the day and check out Turquoise Bay and all that sort of stuff. If people do not pet the crocodiles, they are fine; it is safe. People can go anywhere up there. Why can we not have the same sorts of things up our way?

Mr M.J. Cowper: What about the Looma Road?

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I was coming to the Looma Road. We get the police station out there, so we will have to have a road soon. Part of the road is done, but I think there is 15 kilometres left to do. However, that road gets flooded out, so we will also need a bridge; we are blowing out to something maybe a bit unreasonable.

Mr M.J. Cowper: I've still got the red dirt in my car from the day we went out there late last year and got rained on.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I have only a couple more issues now.

I turn to the Police and Citizens Youth Club, which for many years was unfunded. The PCYC has changed its process and now needs more funding. The centre has looked at a new plan, but it is having problems getting people. The PCYC has a position, but it does not have a house. It is not that well paid. We need more funds to get into the PCYC so that it can make a difference for these 200-odd kids who are in need of help. The community development employment project has stopped in-town bases, so that does not help them anymore. All these things are really getting in our way.

I have left the worst to last: the alcohol restrictions across the region. There are two real issues with these restrictions. I will have to put it on the record again; I do not support the alcohol bans as an end in themselves. Cutting off an addict's supply does not fix the problem; it only makes the person suffering from the addiction more frantic to obtain the drug of choice. I have been saying this for five years, before the Liberal-National government was in power, but I am putting it on the public record again. We do not have the services to assist people to deal with their addictions. Counselling is needed in some cases. Some people need hospitalisation. Anyone who has ever seen somebody they love go through withdrawals knows that it is the most horrendous thing that they will ever see. It is terrible because people feel helpless, and cannot help them, and need to get

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them to a hospital. That is because they have been cut off cold turkey from their drug of choice. I will come back and say this yet again.

When I was growing up in the Kimberley we did not have a lot of alcohol. As a matter of fact, there were no drugs either. We did a lot of fishing, we did a lot of work, but we did not have drug and alcohol issues. Domestic violence was something that we did not see.

Mr M.J. Cowper interjected.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: When I was growing up we did not see it. Why was that? It was because if somebody flogged me, my brother would flog them. I am sorry, but that is the way it worked; it is as simple as that. Is family breaking down? I do not know. But I am saying to members that there are real issues that are not being dealt with. Those issues need to be dealt with. We need to provide alcohol counselling, we need to provide assistance to people and we need to assist families to reunify. The reunification of families is the only way that we can bring the community back together. We need to bring people back, away from the brink, because a lot of them are not even at where they started. Alcohol restrictions were put on people in Fitzroy, and they moved south to Derby and Broome. Alcohol restrictions were put on people in Halls Creek, and they moved to Derby and Kununurra. All that alcohol restrictions do is move the problem on. Do not believe me; ask the police. Moving the problem, which is the drinker—the person who has the addiction—is worse than members can imagine, simply because they are co-dependent. A co-dependent is the victim of somebody who has any kind of counselling for an addiction; that is, their wife who does not drink or their children who do not drink. They drag these people with them. What happens to them? Nobody knows, because nobody is actually looking at what is happening to them. It is a terrible, terrible thing.

If members get a chance, they should have a look at this report I have referred to. I will table it if members like. It is a government report. It says that the police cannot manage because there is so much of this problem happening. There are restrictions and all these things happening and all the laws are in place, but the police cannot use them because the problem is too big. We need to identify those people who have the problem and deliver the services to them, and not label a whole community; it does not work. We cannot mend a whole community when 500 people have the problem, but between 28 000 and 30 000 people are having their private lives imposed on. People with addictions need help; they do not need anything enforced on them that in some cases they do not even understand.

MS A.R. MITCHELL (Kingsley) [9.42 pm]: I rise to support this bill because very many positive things are mentioned in it that are great for the people in my electorate, and certainly great for the people around Western Australia. This budget is very positive for them. Firstly I want to talk about a major road that I happen to share a name with; that is, Mitchell Freeway. Over the number of years that I have travelled along that road, it is interesting to note that the time it takes me to travel both north and south at various times of the day has increased incredibly. In fact, the only thing I really enjoy about sitting late nights in Parliament is that it is quiet on the road when I go home! However, in the morning and the afternoon it is really quite diabolical; and it is getting more and more difficult.

On Thursday morning of last week I left home at seven o'clock to be at Parliament House for a meeting at eight o'clock. I thought I had plenty of time but of course I got here at five to eight. I live in Woodvale, which is 20 kilometres up the road. On Friday morning I had a meeting in Maylands at eight o'clock. I left home at seven, like I usually do, and got there at quarter past eight. This road, Mitchell Freeway, is very well utilised because of population growth in the northern suburbs. Yes, I could get off Mitchell Freeway and come through the smaller roads along the way, but that is not the point of the smaller roads. The idea of the freeway was for it to be used as a freeway and to have traffic flowing. It is therefore very important that this major freeway be continually worked on so that it provides what it is supposed to provide; that is, a road that gets people moving quickly.

Therefore, for me and certainly for other people in the northern suburbs, it is a fantastic result that \$30 million has been allocated to expand the northbound lanes between Hepburn Avenue and Hodges Drive commencing in 2011–12. If members listen to the road reports on the radio every morning, they would hear that the freeway is blocked from Ocean Reef Road through to Whitfords Avenue and picks up again at Warwick Road and Reid Highway. It is a massive problem in that one kilometre in between where drivers pick up speed and get excited, but no, they realise they have made a mistake and that it is blocked again. This expansion does need to happen and I am very pleased with the budget in that regard. I am satisfied at this point that it is the northbound lanes that need expanding, because when I am in a city for a meeting, it takes me another 15 minutes or so longer to get out if I have not left by three o'clock in the afternoon. Everyone is feeling it and they know that it takes longer to get home. That applies from about three o'clock to well after six. Those three hours, therefore, are really quite difficult. Members should not worry, though, as I will definitely be advocating that we need to do

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something about the southbound lanes as well. However, I am very happy and will support the northbound expansion.

