

Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

CLEANERS' PAY RATES — GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

Motion

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn) [4.00 pm]: I move —

That this house supports decent and fair pay rates for cleaners employed in cleaning government buildings and offices and in particular supports the member for Morley's claim that "the hourly rate for cleaners is not only abhorrent, it is just plain wrong and I will always side with the cleaners for a pay rise, no matter who they get it from".

I would like to provide some background to this debate by informing the house of what the issue is all about. Basically, two components of cleaning services are provided to the government. The first is the cleaning services provided by full-time employees of the Department of Education and Training who undertake cleaning in government schools. Then there is the cleaning of government buildings, which is provided by private contract cleaning services undertaken primarily by members of the Western Australian branch of the Building Services Contractors Association of Australia. In February 2008 an agreement was reached between the government, the Building Services Contractors Association of Australia and the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection on a fair pay and conditions policy. Effectively, that meant that the agreement would bring the wage rates of those who are employed by the private sector cleaning contractors who were cleaning government buildings into line —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Not all government buildings.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: No, I mentioned that earlier.

Mr T.R. Buswell: If they are contract workers and they are employed to clean buildings owned by GTEs, would this policy apply?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Yes.

Mr T.R. Buswell: How?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Some workers are covered by that policy. If government trading enterprises are in non-government buildings, that may be right. They may be leaseholders of floors of privately owned —

Mr T.R. Buswell: You were a minister for GTEs. Don't you understand how they procure them?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Most of those GTEs had their own buildings.

Basically, that agreement meant that it would bring the wage rates of the employees of those private sector contract cleaners into line with the rates of pay that are set out in the Government Services (Miscellaneous) General Agreement 2007, which effectively applies to the government school cleaners group that I referred to earlier. If that fair pay and conditions policy were implemented—it could still be implemented, by the way—it would lift the hourly wages of private sector contractors cleaning government buildings from \$15.34 an hour currently being paid to \$19.13 an hour, which is the figure that is paid to those covered by the 2007 agreement that I just referred to earlier, from 1 January 2009.

We should remember that the cleaners who we are talking about are not full-time employees; they clean only on a part-time basis. They do some hours in the morning and occasionally they do some hours in the evening. On average, those employees undertake about 10 to 15 hours' work a week. When I raised this issue by way of a question without notice in this house earlier this year, the Treasurer, in his usual obnoxious and childish way, stated that the fair pay agreement that was reached in February 2008 was not passed on because I sat on it. I was not the minister responsible and I had no involvement in that agreement. It was not because, as he said, I sat on it. I wish to correct the misleading and abusive comments made by the Treasurer in this house. The truth is that the agreement had been reached, written up and announced. The Department of Consumer and Employment Protection, the Department of Housing and Works, the Department of Treasury and Finance, the contract cleaners association that I referred to earlier and the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union took a significant amount of time after the agreement was reached—after February 2008—to work out how the increase in contractors' rates would be guaranteed to flow on into wage increases for those contract cleaner employees. That is why it was not resolved by the time the election came around. The agreement had been reached in February 2007 and there was work done by all those agencies—DOCEP; DTF; DHW, which has responsibility for the tenders and for those contracts in place with government buildings; the cleaners association; and the union—to ensure that a large proportion of the money that was going to be paid to the employers, the contract cleaners, would flow on into the pay packets of their own employees. They were working out how that

Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

agreement would be implemented. That is why it was not implemented between February 2008 and the time the election was held.

Mr P. Miles: Which minister was actually dealing with that within the cabinet?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The member for Midland was the responsible minister for DOCEP at the time.

The Treasurer can still honour the fair pay agreement and agree to the government increasing the rates paid to contract cleaner employees, which rates would then flow on to an increase in their cleaners' hourly rate. As I said, it would increase the rate from about \$15 to just over \$19 an hour. The total number of people who would be affected is 1 500 employees across all government departments. We are not talking about a significant number of people. These people are not full-time employees; they work only a few hours in the morning and a few hours in the afternoon. The amount of money that is being sought that would lead to that increase is quite small. The Treasurer indicated in his answer to a question without notice that it would probably be around \$8.5 million. That is across all government departments and agencies and across those buildings, with the exception of schools. It is a small amount spread across all government departments. The Treasurer's letter to the contract cleaners' association is indicative of his response to this matter so far. He stated, in part —

I consider it the responsibility of employers and unions to ensure that appropriate market rates are paid to cleaners, rather than this being achieved through Government procurement.