I will stay on transport for a little longer, as I also want to applaud the initiative to increase the number of bus services and improve many of the services that we now have. Many members know that I have advocated in this place and had grievances on the bus services for quite a long time, as our bus services may not have kept up with the services that are required. As a computer model and things like that, the service is probably outstanding. But people have changed, our demographics have changed. Certainly I now have seniors in my electorate who moved into the suburb when it was first established and stayed there. They are now seniors. Their needs are quite different from those who travel into the city for work. They want bus services that take them to shopping centres and medical centres, and not just to train stations to get into the city.

This initiative that is examining different bus services to see how they operate, where they operate and how to increase bus services will be well received by people in my electorate, and I look forward to some of those changes occurring. At the same time it is no surprise that the Minister for Transport has secured money to fund 45 more railcars over the period, because this government does listen and does get things done. We want people to use public transport. There is some reason that people think we do not support public transport. We do and we will, and we must make sure that it is safe and provides comfort for people who travel. I think this budget demonstrates that this government is definitely supportive of all forms of public transport.

I want to move quickly to education. The focus I want to speak about on the education aspect is the removal of those lines that determine which schools will have air conditioning. I refer to those lines that have existed for so very long. They are lines that have been not only amended in this budget, but also removed. Now, all government schools will have air conditioning implemented. That is terrific. Do members know what I think is most important about that? It is because our parents and citizens associations—there are some fantastic P&C associations in my electorate—have spent a lot of time fundraising for air conditioning and items like that. I believe that P&Cs should be fundraising for education equipment and services and opportunities, not necessarily capital expenditure on infrastructure and items like that. For me, I think it is great that our P&Cs will now be able to get back to doing the things that they probably prefer to do as well, and I applaud the minister for this initiative.

I have mentioned the changing demographic with the number of seniors in my electorate, and I want to speak a little about them because they are the backbone of our society. I have said before that these people worked hard during their lives; they saved; they were not extravagant; they certainly are not a drain on the government; and they are very appreciative of any help they can get. Therefore, an increase in the cost of living rebate has certainly been well received. I was at happy hour on Friday at one of the retirement villages and I know that the seniors there certainly appreciate that. In conjunction with the other measures that we brought into place over the last couple of years, they can see that we are tangibly trying to assist them in some way. Many of these people are not necessarily pensioners, but they appreciate the support that we are giving them. It was also pointed out to me on Friday night that they had definitely recognised that they received no support at all from the federal government in its last budget. They were, therefore, even more appreciative of what we are trying to do.

Mr J.E. McGrath: Member, happy hour at the senior citizens? It must have been a great night!

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: I loved it actually. Pizza night followed it as well, so it was a wonderful night.

Mr J.E. McGrath: Drinks at half price?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: Yes.

Mr J.E. McGrath interjected.

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: No, they are up to port and lemonade at the moment!

I also want to speak about the support for people with disabilities. Some members may have seen that I am a director of Special Olympics Western Australia, which organises sport for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. I want to applaud the government for its support for people with disabilities. The other thing that has surprised me is the number of people in my electorate who care for disabled children. They do it on their own. They are not looking for a lot of support. What they need and appreciate is respite. The opportunity to have increased respite is something that is greatly appreciated.

Another concern of many of these parents is housing and accommodation. At the moment, yes, they are looking after their son or daughter, many of whom are probably into adulthood. The parents are concerned with what is going to happen to their son or daughter when they are too old to care for them or they are no longer around.

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Increased housing and accommodation for people with disabilities has reassured them that this government cares about the things that they are dealing with. I am very grateful that this has been recognised and is being attended to.

I also want to speak quickly—I am pleased the Minister for Environment is in the house—about a very large regional park in my area, Yellagonga Regional Park. It has great historical and cultural significance in the area. It is very important that we continue to look after it. The Department of Environment and Conservation does quite a good job, but I am particularly interested in the walk trail upgrade at Perry’s Paddock in Woodvale and a number of other things. A great environmental group, the Friends of Yellagonga Regional Park, work very hard to support the Department of Environment and Conservation. This initiative—

Mr W.R. Marmion: They do a very good job.

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: They do a great job; they are absolutely fantastic. These are a couple of things that are very important to me in my electorate. I am very pleased to support this bill, and I thank the government for being such a responsive government and meeting the needs of many people.

Mr J.E. McGrath: Member, you have a lot of background in sport. Do have a view on the progress of the stadium and the \$13 million that has been put into funding the planning for the stadium?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: I certainly do. Because this is such a major stadium and there are not many chances to do this, we need to get it right. We certainly need to work through a couple of issues that have come up and need to be dealt with. I think sporting infrastructure and the use of sport and recreation—the Minister for Sport and Recreation has been very successful as well in this budget—are things within our society that we really need to support and grow.

Mr J.E. McGrath: Do you have a view on the funding for families who are finding it difficult to put their children into amateur sport—there is \$20 million, I think.

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: I do, because there is no doubt that sometimes junior sport gets a little bit expensive as well. We want people to be active. We want people to be outside; we do not want children spending more time in front of screens and those sorts of things. So yes, that is a great initiative and one we should be encouraging every family to get involved with, because there is no doubt that sport, like music and the arts, is certainly very beneficial. Outside is even better than inside.

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee) [9.53 pm]: After that long string of dorothy dixers from the member for South Perth to help the member for Kingsley get a few more things on the record, which was very good of him —

Mr J.E. McGrath: I actually went to school in Willagee. My first school was Willagee Primary School.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: And it shows, sir.

This is the second budget I have experienced in this place. I enjoy the opportunity to rise and put on record my particular views on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2011–12 Bill 2011 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2011–12 Bill 2011. The budget offers us opportunities to speak about the breadth of government activity across the grand and graceful state of Western Australia. Similarly, it offers us the opportunity to represent our electorates. It offers us the opportunity to bring to the Parliament the views that we discern from those who voted for us and whom we represent.