Effectively, the Treasurer is saying, and he indicated this in the house when I asked the question, that this is not really the responsibility of government; it is up to the market to determine those rates, and we should not really be involved in it. That is not how things work in the real world. It is not how things work in government, as well, because, effectively, the government, as the principal in this case, can and does affect the wage outcomes between contractors and employees. It happens in the private sector and in the public sector and it has happened under this government. I give the example of the agreement between the Public Transport Authority and the companies that provide bus services in metropolitan Perth. They reached agreement on a wage outcome prior to the election, but the election came along and held that up. Therefore, that wage outcome—that agreement—was not paid until such time as this government picked up the agreement that was reached. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet actually involved Deidre Willmott to ensure that the PTA passed on the increase in rates to the bus service companies and that they were charged to the government so that they would then effectively flow on and increase the enterprise bargaining rate for the bus drivers. That was done after the election. The agreement was reached with the previous government and not implemented, but it was honoured by this government, and the Premier got Deidre Willmott, who works in the Premier's department, to ensure that the wage increase that was agreed to prior to the election flowed on to those bus drivers. There are other examples that we can use where that applies. Alcoa is a classic example. Alcoa ensures that it plays a major role in determining what its contractors pay their employees, as does BP, which used to negotiate on behalf of the contractors and then fit them with the wage outcome. That has changed slightly in recent years, but it still has the same effect. Woodside does the same thing, too, for its contractors whether they are maintenance contractors or construction contractors. These are the principals in the contracting services that ensure that their contractors who work on their sites have wage outcomes that are sustainable for the principal. The public sector does it as well. In fact, this government has done it with the bus drivers. Therefore, it is not unusual for the principal; that is, the government, to determine wage outcomes for contractors who provide services. I put it down to this: this government was willing to intervene—to use its terminology—in the market to ensure there was an outcome that was acceptable for bus drivers and for the government, even though those negotiations were between a private company and its employees, because they were bus drivers and the government did not want a bus strike. However, the government is not willing to do that with the cleaners, because if they pulled the job up, it would take a very, very long time before their withdrawal of labour had any impact whatsoever on the provision of those services. That is the reason that the government did that. Obviously, if people pull the job up over a failure to honour an enterprise bargaining agreement in the bus service, the government would feel it straightaway, but with cleaners it would not, and that is the only reason that the government is not willing to honour this agreement.

This is a moral issue and it has been recognised as such by many members, hence the wording of this motion. The member for Morley provided written advice to the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union in support of the cleaners' campaign. I am advised that as part of that campaign to get the government to honour its commitment that the —

Mr T.R. Buswell: It was not this government's commitment.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The campaign was to get the government of Western Australia, regardless of whom it comprises to honour that increase. My understanding is that the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union has

Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

seen quite a number of government members to highlight its concerns. I am advised that a significant number of those members agreed with the union that it was unfair that these very, very low-paid workers were treated the way they have been by this government, given the fact that it is possible for them to get a wage increase that would lift them from about \$15 an hour to just over \$19 an hour by the application of a very, very small amount of money—\$8.5 million—in the scheme of things. We should remember to compare that \$8.5 million with the amount of money that is being spent around regional Western Australia by the Nationals, as ministers in this government. More than \$600 million is being spent in regional and rural Western Australia. Many projects are being funded in regional Western Australia that cost more than this wage increase for these employees who are some of the lowest paid workers in Western Australia and who provide services, effectively, to the government of Western Australia. That is why this is a moral issue and why I believe that the member for Morley quite rightly came out in support of the campaign for an increase in these workers' wages and confirmed that support in writing. I commend the member for Morley for having the independence of thought and the moral fortitude to come out and say those things. I think that position should be reflected upon by many other backbenchers in the government, because we are not talking about the high flyers—those people we see in the newspaper everyday walking away with millions of dollars in bonuses from companies that are collapsing—but the people whose realistic approach to life is that they go to work at four o'clock in the morning to clean a government office, then spend the rest of the day working at another job before they return at four o'clock in the afternoon to do another shift cleaning that government office. They have, effectively, three jobs in one day. Some members opposite met the woman I refer to—that example is undertaken by a woman who is 60 years old. She would like, if she were paid correctly, to be able to give up one of those jobs, so that she did not have to work three jobs in one day to make ends meet. That is what she would like to do, and that is the truth and the heart of this debate that we are having today and why we have moved this motion.

I call upon the Treasurer to take the same approach to the contract cleaners' situation as was done with the contracts for the transport workers union and the bus drivers. An agreement was reached with the Labor government about what the wage outcome should be, and that agreement was then honoured by the Treasurer's government ensuring that the wage increase agreed to by the previous government would flow on to private sector companies and their employees. This is no different. I ask the Treasurer to apply the same standards to this outcome. I know he may have a problem with the union involved in these negotiations. I know the effectiveness of these people in undertaking industrial action and I know that it would take a long time for such action to have a great effect. Nevertheless, this is a moral issue; it is about ensuring that some of the lowest paid workers in Western Australia, who provide services to all of us, particularly to the government of Western Australia, are paid the correct amount of money and a fair amount of money—an amount that will allow them to survive.

MS J.M. FREEMAN (Nollamara) [4.20 pm]: I support the motion and —

Mr J.M. Francis interjected.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I am, and proud of it. I thank the member for Jandakot very much. I will get to that. This is my story. I concur with the member for Cockburn's comments and congratulate the member for Morley on his commitment to bettering cleaners' wages. I acknowledge that his comments emanate from his concern about low income workers and the particular challenges they face in our community.

I acknowledge that all of us here are concerned with those less fortunate than ourselves. In his recent book, Tim Costello talked about the importance of stories. This is a place of stories about our personal exposure and therefore the experiences that shape our perspective on the issues before us in this place. My story is one of a formative connection with cleaners and in particular contract cleaners. At around 27 years old, I was fortunate enough to become the contract cleaning organiser at the Australian Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union. It was a pretty turbulent time to become the contract cleaning organiser. It is not an easy job. The work meant many early mornings and late nights meeting with cleaners in their workplaces—a lot of early mornings; a lot of late nights!

A member interjected.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Yes; I did not need to add that; I had the missos to do that for me.

I used to joke that I had been in every basement of every building in St Georges Terrace to meet with cleaners, not to mention all the shopping centres—probably all the shopping centres in members' electorates, although obviously not the new centres—and technical and further education colleges. My job was to assist cleaners and to work together with them and their employer to find resolutions to pay disputes and occupational health and safety issues and other workplace concerns. The two years that I was privileged to work with cleaners gave me a well-founded commitment to low income workers—battlers working really hard with scattered work hours and multiple jobs just to make a living wage. One woman I worked with suffered injuries after working up to 12 hours a day on various different jobs for one contract company to support her children and sick husband. She

Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

was considered to have different jobs—not one job for that period of time. Members can imagine the devastation of an injury and the subsequent impact on such a marginal income worker. This woman is a good representation of the profile of the workers in the industry—that is, she is a woman from a non-English speaking background. The two years that I was privileged to work with cleaners was a time of great instability, workplace agreements and privatisation. I ask members to imagine what it is like for these workers who earn really basic money to lose stable, ongoing employment and face a reduction in wages. During this time, I developed a good rapport with employers in the industry. If members ever meet one, ask them about me—they remember me! They still say hello quite warmly and the relationship has, as I understand it, continued.

I have previously commented in this house that the impact of undercutting wages undermines the employers who want to maintain the standard of the industry in the race to the bottom in the unforgiving competitive method of tenders based on who would cost the least.

When I worked for the cleaning industry, workers acknowledged the LMHU as a champion for wage justice in a competitive industry in which wages make up 80 per cent of costs. They looked to the LHMU to prosecute unscrupulous employers and to ensure the award was modernised and wages adjusted to keep pace with the cost of living. However, this industry was destroyed by the introduction of individual contracts—an introduced unfairness whereby cleaners employed directly by local schools were being paid more than cleaners down the road at the local TAFE. Members should be clear that the school cleaner was not on an excessive wage, but rather was being paid a fair wage in comparison. That got better, a lot better, with the change to a Labor government and subsequent changes in employment practices. The relationship with the industry improved and the LHMU went into discussions to establish and set standards in the industry for some of the lowest paid workers in our society. However, we are back discussing standards, yet again, today. Why is a contract cleaner who cleans the Premier's office, the Treasurer's office or any member's office paid less than a cleaner who cleans a school in our electorates? Members will argue that it is for the contract employer to negotiate wages. There are many examples of the contractor paying what the principal—that is the government—establishes. The member for Cockburn has outlined many such examples. We would think it absurd and outrageous if contract nurses working alongside other nurses in private health agencies or in hospitals were paid less to work. But it is somehow okay for cleaners to be paid thus because they, somehow, have a lesser need. It is also not without precedent for occupational health and safety and other standards to be established in contracts. Cleaners cannot be the forgotten hidden workers, dismissed as doing menial and insignificant work. We judge this Parliament and this government on the community standards they establish, the basis of which must be fair and equitable wages for all workers who service the government. We also need to address the economic needs of low-paid workers, especially in this time of global financial crisis. It has been clearly demonstrated that wage increases for low income earners have a greater multiplier effect than do increases for other workers because most of their earnings are spent on the necessities of life. Also, given that cleaners are predominantly women and given the large pay equity gap in Western Australia, something as small as this would be a real demonstration of the government's commitment to address that gap and to establish fair and equitable wage standards.

The Treasurer's comment when this matter was first raised in a question without notice caused me some concern. I was somewhat gagged by not having made my first speech and so had to remain silent. As members may have appreciated, I am not a great interjector; it is not something I come naturally to, but I can say —

Several members interjected.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: That is right; it will come! However, I will now say that had I had the opportunity to speak, I would have denounced the claim that this was a union fundraiser.

Mr T.R. Buswell: You will get another chance this afternoon.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Thank you, Treasurer. To belittle the ongoing commitment that the LHMU has to these low-paid workers is to not recognise the fundamental humanity of the organisation I worked for in its striving to ensure that all workers in Western Australia have a living wage. The LHMU could simply focus on its more powerful membership groups. It could focus on the ambos or many others. They have members on the Kwinana strip, in hospitals, in schools and even in this place. However, the LHMU organisers do not just fundraise; they go out and work for low-paid workers such as the cleaners in our community. They want community standards.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Member, I have a question about the workers under contract in government buildings. My understanding is that contractors are largely proprietary limited companies and so fall under the federal IR system.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Most of them were being paid on Australia workplace agreements, but that obviously changed, and most are now paid on the fair pay minimum—the minimum wage. That is where we get the \$15.00 figure.

Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

Mr T.R. Buswell: I just wanted to check that.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: No, no; they are government contracts. We have had arguments about this. I can tell the Treasurer that, when these workers were first taken over to the federal system, I was there arguing that they should stay in the state system and I was certainly arguing for wage increases in that area.

In closing, when the Labor cabinet agreed to the policy, it was persuaded by arguments that the Liberal-National government should also consider. This is about fairness for lower paid workers to ensure that they meet the needs associated with the cost of living. This is about setting a standard in the industry. As the biggest tenant in the central business district, the government could establish itself as a government that understands the needs of low-paid workers. We could have Barnett's battlers instead of Howard's battlers. This is about a collaborative approach with industry, the employers —

Mrs C.A. Martin: Barnett's fruit bats!

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: That is right; the employers —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Did your shadow minister make a submission to the recent federal minimum wage process?

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I am not aware if he did; the Treasurer would have to ask him. I am certainly sure that this government would have made a submission on the basis of its importance. As the Treasurer would know, if he looked at any of the previous state wage cases, I have been an advocate for low-paid workers for some time.