If there is one thing that I have learned from this budget, it is a story. It is a story about victims. Today we have heard many members bring stories of particular points of disadvantage from people in their electorates. I would like to do similarly, because it is very important that people in the seat of Willagee understand that I understand. Bringing to this Parliament and recording their particular disadvantage also serves to remind members in this place—who perhaps do not have electorates oversupplied with disadvantage—of what I am tempted to call the “working poor”. That is not a circumstance I would wish on anyone. Each member must bring to the Parliament the views, attitudes and circumstances of the electorate that they represent, and I am no different.

We have seen in this budget and we have heard in this place several times today that this government is yet again slugging family budgets. The numbers are astronomical for somebody on a minimum wage. The numbers in the bills and bank accounts that are hitting the kitchen tables of people of Willagee at budget time are actually debilitating. They are debilitating in a way that is not necessarily reserved for the dwindling balance of their bank accounts and the management of credit cards; it is actually affecting a very important part of this great state—that is, the morale of the working people and the working families of this state.

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The second and third-order effects are quite tangible. Families of various make-ups—blended families, single parent families, multiparent families—are having to make decisions that no ordinary Western Australian family ought to have to make. They are making decisions about whether one of their children can go on a humble school excursion to some of the camps on the south coast or even a bit further afield. They are making decisions about those kids and asking, “What are the alternatives if my child does not go on this excursion?” Schools have to find alternative activities, principally centred on going to school, whilst all their mates go off to these camps and different activities or excursions. These are things we would not wish upon our own children, and we ought not wish them on any other person’s children.

They are also having to make decisions about things that ought not be discretionary spends, such as their children participating in sporting activities. It is funny that the member for Kingsley should be prompted to talk about youth sport. I think we share a common view, which I will speak to in moment. It is the tangible and intangible value that junior sport provides to the fabric of Western Australian society. It is very important that I stress to the house that we have families making decisions on a daily and weekly basis about what their children, let alone themselves, will or will not be able to participate in.

We are talking about a growing component of our society, which was typically only referred to in other countries—that is, the working poor. The working poor are pretty silent. The working poor do not necessarily congregate in large numbers, they do not march on Parliament, because they do not actually see themselves as working poor. They see themselves as average people making their way through life, trying to do the best they can with what they have. They are quite dignified people. They are stoic in the way they attend to their daily life and get on with their lot. There is a couple in my electorate who are a typical example of a working family. The father is a truck driver. He looks very much the part of a truck driver, but he also coaches the junior footy team down at the Freo Hawks, or the Freo City Dockers as they are now called. His wife works part time. She is a disability care worker, God bless her. She had been an administration officer but she retrained as a disability care worker because their son was born with a disability and required multiple supports, including a shunt in his head. They also have a daughter, who is the pride of the family. The reason she is the pride of the family at the moment is simply that she is the first of any generation of that family to go to university, so they are particularly proud of her. That family has to make decisions all the time, principally about the child who has a disability and who has had to endure operation after operation. They are not alone. As they look towards their future, they wonder what it may look like when they see other parents in their 60s who are still caring for adult children with disabilities.

The Salvation Army, in its report “Perceptions of Poverty: An Insight into the Nature and Impact of Poverty in Australia”, estimated that at least 80 000 Australians needed its assistance for the first time last year. The Salvation Army said that the working poor are an emerging group that is getting bigger. It said that around half the country’s low-income households had reported experiencing cash flow problems, with more than a quarter of them needing to increase credit card debt, exhaust savings and borrow money from friends and family. These are the indicators that our society is going to leave a large number of people behind. This is a sign of a society that may not actually care. The Western Australian Council of Social Service noted in its submission to Fair Work Australia on minimum wages that the federal minimum wage works out at about \$28 300 a year. Members should reflect on how much tax they paid last year. I would hazard a guess that for a reasonable proportion of the people in this room, \$28 000 might represent the amount of tax they paid. Some people have to get by on that sort of money. There is growing wage inequity. The real minimum wage has grown modestly over the past decade but has fallen substantially when compared with the median wage. That means that everybody else is leaving low-income earners behind. Of those low-income earners, 630 000 were young employees aged under 21. These are the signs that we need to watch. WACOSS identified a steep increase in access to all sorts of emergency care and relief services that it would not ordinarily have to field. The offices of many members of this chamber who have low socioeconomic groupings in their electorates would have become, if they are anything like my office, referral centres to non-government organisations. One gets to know an unhealthy amount of information about emergency relief care in one’s electorate, the city or the state that may be accessible by people with these problems. It is really important that we bring to the chamber the extreme effects that households are under as they try to work out what they can and cannot expend money on.

Another thing affecting my electorate is the Roe 8 extension. Some people are for it and some are against it. A large number of the people who are for it are those who live closest to the road, and it is all about their ease of access to the freeway. The reality is that it is a road too far. The reality is that this government has yet again squibbed on an election promise. In the other place today we heard an admission that the cost of construction is now expected to be \$620 million. The reality is that the extension will not be built. The reality is that the member

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for Riverton and perhaps the member for Jandakot and anybody else along the way will have to go back to their electorates and tell them that the road the government promised would take trucks off Leach Highway will no longer be built. They will also have to admit, in all honesty, that the contract for the soft push polling done under the guise of community consultation is yet to expire and must run its course—to the tune of \$20 million. The people in my electorate want to know the truth. What they really want to know is that that \$620 million is actually not the full cost of building a road to nowhere through a wetland to join the freeway to Stock Road. The road the government wants to put through does not attend to the issue. I am asking the government to be honest about the fact that it needs to talk about the port of Fremantle and what it has not done about the infrastructure that supports that port. The issue is not the Roe 8 extension, but the Roe 8 extension plus what the government is going to do to Stock Road and to the Stirling Bridge–Leach Highway intersection, which backs up for some 1.5 kilometres during peak hour as container truck after container truck tries to get in or out of the port. The port says that it has any amount of increased capacity, from 30 to 100 per cent. When asked whether that is confined to how many ships and containers can be moved into the port, the answer is yes. When asked whether the supporting infrastructure of road and rail is ever considered when determining that capacity, the answer is no. Supporting infrastructure does not come under the purview of planning for the port authority. This is an absolute disgrace.

We need to talk about the port of Fremantle, its uses and the infrastructure that services it in a way that dovetails with a 20 to 30-year strategic plan for the state. We really need an idea about the future of containerised traffic into the major port of Western Australia. Just because the first place we decided to establish a colony in the Fremantle area centred on the mouth of the Swan River does not necessarily make it a compatible use with what we need out of that area today. I urge the government to get on with strategic planning to find an alternative bulk handling and containerised port for this state, to ensure that we achieve what we need to achieve in the longer term and not just in the here and now. One of the alleviating things we could do for the here and now is a treatment to the intersection of High Street and Leach Highway to ensure that trucks can get around it so that the compatible use of mixed traffic is made more useful. I also note that there has been a decline in rail traffic. It was a stated requirement when the Labor government was in power that the number of rail containerised movements would increase to take pressure off those roads. The ambition was 30 per cent out to 2012–13. We reached half that target—15.1 per cent—in 2008–09. In 2009–10 it was to continue to 16 per cent. However, we lost steam, if members will pardon the pun. The actual for 2009–10 under this government was 10.89 per cent and declining. Next year, the government is only budgeting for an increase of 16 per cent on rail. The government says that it wants to take trucks off Leach Highway, but it should be honest. It will not really be serious about that until it contains the containers onto rail and moves them out that way. That would be a short-term fix while the government gets on with the long-term fix.

I could not let the opportunity pass without talking about housing maintenance. It is fortunate that the Minister for Housing is here, and I hope he takes particular interest in this and how the maintenance project is faring. I remember that the previous minister said in this house that Homeswest was looking for a \$20 million saving over three years. I would like to know where the government is at in that regard and in relation to expenditure to implement a failed privatisation of housing maintenance. I put on notice that I am taking particular interest in those issues. I also want to know how the government is going with unpaid contractors, because weekly I am receiving information from subcontractors and sub-subcontractors—that is, the pyramid of contractors who have been carrying the outsource burden of responsibility from this government on delivering maintenance to Homeswest housing—that they have unpaid bills as big as \$25 000; and one is \$100 000. Obviously I will not mention the companies in this place for fear they will never see their money or any work again.

I will round off on housing maintenance with the issue of reticulation, which might seem quite trivial. However, there are 1 600 different government complexes across the metropolitan area that require their reticulation turned off in winter and turned on in summer, and maintained properly. In none of the 31 complexes in the suburb of Willagee was the reticulation turned off at the required time coming into the winter break, and only half of them had their reticulation turned on in summer. As a consequence, a lot of those gardens that provide social amenity in those complexes that typically hold older people are declining.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I will reserve the remaining time tonight to talk about some of the more systemic issues that need deeper support from the government. I want to centre on the Hilton Primary School, which is a tiny school in my electorate that I am told once held 900 or more students and is now down to fewer than 200, just under half of whom are Indigenous. Hilton Primary School has one of the highest percentages of Indigenous students in primary schools in Western Australia and also is a low socioeconomic school. That is an issue that is

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confronting the principal of Hilton Primary School, Aaron Thomas, who has only been installed there for a year and a half and who has done a fantastic job getting the parents and citizens association up and running and local community groups using the grounds, which has made the school part of the local community again. I fully endorse and support that process at every turn I can. The principal's particular concern is with kindergarten and preprimary kids who I am told get assessed once a year, at the start of the year, in relation to things such as language and speech issues. They find a fair few children with these issues. I did not know this until I talked with people at the school and learnt about it. If these kids miss out on language, they miss out on learning. The connection between language and learning is irrefutable. If we do not get it right, they will not be able to learn. They will lose their self-confidence and self-esteem if they do not achieve good levels in those important areas and they will be disengaged from the education system. They typically come from disadvantaged families that are challenged in many different ways, and, although still in society, they will drop out. They are the children who go on to become disruptive young people and end up in our criminal justice system. Hilton Primary School has to refer those kids to Southwell Child Development Centre, which has a waiting list of several months. That is critical time for a young child in kindergarten and preprimary—that five-year-old age group—and these children will be completely left behind. To cut to the chase, we need to move away from a system that refers to another location to an in-school, in-service arrangement. Some of those families are not well organised; they are some of the most dysfunctional families. Trying to break that generational downward spiral is particularly difficult, and if they miss appointments or enough of those appointments they are cut off from the system. The system is not very user friendly. Hilton Primary School has referred probably 15 children this year alone, and there are more to come.

These are the quiet, missing links. These problems are also linked to early childhood examinations; namely, the 18-month check-up that I understand is no longer done in the public system. It is very hard to get these 18-month check-ups that are indicators of things like language. Missing the check-ups is the precursor to a range of other health issues. I urge the government to act in this regard. I will be investigating this matter further and will bring to this house particular cases requiring early childhood intervention to ensure that we can get into these problems in a systemic way to curb the problem and the other problems we find in society in later years.

One of the more proactive things we can do relates to junior sport. Another silent social killer around our suburbs is the decline in junior sport participation. I am talking about organised junior sport, not just tunnel ball down at the oval after school or during the physical education lesson. I am referring to organised, competitive team-based sport. The exercise, recreation and sports survey is a joint initiative of the Australian Sports Commission and state and territory government agencies responsible for sport and recreation. The survey has been going since 2001 over a comprehensive range of groupings. The grouping that I particularly focus on is the 15 to 24-year-old group, but obviously the process of getting young people integrated into sport starts a lot earlier. We are seeing a stagnation and a slight decline in sports participation rates. From 2006 up until 2009—the data is a bit slow to come through—Western Australia has been stagnant in junior sport participation; it had only a modest increase overall and a slight decrease in male participation from 44 per cent to 42.9 per cent over that period. One must look hard at this material as the data is difficult to discern, particularly when trying to separate different users. I do not think anyone in this chamber needs convincing about the relationship between organised recreational activity and mental health and also the relationship between organised sport and social wellbeing; it is well documented. Sport provides for increased social networks, and substantial evidence shows the correlation between social support and increased and continued participation in sport and active recreation. If a child plays three sports in their high school years, they are more likely to play one sport when they leave high school. If they play one or two sports, they have virtually no chance of playing a sport after they leave school.