Basically, it was the collaborative approach in this policy that enabled the employers to gain stability and loyalty from their workers and to pay wages comparable with those they could receive as direct employees. It must be disheartening for many of those employers to constantly lose their employees to the government sector because of the higher wages paid by government. The employers understood the need for more equitable pay rates. We have heard that these contract workers earn about \$15 an hour. On average they work for two to three hours a day. I understand the change was costed after the last Australian Fair Pay Commission increase at around \$2.5 million only, instead of the amount that the Treasurer mentioned. Equally, the amount is vastly less than the \$35 million that the government recently awarded to teachers—well deserved as that was, and I support that; but this is far less. This policy is sensible, achievable and fair. It is not an expensive commitment and it should be adopted by this government.

MR I.M. BRITZA (Morley) [4.32 pm]: I must declare that I am not the lead speaker; I defer to the Treasurer for that.

I want to speak to this motion because I have been quoted in it. While I have been accurately quoted, it is not really a complete portrayal of the truth from my perspective. I want to ensure that the house understands why I said what I said. I do not back away from what I said one bit because I meant it.

When Mr Kelly came to my office with two cleaners and they told their story, I would have had to be pretty hard not to accept that something was wrong. They deserve that acknowledgement. I have worked as a cleaner.

I have belonged to only one union, and I am sure members in this place will be surprised when I tell them that I was a member of the Builders Labourers Federation.

Several members interjected.

Mr I.M. BRITZA: I think I was seconded—or actually kidnapped! Nonetheless, getting out of that union was quite an ordeal. They kept after me for a year after I left, and the only way they stopped pursuing me was when I said I would be happy to be a member and to pay my dues if they made me chaplain! I am happy to report that they immediately let me go.

To the point: I thought that those cleaners had a fair case, and I still believe that. When I was listening to Mr Kelly share his views, I was a little wary because I knew he was a union rep, and I am cautious when listening to them because they have an angle. They were sharing that angle, and as I did not know all the facts, I said that I would speak to Mr Buswell personally to find out the ruling on this thing so that I could come back to them with an answer. This was prior to Christmas, when I went overseas to visit my wife's family. While I was away, this union went around my suburb with a big trailer saying "Barnett and Britza vote against the cleaners." Quite frankly, all the way from Texas, I was ticked off. I was not happy with that. Number one, I had never discussed the issue with the Premier. I thought that is fine! As I settled down I thought, "Well, they are giving me free advertising in my area," so I began to see the good side of things. However, I could not wait to get home. I emailed my secretary and asked her to ensure that my first appointment was with Dave Kelly, because I was upset with what he had done. I gave my word to those cleaners; I cared for the cleaners.

Mr J.M. Francis interjected.

Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

Mr I.M. BRITZA: No, he did not. The point was that he came to my office with two cleaners who both said that they came from my electorate. I do not know whether they did, but I took them at face value and believed that they came from my electorate. As we began to talk, I told the cleaners to their face that—this was not to Mr Kelly, but to the two cleaners—I would support them because their wages were terrible. It was not right. I told those cleaners that I believed the advice that the Treasurer had passed on to me, and it was not the government they should be making their case against, but the contractors who employed them.

Mr Kelly then said that so many contractors put in tenders that whoever the government picks for the contract, gets it. I just said to them—and pardon me for being so simple—that I thought to myself, “Well, Mr Kelly, why do the contractors not bring the pay rise into their tendering process and then pass it along to the cleaners?” It seemed pretty simple to me—maybe too simple. Nonetheless, because I had not spoken to the Treasurer, I said that I would once again confirm the situation with the Treasurer. On my return from overseas, I told them that I would speak to the Treasurer and send a letter within the week, number one, expressing my support, because I have never backed away from that.

Mr F.M. Logan: Can I explain the issue that you just raised? If all of the contracts came up at once and they could put that amount in their tenders, they probably would; however, they do not all come up at once because the tender process is staggered and some are already in place. If they are in place and they are going to be hit or they are being asked for a wage increase, what they try to do is ensure that the wage increase is passed on to the principal. That is what happens.

Mr I.M. BRITZA: Mr Kelly should have known that.

Mr F.M. Logan: All they are seeking—and they did get an agreement from the principal, being the government—is to fund that increase. All we are asking is that this government do the same thing.

Mr I.M. BRITZA: Mr Kelly did not share that. They not only went around my electorate telling a lie, but also they illegally went into the Galleria shopping centre, where my office is located, without approval, giving out leaflets. That was wrong; it is inappropriate.

All they said to me was, “It is okay. We want to shake the trees and rattle the cage and get something done.” That may be the way Mr Kelly does things, but it is not the way I do things.

I said to him that I would speak with the Treasurer and would write him a letter. I wrote a letter that week. I got a quick explanation from the Treasurer, which I agreed with, and I said so in my letter. I agreed with the principle. I came back straightaway and wrote the letter, which all members have a copy of, and I do not go back from that at all. If I were to change anything, probably I would change the part “no matter where they get it from”, because that gives a wider range. My principle was that the cleaners deserve that right. I have worked as a cleaner for low wages, and their stories of having to work at three locations a day is not right. I agree, and I do not back away from that.

I am not backing away from the fact that I still believe that Mr Kelly and his union were driving at the wrong thing. I stand here today saying that I do not believe it is the government’s responsibility. It is the responsibility of the union members or the union representatives to go to the contractors. I still stand by that because I believe it is right and I believe it is true.

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [4.39 pm]: I, too, would like to say a few words on this subject, particularly because, in this area, the overwhelming number of people in the workforce are women, so the issue has a direct impact on female workers. Also, as we have already heard, quite a number of migrants are involved in the workforce. I add to the comments of my neighbour the member for Morley that I too have worked as a cleaner so I certainly know about the wages, conditions and terms of employment. It is, frankly, disgusting that these people are working for \$15.34 an hour. Anything the government can do to support an increase in their salaries and wages is to be applauded.

However, I want to talk a bit about the hardship, poverty, sense of deprivation, despair, anger and frustration—the kinds of emotions we find in households where, for their sole source of income, they are relying on someone in the house who is a contract cleaner. As we have heard, often a contract worker will leave for work at four in the morning, be there for a couple of hours, go to another job, come back in the evening and work for another couple of hours. Those workers face the same kinds of costs that enable them to get to work as we do. To travel to work they have to buy a car, pay for running costs for their car if they own one, or pay for public transport. They must also pay medical expenses if they or someone in their family falls ill. They must also meet dental costs and dress appropriately for their jobs. They do all that on a very, very small—I believe inadequate—income.

In this debate, I think we should be considering another cost. In addition to the social and moral costs the member for Morley referred to earlier, the economic cost is very real. It is not just a moral or ethical issue; it is

Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

an economic issue. The economics of this issue go to what happens in communities. Social exclusion means that people cannot participate fully in their communities. With very low income or disadvantaged and vulnerable workers such as contract cleaners, not only must they do without the things I mentioned such as health and medical expenses, but also they cannot participate in what we think is normal social interaction within their community. For instance, their children will probably not be able to go on school excursions, or participate on the weekends in sports activities such as hockey, softball or cricket. Their families are more than likely living in older homes or accommodation where the heating and cooling appliances are of an older style, so they are extremely expensive to maintain and very power hungry. That will take more money out of their wallets. Also, in families that are struggling, healthy meals become a bit of an impost in themselves because fruit and vegetables and fresh meat are quite expensive for those on low incomes.

Mr P. Miles interjected.

Ms L.L. BAKER: I prefer to finish my remarks, thank you.

Low-paid workers put a real economic cost as well as a moral cost on our community. Social exclusion can result in antisocial behaviour: people feel as though they cannot be part of the community; they feel different; they think they are not as good as other people, so they tend to be removed from activities that include them in the community.

It is tempting to assume that the effects of low-paid work and poverty are largely personal and the domestic hardship of just a few unfortunate souls, but the reality is that social exclusion is more and more part of our modern market place than it has ever been before. It is the government's responsibility to call for a more reasonable wage for these workers, using whatever levers it might be able to apply, such as that which was previously put in place when the Labor Party was in government. The free market rhetoric about letting the market or businesses decide wage levels is a little naive. So far it has not helped to solve poverty, hardship or social exclusion in our society. In fact, I would argue that we are seeing more social exclusion and antisocial behaviour than ever before. Markets alone do not draw enough attention to the lived reality of social hardship resulting from low pay and its best friend, poverty.

I urge the government to think carefully about how it might be able to use the tools it has available to it to ensure that, for these most poor workers, there is a fair go.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [4.45 pm]: I rise to support this motion. There is no doubt that those who are underpaid live a hard life working in trying conditions, starting work very early in the day and often finishing very late, working in conditions that often involve multiple journeys from workplace to workplace, paying high costs of petrol while stuck in traffic jams and meanwhile trying to fit in family lives and look after their children and partners. It is a poor reflection on our society when we question the need to increase the rates of pay for people who work as contract cleaners. Why should it be a matter of conjecture that contract cleaners are not paid the same as government cleaners? It seems that it is a very simple thing to do. There are some good mechanisms in place. Other members have outlined some of the parallel situations. We mentioned the bus drivers for whom contracts were developed in a way that would enable contract bus drivers to be paid at a satisfactory rate. That can be done for cleaners also. Another example—one that is quite close to my heart—relates to disability support workers. Through the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union I have been able to work as a “volunteer”, we might say, with people who are carers in the non-government sector. I worked alongside people who have the very challenging task of looking after people with very severe disabilities. It is a style of work that requires the utmost compassion and dedication and a high degree of integrity and reliability. A situation arose in which those people were being paid very poorly. However, the Carpenter government was able to put into place an excellent initiative that enabled their pay rates to be topped up to something approaching what their skill level required, and that gave them a greater sense of recognition for the quality of their work.

Ms J.M. Freeman interjected.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Yes. This enabled them to be paid at the same rate as government workers in the area. In 2007, the state government provided \$7.5 million to increase wages for non-government disability support workers in the state. That is the sort of mechanism we need to consider for these workers. It can work very simply and would ensure our contract cleaners are paid at the same rate as others.

Comments made by other members, including the member for Morley, reflect the fact that we have a moral imperative to ensure a fair go for those who are sometimes the invisible workers. We do not see them so much because they go to work early; they have been going to work in the dark for probably the past two months. It is a tough job and it is only reasonable that we increase their rate of pay from sometimes \$15.34 an hour to \$19.13 an hour, using the mechanism I have outlined. When we consider the other issues that this sector of workers is facing, we find that it makes the case all the more urgent. These are the people who will be vulnerable to rises in energy prices and in other costs of living, so there is an absolute need for additional support.

Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

The Treasurer must deal with this issue promptly. It would be quite unacceptable for the excuse to be used yet again that these are contract workers and therefore the negotiations should be held with the people who employ them. We should acknowledge that government has a responsibility to step in, set standards and ensure that mechanisms are in place to allow people to be paid properly. The old excuses that it is contracted out and it is not the government's fault do not wash in a civilised society. That is simply shifting the blame and making others accountable when they probably have no real understanding of the issues involved. We have to move on from that. Even in these tough economic times, we are still a wealthy society and we must ensure that those who are less well off are properly looked after.

MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot) [4.50 pm]: I will start by saying that "Terrance the Trailer" also gets towed around my electorate. I welcome him as a friend. The union tows around my electorate a trailer claiming "Barnett and Francis stopped cleaners' pay rise". The reason I welcome "Terrance the Trailer" as a friend —

Ms J.M. Freeman interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: No, I did not. The reason I welcome "Terrance the Trailer" as a friend is that, as a new member, I love the idea of having my name associated with a Premier who has a 60 per cent approval rating, rather than with a Leader of the Opposition who has a 13 per cent approval rating. I thank the union very much. I welcome it.

Mr A.P. O'Gorman interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The member has had his chance. I note that this photo was taken —

Mr R.H. Cook: Are you on Terrance's Facebook?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I have not accepted Terrance as a friend on Facebook. However, I will raise an issue with the member about the conduct of his union's secretary and "Terrance the Trailer" on Facebook. I take offence at "Terrance the Trailer" and Dave Kelly harassing my wife's personal friends on Facebook. I think it has gone too far. Personal friends of my wife's family, who do not even live in this country, are being sent messages by the union. That is overstepping the mark. The member should be ashamed of his association with that union.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: No, Terrance can view my friends. She has found my wife.

Ms J.M. Freeman interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I got the friend approach from Terrance and I knocked it back, but Terrance has obviously approached my wife's friends.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.M. Harvey): Order, members!

Mr J.N. Hyde interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, member for Perth! The member for Jandakot has the floor. I would like to hear what he has to say. I am sure that our friends in the public gallery also would like to hear what he has to say. I ask members to allow him to continue.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: This photograph that I was sent—I get them fairly often—was taken at Cockburn train station. I thought, "Here we go; a union is handing out political flyers on the platform at the station." I raised this matter with the Minister for Transport. I thought, "Gee, that's a bit rich. During election campaigns, you can't hand out flyers on platforms, but you can out of an election campaign." Hon Simon O'Brien wrote back to me and said —

The Public Transport Authority ... has advised that no approval was given for representatives of the LHMU to be at the station to conduct the activity that you have identified. Transperth staff will take action by having the offending persons removed from its property should it occur again.

I invite those people to feel free to go back to Cockburn train station and we will see what happens.

I will not stand in this place and say that I do not think these people deserve a pay rise; of course they deserve a pay rise.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: It is about how it happens. We are talking about \$4 an hour.

I am going to talk about the big elephant in the corner—the conflict of interest. The previous Labor government made a commitment to give cleaners a \$4 an hour pay rise after lobbying from the miscellaneous workers' union.

Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

I have a question for members opposite: when this decision was made in cabinet, did they disclose how much money that union had donated to the Australian Labor Party? I had a quick flip through this stuff. I am happy to table this information; in fact, I would love to table the political party disclosure return of the Australian Labor Party in this state from 15 October 2008.

Mr R.H. Cook: I can't wait for the tobacco bill and to see your donations from big tobacco companies.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I did not take any money from them.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: An amount of \$167 943.72 was donated by that union to the Australian Labor Party for the state election. If the member for Cockburn cannot see the conflict of interest, he needs to go back to school. It is blazingly obvious to everyone on this side of the house. If the member cannot see the conflict of interest in unions donating money to his political party at the same time as cabinet is meeting to give members of that union a pay rise, he needs to go back to school. The dirty tricks used by the missos —

Mr M.P. Whitely: How many Red Bulls have you had? Why don't you just calm down a bit; you're overstimulated.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I need order now.

Mr D.A. Templeman: All you want to do is attack good working people who want a decent wage.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, member for Mandurah! I have had just about enough. Hansard cannot hear what the member for Jandakot is saying and neither can I. The member for Jandakot has the floor.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The truth is that I have not blocked anyone's pay rise. The Labor government had no right to make an unfunded commitment that it could not fulfil. The member did a deal with his union and the government did not allocate the funds for it in the budget. It was not a commitment we made during the election campaign. We never said that we would give these workers a pay rise. We never said that we would use taxpayers' money to subsidise private sector wages. The government said that, and it could not deliver. When did cabinet make the decision, member for Cockburn—February?

Mr F.M. Logan: February.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: March, April, May, June, July—how long did the member need? Seven months?

Mr F.M. Logan: Did you listen at all to what I said?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Yes, I heard the member say that he could not deliver because the election was called. He had seven months. How long did he need?

Several members interjected.

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: These are excuses. The member has more moves than a snake with hiccups! I have one last message for the cleaners.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I have one last message for you: get off!

The ACTING SPEAKER: I call the member for Mandurah for the first time.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I have one last message for the cleaners who are members of that union: if they really want to advance their cause and want to stop the union wasting their money, they should resign from that union and start their own union, but with one provision—elect a cleaner as the head of the union. This union is doing these workers no favours whatsoever.

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton) [4.58 pm]: Madam Acting Speaker —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! There will be opportunities for other members to stand and have their say. At the moment that opportunity is with the member for Riverton. I ask members to let him begin his speech.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Just like the member for Morley, I had a visit in early December from Mr Dave Kelly, the head of the miscellaneous workers' union. He wrote to me and asked to have a meeting with me. Normally, I would tell him to go down to Menzies House, because I know that he is a political operative. However, this time he said that he was going to bring with him a couple of people from my electorate of Riverton, so I said yes. I met him on 5 December, and he raised the issue of the pay problems with contract cleaners in government

Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

buildings. Clearly, the data he provided me was cause for concern; that is, they were among the lowest paid and the lowest income workers in the state. Everyone would feel for those workers. When I was at university, I worked as a contract cleaner. It was hard work, with low and variable pay.