The other benefit of junior sport is ensuring that we expose our kids to a range of male and female role models. Let us face it, in our communities, some of the most destructive people are young men. They run around breaking into things and breaking light bulbs and windows and doing silly things at odd hours; they are young boys turning into men. If they do not have alternative male and female role models, and they do not participate in a team sport that allows them to understand the quality of sacrifice—that is, being selfless in a team environment—they are on a road to nowhere.

I acknowledge that the government has announced a sport for all program. As soon as I learned about it, I rang the minister's office. If members are not sure, the sport for all program has been allocated of \$5 million a year over four years, if I understand it correctly, to ensure that kids who fall out of, or may be at risk of falling out of, organised sport can have their fees and other costs paid for or subsidised in some way. Currently, out of my office—it is not just me personally—by rattling the cans and from a few donors, we support 20 kids who cannot afford the \$120 it costs to join a particular sporting club. That money does not pay for boots, shorts,

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mouthguards or anything like that; it just covers the registration fee. That \$5 million will be well taxed by the members of my electorate because I will be giving it a good old nudge. I suspect that it will be underdone and I will be bringing to the house all the details about the user-friendliness of that fund. I commend the government and the minister for looking into it. I look forward to further detail.

We have talked about early intervention and the 18-month check-up. We also talked about Hilton Primary School and its early language skills training, occupational therapy and speech therapy where required, early diagnosis and early action. In that continuum we also talked about the importance of junior sport. It still confounds me why organised team-based sport is not compulsory in secondary schools. I know that there are all sorts of issues with it but of all the places we can mandate for this sort of activity to achieve some good health and social outcomes, our schools are the one place to deliver it.

Another NGO that assists people in a positive way and which is a good advertisement is the Pathways Foundation. It is only small. It is a national and international organisation. It started out in New South Wales and spread across the country, and it is now operating in New Zealand. It works on the concept that it takes abilities to raise a man. Pathways takes young men aged 13 to 15 into the bush with their father or significant male other. I did it with my son when he was 14 years old and I will also do it with my 13-year-old this year. The Pathways Foundation provides an excellent method by which men can tell their stories and their sons can hear the stories of other men and understand the requirements that it will take to become a man. They are intangibles and not typically popular to talk about in this day and age but if we do not attend to men's health in the early years—by that I mean giving young men the self-confidence to enter the world with their heads held high and their eyes set fiercely on the horizon—we are not doing them the service that they deserve. Unfortunately, the Pathways Foundation is not in receipt of government money, particularly in the \$600 million bracket. I commend the work of the Pathways Foundation to the house and I will bring it to the attention of the relevant minister to ensure that its case is heard. Its needs are very little but it is a very worthwhile group.

In my last couple of minutes I also give a very good bouquet to the City of Fremantle. It was part of a memorandum of understanding signed with the Department of Housing recently for the development or preservation of the 70-odd Homeswest blocks in the suburb of Hilton that have older homes on them. Dave Bevington, a local resident, brought the issue to me. It was fairly simple for me to back the passion of those people in that suburb, do something about what was left of the housing stock and work with the department to come up with an MOU between the council, the department and the constituents of Hilton. Mr John Pynes, the regional manager of the Fremantle housing authority, has been outstanding in his support, as have the council officers. It is a great example of the voice of residents being heard and joining up with groups, not in an adversarial sense but coming up with something that is workable for the future.

MR J.N. HYDE (Perth) [10.24 pm]: I am delighted to be in this chamber as the night watchman on the first day of the budget speeches. I will start by discussing issues relevant to the electorate of Perth.

This is a very sad budget. There is not much vision in this budget at all. If we look at what should have been the greatest building constructed under this government's watch—already a tired, old government three years in—we see that it has, so far, cut ribbons only on Labor-built buildings. The magnificent Perth Arena is soon to be opened, and I think it will be the most wonderful piece of architecture in the City of Perth. This budget has only \$5 million for museum planning. This government has ripped out of the budget the \$500 million left by the Labor government on that fateful day in August 2008. The government took that money and spent it on singing cows and plastic toilets—or the adjectives and nouns reversed in those two descriptions.

Interestingly, under a barrage of assaults about the wasteful expenditure on an elevator for one floor at Government House, the government dragged out its heavy hitter, the Minister for Planning, to announce that it would spend \$59 million only for the Northbridge Link project. Of course, \$300 million or half the work was completed under the previous Labor government with the Joondalup railway line linking to the Mandurah line underground. All this government has to do is put the little Fremantle railway line underground. A previous Liberal government under Sir Charles Court tried to close down the Fremantle line. This government can redeem itself by putting that line underground and leaving it for posterity.

The Attorney General; Treasurer mentioned \$5.4 million in the budget to build a homeless shelter within two kilometres of the central business district, yet the government has not identified where it will be built, who will operate it and who it will cater for. These are the issues that we need the government to clarify.

The budget contains only \$270 million for the Perth Waterfront project. Therefore, the legacy of this Barnett government as it staggers towards the election in 2013 will be a big hole and a wire fence. We will watch to see what happens to Riverside Drive. I note that public comment on that project closed last Friday, or perhaps it

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closes next Friday. Certainly, from the mountain of submissions that have been copied to me, everybody is saying that Riverside Drive must be kept open. Clearly, this government has made a bad planning decision that it must reverse if it is to resurrect any of the Perth Waterfront project. Developers and others certainly are saying that they will not invest but will move to Murray Street and elsewhere in the CBD because there will be a huge access problem unless there is access from Riverside Drive. This government has already greatly annoyed the businesses established at the ferry point to South Perth. Those businesses have not been properly consulted about Riverside Drive.