Several members interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: That was 40 years ago. To be honest, I cannot remember much about it, and it did not last very long.

At that meeting, they raised some good points. I said that I would bring the matter to the attention of the Treasurer, which I did. However, before the Treasurer could possibly respond, “Terrance the Trailer” had gone into the electorate and was campaigning. That did not surprise me. It was clearly from the start a political campaign. If the missos had wanted to solve the problem, they would have said to the government and to people in the electorate, “Here is the problem. How can we address it?” They did not do that. They ran a campaign for Mr Kelly.

The real issue here is that we have just gone through the biggest boom in Australia’s history. Labour has been in short supply. People have been getting huge wage increases. Cleaners on mine sites have been earning \$80 000 to \$100 000 a year.

Mr P.B. Watson: What about the cleaners at Albany Senior High School? What are they getting?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I think they are getting government wages, are they not? That is what members have told me. Okay. How did these people miss out? Their union was useless! This is a moral issue. These people have missed out, in the largest boom this state has ever had. These people have been left on low wages. Why did the unions allow that to happen? It is because the unions did not spend their time doing what they are supposed to be doing—representing their members, particularly the low-income workers, by going to their bosses to get a wage increase for them. I heard earlier—I think it was from the member for Nollamara—that the employers knew that they needed to pay their workers higher wages. So why did their union not get those higher wages for them? Why?

Ms J.M. Freeman interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Some cleaners have been given large wage increases. The missos spent their time trying to get members into this place. They spent their time taking their members’ money and running political campaigns to get Mr Kelly into this place. That is what happened. We have a moral issue here. We have just gone through the biggest boom in the history of this state, yet people have been left on low incomes, and in itinerant work, because the people they relied upon to look after them did not look after them. They looked after themselves. They did not look after the workers.

Another issue is that the missos campaigned for the Labor Party at the last election. They said to their workers, “We are looking after you. If the Labor Party gets back into government, we will get you a wage increase.” They said that, yet they knew very well that that was not going to happen, because there was no money in the budget for a wage increase—no money, no wage increase. They were tricking the workers. They were misleading them. They were misleading the poorest people in the workforce. They were misleading their own members. Why were they misleading them? It was because they wanted their members to help them campaign for the Labor Party so that they could get into government themselves. That is a serious conflict of interest—serious.

What is the solution? It is a moral issue, as the member for Jandakot has said. I want to help these contract cleaners to get a wage increase. Therefore, my advice to them is that they ditch their union and take on a new union that will put its efforts not into getting into politics, and not into campaigning for the Labor Party, but into looking after its members. If these workers did that, they would be able to get higher wages, and we would not have to deal with this issue in this place. We would not have to use taxpayers’ money to subsidise this work. I actually asked the departments how much work they had put into this before the election, and they said that they had not done any work on this at all. When I asked them why, they said that no-one had told them that they had to put money into their budgets for this wage increase. We had all heard about this. The union had been talking about it, and the Labor Government had put out two or three press releases on it, but there was no action. That is typical of the Labor Party. However, the union duped its members. It tricked them to get their votes, and it then left them in the lurch.

This is my solution: we should encourage the contract cleaners to take care of themselves and start a new union that will represent them and get a wage increase for them. Of course, that will be difficult now, because the boom has finished. It will be really tough for these people. They will be lucky to keep their jobs, and they will be very lucky to get a wage increase. However, I urge them to remember what their union did to them. They are in

Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

this position because they made a tragic error—they allowed their union to take their money and their vote, and they were left in the lurch.

MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont — Leader of the Opposition) [5.05 pm]: I need to respond to that outrageous argument from the member for Riverton. The member for Riverton, and his colleagues, have it within their hands right now to help these workers.

Several members interjected.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: But they would rather play the blame game. They would rather play politics than face up to this issue. This issue is: will they assist these workers, or will they not assist these workers? Will they implement the cabinet decision that was made by the previous government, or will they not implement it? The member for Riverton can preach about what these workers should do and give them gratuitous advice on which union they should join or not join—totally leaving aside the fact that he does not support any union. He can do that if he wants to. However, if he really supports his low-income constituents, he should be going to the Treasurer and saying that the decision made by the former government was a fair decision, and this government should proceed to implement it. After all, in a \$20 billion budget, there is no reason why the government should be getting cleaning done on the cheap by contracting out that cleaning to the private sector, in the knowledge that private sector cleaners are paid much lower wages than non-contract cleaners. Members opposite can play the blame game if they like. However, playing the blame game, and playing politics on this issue, only demonstrates their lack of consideration for their low-income constituents. We are not going to let the member for Riverton off on this issue. We are not going to let the member for Jandakot off on this issue. We are going to tell the cleaners and the other low-income people in their electorates that they do not care about this issue. They have come into this place and have simply played politics on this issue. They have it within their power to do something about this issue. They are in government now. They can make that decision if they choose. However, they have chosen not to make that decision. They have a clear moral choice in front of them: pay these low-income workers a decent wage, or take no action. The moral choice they have made is to take no action.