There was enough publicity on the weekend about the very expensive elevator the government will put in for a one-storey dwelling—namely, Government House on St Georges Terrace—while the lift does not work in the 11-storey Stirling Towers Homeswest building in my electorate. In addition, \$282 000 will be spent on Government House catering and furnishings and \$201 000 on the driveway. This is an issue that exposes the priorities of this Barnett Liberal government. Its priorities are not the priorities of Western Australians.

Surprisingly, the government has cut expenditure for the new Northbridge police station. In the budget papers, that expenditure has been cut from \$112 million to \$85 million. I have not seen the press release praising the previous Labor government that commissioned the Northbridge police station, which is now, somehow, coming in 40 per cent under budget. We want to know what the government has cut out or what incredible activities it has undertaken to cut the cost of this major building. Late last year, we called the building “Lake Johnson” because it was full of water. It is still full of water and I certainly know, with local knowledge, that the government is having massive dewatering problems. My original prediction that it would end up being a home for the water police seems to be ringing true. There is no way that the new Northbridge police station will be opening next year. I am waiting for the invitation; it has not arrived.

Mr R.F. Johnson: If you’re going to be so negative, we won’t send you one!

Mr J.N. HYDE: Last year the Minister for Police and the Premier promised me I would get an invitation. I have gone soft on the Minister for Police lately! We need to have details of why the cost has come down, why nothing has been built there, and when exactly it will be finished.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Have you had a look at the site lately?

Mr J.N. HYDE: Yes, I have. A lot of hole digging is going on and a lot of dewatering, trying to remove the water.

Mr J.H.D. Day: And concrete being laid.

Mr J.N. HYDE: There is some very wet concrete there and cranes waiting to do some serious work. We are also waiting for the concrete to be laid on the Perth Waterfront project.

Mr J.H.D. Day: I’m glad you’re waiting for that with eager anticipation, because you seemed to be speaking against it five minutes ago.

Mr J.N. HYDE: No, I am just trying to help and give the government the assistance I am sure it will welcome!

I turn now to education. Highgate Primary School is growing at 10 per cent; all the inner city primary schools and high schools are growing, but we do not have a budget commitment for a new primary school, which would probably be situated in East Perth, or for another high school. There is actually no high school in the electorate of Perth, which makes it worse off in that respect than most electorates that benefit from royalties for regions. We need extra expenditure on education. Highgate Primary School desperately needs a new heritage tin roof, and that is not provided for in the budget.

There is no funding for sinking the double level crossing railway line outside the Perth Children’s Court and Royal Perth Hospital. This is the only railway level crossing in a CBD in Australia; in fact, it probably should be heritage listed, it is so unique. Many Third World cities do not have double level crossing railway lines in their CBDs.

We do not have a transparent expenditure program or a commitment for the additional \$30 million for the Perth parking levy, which is growing exponentially. The opposition has given the government advice; we are not a nagging opposition. We have given the government the vision that is so sadly lacking on the government benches on the subject of a light rail running from West Perth to East Perth. We have offered a transparent way of spending the money and giving a community dividend to the people of Perth.

There is no costing for the \$500 million Indigenous museum that was promised by the Barnett government for the Perth Waterfront project. The private sector is not getting excited about the Perth Waterfront project for the

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reason that it is not known what is going to be there. We have seen some graphics of an Indigenous museum and a chairlift from Kings Park, but there is still nothing there. If the government wants real private sector involvement, it is going to have to have attractors in place.

There is also the government's squibbing on its big election commitment to retain Royal Perth Hospital as a tertiary hospital. The \$500 million needed for that has not been included in the budget; however, there is \$1.4 million for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting health services, so if CHOGM attendees need a bandaid or a Panadol, they will be looked after.

There is also no commitment to a new tennis museum. I think it would be ideal for funding to be provided so that Robinson Park Tennis Club could include a tennis museum in its development. We need to honour the greats of tennis in Western Australia in a variety of spheres, including on the court, in administration and elsewhere. Let me turn to the arts, because that should be fun. It is a very sad arts budget. Many of our arts organisations and 40 or so independent companies have been told that they will face a \$1.15 million drop in 2012–13. The major problem with the arts budget is that it fails to fund creative Western Australians and it diverts dwindling resources into hosting non-Western Australian content. There has been no arts dividend from the boom by the Barnett government, only cuts and appearances at openings of Labor-built dividends, such as the new State Theatre Centre of Western Australia and whatever the wonderful Central TAFE is now called. It is not a Polytechnic West campus, although it has been re-branded; it is a very important building in the city, and a number of marvellous arts activities are held there. Local performance companies and individual artists have suffered a massive cutback. The Barnett government is failing to invest in and nurture the creativity of Western Australians. It is condemning a generation of creative Western Australians to aspire to be ticket sellers and takers at brought-in exhibitions and performances from elsewhere. The Art Gallery of Western Australia has suffered an 85 per cent drop in its acquisitions budget, while it has been forced to become a touring hall for overseas exhibitions. It is very disturbing that the Barnett government has failed to value local film drama production. ScreenWest funding has been cut each year from \$5 million two years ago down to just \$3.7 million now, and screen production support has been cut from \$12.1 million in 2009–10 to just \$9.3 million now. Of course, we are seeing the benefit of the planning at the end of the Labor years and the early commitment of the current Minister for Culture and the Arts with wonderful productions such as *Bran Nue Dae*, *Red Dog* and a number of other projects that are coming to fruition. As I have been told, there will be only two live drama film productions in Western Australia in the next 12 months. We have a fair bit of animation and the small-scale stuff that is being done by computer-aided design and other computer work generated in Korea and elsewhere in the world, but there is very little live screen production here.

The minister today partially tabled a document relating to *The Graduate*. The minister failed to reveal that document. Let us remember that it drew a very adverse finding from the Ombudsman that the minister has chosen to ignore. All the important bits were redacted, which of course is the new terminology used by the State Solicitor's Office when it does not want to put in the really important stuff, such as the numbers. What was left was a forelock-tugging failure to stand up for Western Australian actors in Western Australian government-funded productions. Clause 12.2(e) of the document, which the government did not black out, states —

Where possible and always subject to the agreement of the Original UK Producers and the Director, preference will be given to Perth actors for the ensemble roles (i.e. roles other than Mrs Robinson and Benjamin) ...

My word; that is sticking up for local content, is it not! The government stumps up hundreds of thousands of dollars of corporate welfare to a private promoter, but it does not have faith in WA actors to at least demand that the lead actor playing opposite Jerry Hall had to be a Western Australian. It is tokenism and parochialism gone absolutely mad. The government had an opportunity when it put in state money to enhance local content.

Mr J.E. McGrath: No, you've got it wrong.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Not at all. The government could do the same thing with sport by ditching the Eagles and the Dockers and having a real footy team such as Geelong here so that we could have good audiences and the crème de la crème. That is the same analogy that the minister keeps trying to apply to the arts. The government is turning Western Australia into an empty touring hall.

I urge the minister to read Peter Carey's wonderful collection of short stories, the *Fat Man in History*. There is an amazing story in there about a town that sells itself out to tourism. It was famous for a picturesque old petrol station and a little deli that sold great pies. The town determined that the folk had to keep dressing in the old clothes and keep pumping petrol with lead in it, which was causing cancer. They were stuck in a time warp because that is what they had created. They had created a destination rather than celebrating what was in the

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culture of the town. This is what is happening under the minister's arts policy. He has a tremendous opportunity to create a marvellous Western Australia; to do something that was done in the 1890s and that happened in 1912 when one could take the train to Cue, which had a population then of about 16 000, 10 hotels and an array of cultural activity.

Mr J.E. McGrath interjected.

Mr J.N. HYDE: The minister should go to Kalgoorlie, as I will be in a couple of months for the 100th anniversary of Kalgoorlie rep. He can look at the wonderful theatres that have been created there as a benefit of the boom, and we are not getting those benefits here.

Mr J.E. McGrath interjected.

Mr J.N. HYDE: I gave the government the way to bring someone to the opening of the Heath Ledger Theatre and it did not take it up. Yes; use an attractor—one person—but do not sell out the rest of the production when we can use the amazing Western Australian actors we have here as an acknowledgement of their talent.

Mr J.H.D. Day: They were all Western Australian actors, apart from the two lead ones.

Mr J.N. HYDE: That is the very point: the two lead actors. Western Australians were not good enough for the two top roles.

Mr J.H.D. Day: So you don't support Jerry Hall or Rider Strong coming here?

Mr J.N. HYDE: We will be drilling down in the estimates hearings. There is \$2.1 million for the Albany Entertainment Centre this year, but only \$500 000 for the State Theatre Centre of Western Australia, so we will ask why it is four times more expensive to run the Albany Entertainment Centre, which is being used for the Minister for Transport to attend a ports conference, as he did last week when I was there. But we are not getting the degree of cultural content in that wonderful building in Albany that we should be. The government has not even paid for the shelves for the State Records Office of Western Australia. He keeps acknowledging in the budget that that is a huge problem. The minister knows it is. Every year we have failed to digitalise or address the massive storage problems there; we are in deep trouble. There is no extra funding for the third floor of the Art Gallery. In the estimates hearings we will drill down on the Museum of Modern Art figures because there is something shonky in all of that.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Like what?

Mr J.N. HYDE: This is what we will find out. The minister has not given us the figures for *The Graduate*. Even if I have to go myself to the Museum of Modern Art in New York, I will find out what was in that deal. It seems incredibly good for the good people in New York. I will be very interested to know about the one the minister is bringing out from London. It was being hawked on the internet. They had to clean out the exhibition because they needed to spruce it up and remodel. I would be very interested to know whether the minister is the only person who has taken them up.

May I have an extension, please?

The SPEAKER: I want to hear how the bogans from Bell Park, aka Geelong, might be permanently located in Perth, so please continue.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr J.N. HYDE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I will ensure tomorrow that I have the appropriate tie to answer that fulsomely!

Mr J.H.D. Day: Do you like anything the Art Gallery does?

Mr J.N. HYDE: I love the Western Australian work in the Art Gallery. The minister needs to give a vision. Brisbane has a vision and Sydney has a vision. We need some government-led vision, and it means spending money. We cannot run the local Art Gallery on \$230 000 a year for acquisitions. We are barely able to get a Marcus Beilby and a number of other brilliant artists here. We should be seeing more of the wonderful work that is in WA that is instead going into private acquisitions. What is missing from this Art Gallery is any mention of the Year of Chinese Culture in Australia, which begins in Perth next month. Where is the money for what should be a more than \$1 million commitment to arts in China? I am holding an article from a Chinese newspaper. It refers to the lack of arts funding for China and the arts. They are talking about it in Mandarin, in Hokkien, in Cantonese and in dialects in between. We have all the great southern —

Dr M.D. Nahan: It's all the same written language.

Mr Rob Johnson; Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Deputy Speaker; Mr Andrew Waddell; Acting Speaker; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Fran Logan; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr David Templeman; Mrs Carol Martin; Ms Andrea Mitchell; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr John Hyde

Mr J.N. HYDE: The written language is, which is why I said they are talking about it. They are reading about it but they are talking to their families, whether they are Hokkien speakers or Cantonese speakers in various parts of Hong Kong or on a China Southern Airlines flight coming into Perth. Hopefully, that first flight will be in late November or December. They should be coming here to see wonderful Chinese–Australian productions. We have a wonderful consul general from China now who is very arts focused, so I cannot see why there is nothing in the budget for the Year of Chinese Culture. Similarly, Minister for Culture and the Arts, next year is a very important year for people who go to libraries because it is the International Year of Reading. What budget commitments do we have for the International Year of Reading? Zilch.

Mr J.H.D. Day: The State Library will be doing a lot in that arena.

Mr J.N. HYDE: I am sure that it will. I am sure that the State Library of Western Australia will have books and that people will read them. But the government has the ability to promote it. These are areas in which we need vision from the government. We need to look very carefully at the Eventscorp budget. I think one of the good things that the previous Minister for Tourism did was take money away from sport and put it into the arts. Therefore, those of us who like the arts could see the benefits.

Mr T.K. Waldron: We shouldn't be arguing about some money between sport and the arts because sport and the arts deliver a lot of the same outcomes.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Exactly.

Mr T.K. Waldron: That is why they should actually work together; they should be run in conjunction with each other.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Exactly; so why has the arts been cut this year? Last year it got an equalisation out of Eventscorp, but there is a philosophy, I think, among people in tourism that the arts is not an economic and tourism driver, yet Singapore, Hong Kong and Abu Dhabi are doing things with performing arts and theatre arts. Hong Kong has the amazing \$23 billion West Kowloon development, including 13 museums and six performance spaces. It is getting tourists who are going there for the arts. That is missing from this budget. There was a really interesting article on ABC online by Victoria Laurie, headlined “WA budget keeps the arts starved of funding”. I think that is very accurate. The article quotes Sam Walsh, who apparently has a day job digging holes or pumping oil or something like that. He said —

“The 2011 state budget sends a disappointing message of neglect to the many Western Australian who understand and value the widespread and vital contribution that arts and culture makes to Australian society.”

He also said —

“we've had enough conversations with the Premier and the Arts Minister...for them to have that understanding.”

It took our previous government seven years to finally wear down the cone heads in Treasury and convince them that there is an economic rationale in supporting the arts. As they do, they throw everything out and try it on the next government so that that new government has to start educating them again. Keep at it and any support that we can give, we will. Sam Walsh also noted —

“The not-for-profit arts organisations have been offered 1.8% indexation in a marketplace where business costs including wages are running at three times that level,”

The government has put the Black Swan State Theatre Company into the magnificent Labor-built State Theatre Centre of Western Australia, but it is not getting any extra funding even though its production costs have doubled since it has moved into the new State Theatre Centre. The government has not fixed the plumbing in the toilets on the ground floor. There are massive problems in that building. The minister needs to get down there in his gumboots and sort it out. We will eventually get from the minister the real figures about how much arts activity is taking place in that centre. The announcement about the floating LNG project was made in that centre on Friday. The minister is counting that as a full-day booking. He did not invite the local member. A number of activities are taking place in that centre, but they are not arts activities.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Don't you think other organisations should be able to book it, like the Australian Institute of Architects, for example, which I know is one organisation that has booked it? Don't you think it is appropriate that other organisations can use it?

Mr J.N. HYDE: But all the minister is able to celebrate there is that it is a meeting hall.

Mr Rob Johnson; Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Deputy Speaker; Mr Andrew Waddell; Acting Speaker; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Fran Logan; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr David Templeman; Mrs Carol Martin; Ms Andrea Mitchell; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr John Hyde

Mr J.H.D. Day: Is it not good that a major arts facility is being used more broadly for some of the time?

Mr J.N. HYDE: No, it is not. I would love to see that arts building—that State Theatre Centre—hold live performances 365 days of the year, so that the gas and oil lobby, the architects and the Sexpos, and all the other organisations that need to hold their conferences have to go elsewhere because our State Theatre Centre is being used for theatre and performing arts.

Mr T.K. Waldron: Sporting arenas are used for the arts.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Yes.

Mr T.K. Waldron: They are utilising the facility.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Perth Arena will be wonderful as a covered venue for tennis.

Mr T.K. Waldron: Subiaco oval is used for entertainment and the arts. We need that flexibility.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Yes; it has a multifunction use, which is great. But the State Theatre Centre is smaller than the Albany Entertainment Centre, so we will soon need another theatre centre in Perth. We will need, in the government's 10-year vision, some commitment towards future performing arts buildings.

I now want to move very quickly to heritage. We need the Minister for Heritage to explain exactly what is happening with his approach to the National Trust. I was very alarmed to see the minister quoted as saying that he would be sending to the Public Sector Commissioner a matter regarding the National Trust. The reality is that in this budget, the government has given the National Trust zilch for maintenance. This was drawn to the attention of the minister in the previous two budgets, but it has not been acted upon. An amount of \$2.6 million has been allocated to the National Trust. The minister failed, in the very thin, one page so-called state heritage policy, to acknowledge the role of the Heritage Trust. The minister needs to tell us his concerns about the National Trust. He also needs to be honest about the government's failure under his watch to properly fund the National Trust and heritage in this state.

I now turn to planning. It is a good thing that the Minister for Planning has stayed in the house. The minister made a statement about how this government has done amazing things in planning and has upped the work rate. The minister also decried the benefits of having a combined department of planning, infrastructure and transport. However, it is very interesting that the corporate services function of the Department of Planning has been transferred back to the Department of Transport, at a cost of \$31.7 million. Therefore, the minister's own department has admitted that under this government, the splitting of those departments into silos has not worked, and greater cost efficiencies can be gained by undertaking corporate services and other activities in Main Roads and the Department of Transport. Therefore, out of a net budget for planning of \$47.6 million, \$31.7 million has been contracted out to Transport. The government has virtually re-amalgamated and recreated a department of planning and infrastructure, without acknowledging that it has done that. That is an admission by the government that its splitting of the DPI into the planning and transport silos has been a failure.

Reference is made in the budget to the development assessment panels, at a cost of \$700 000. We need to know how much will be involved in the cost recovery of the operation of the new DAPs, and where that \$700 000 will go. Most importantly, the government has made no full commitment to an electronic land development program. This state still remains behind the eight ball in joining the twentieth century, let alone the twenty-first century, in this area. I do not think the Barnett government is thinking about releasing new land onto the market quickly when it has refused to include funding for this important electronic delivery of modern planning, not only in this budget, but also in its earlier budgets. People trying to develop new subdivisions are being frustrated by the manually tracked, four-year paper trail.

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