The member for Riverton asserted that the former government had not set aside any moneys in the budget for this wage increase. The amount of money involved in this is well below the radar of a specific budget allocation. A cabinet decision was made that government agencies would fund this wage increase out of existing resources. That is a perfectly normal and natural government decision. Members opposite would be making these types of decisions time and again in their budget processes right now. They would be making decisions to establish new government policies that agencies would be required to meet from existing resources. This was a decision that was made by the former government. Therefore, I think that the reference to a budget allocation is a mere furphy. As a former Treasurer, I know that within those very large departmental budgets, they could afford to pay the amounts involved. As a former Treasurer, I also know that that was the expectation of the previous government.

Members opposite have a choice. They can vote for this motion and express support for low-income constituents and for the member for Morley's approach to the issue. Congratulations, member for Morley, on standing up for low-income workers. I hope he can achieve something inside government for these people. I am interested to see what he is going to do. Judging by the tenor of the speeches, he will not be voting for this motion. Is that right?

Mr T.R. Buswell: Absolutely correct.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: The member for Morley wrote to his constituents to say that he supports them. We have moved a motion in the house, using his words. It will be interesting to see what the member for Morley actually does—whether he puts his personal concerns and his personal values above party discipline, or whether he votes against his own words in the division that will occur in this place. It will be interesting to see whether he joins us, when we go to that side of the house, and votes for the motion.

I have heard a lot of politicking and a lot of indulging in the blame game from members opposite. Let us not get away from the basic issue: here are people doing hard, physical work, not a pleasant job in many cases, who are on very low pay. They are on lower pay than other people doing the same work who happen to have the privilege of being directly employed by the government. Here we have a circumstance in which there is an incentive for government agencies to save a little bit of money by contracting out a cleaning service and taking advantage of the fact that the private sector will pay those people a lower wage than if they were directly employed in government. Why would we not remove that perverse incentive to display injustice from the options available to departmental officials who make financial decisions? Members opposite can blame other parties all they like and they can play all the politics they like, but in the end they have a moral choice to make—support these people or not support them; back the previous government's decision and take it through to full implementation or walk away from it. We criticise the government because it proposes to walk away from that decision and leave these

Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

people in the lurch. All the protestations about support for them, all the indulgence in the blame game, does not take away from the house the basic issue: does the government support these people or does it not support them?

MR P. ABETZ (Southern River) [5.12 pm]: As happened with so many members on this side of the house, Dave Kelly and some of his workers knocked on my door as well and made an appointment to see me. I listened to what they had to say. I said to them that I can certainly see the issue and I can certainly see that cleaners are at the very bottom end of the pay scale in our community and that it is not always easy to make ends meet.

My wife and I raised five children, and, according to the government's statistics, we lived significantly under the so-called poverty line, yet we were able to send our children to a Christian school, which was a choice that we made, and my wife was a stay-at-home mum. It is a matter of making choices, which the member for Nollamara was talking about before in terms of the so-called evils of being a low-income earner. I do not think our children were in any way deprived of anything significant. Nonetheless, I certainly agree that at that time the boom was still happening.

I agreed with Dave Kelly and the workers that cleaners deserved a pay increase. I said that I would take the matter up with the Treasurer and see what could be done. Cleaning is not rocket science. It is hard work, but it is not rocket science. I told those workers to get together and organise themselves. If the contractors are shafting the workers, why not get themselves organised by getting an ABN number and running their own business? Somehow that seemed to be a little bit beyond Dave Kelly and his mates. It became quite clear, from what the member for Jandakot said, that basically what is happening is that instead of employing a capable negotiator who could negotiate a better deal for these cleaners, they pay \$167 000 to the Labor Party. That surely would have funded one very, very capable negotiator to organise a better deal. Dave Kelly said that WorkChoices was a big evil that had affected the cleaners. Now that WorkChoices has gone —

Several members interjected.

Mr P. ABETZ: I certainly do. I have lived in the real world. A figure of \$167 000 would definitely employ a capable negotiator for the union—make no mistake about that.

Several members interjected.

Mr P. ABETZ: Surely a union that can afford to give that amount of money to the Labor Party could employ a capable negotiator who could negotiate for some of the other workers under the umbrella of that union.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr P. ABETZ: I cannot even hear the interjections. There is no fun in that! Thank you, Mr Speaker, for bringing the house to order for me.

I am concerned for those who are at the bottom end of the spectrum. In terms of community service, I think I have probably done a good deal in working with low-income earners as a pastor for the past 25 years before entering this place. I certainly know what is going on there. A figure of \$167 000 was paid into the Labor Party's coffers instead of being used to look after the union's workers and get a better deal for them. I think that is really despicable. The union needs to get on with getting a better deal for its workers. That is what unions are for. I do not believe that it is the role of government to get out there and negotiate on behalf of the union for a better deal for its workers. That is not the role of government.

Mr F.M. Logan: The union will negotiate. There is no problem with the union negotiating with the individual contract cleaners for a higher wage increase. The contract cleaners want to pass on that cost to the principal. That is all that is being asked of the other side.

Mr P. ABETZ: If the contract cleaners put in a tender and nobody has a lower tender, the lowest tenderer will win. That is the bottom line.

Several members interjected.

Mr P. ABETZ: They are not allowed to collude; that is correct.

I have one final point I would like to make, which reflects negatively on the union of Mr Dave Kelly and his mates. I gave them my time in my office and said that I would follow this matter up. I had a letter ready to go and then, about a fortnight after they had been to my office, I got an email saying that I had opposed them. I wrote back to the union saying that I found that claim absolutely despicable when I had said that I would support the union people and would raise the matter with the Treasurer. I told them it would take at least three weeks to

Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

get a response. Before that three weeks was up, they were out there conducting their campaign. I wrote to them to say that I would no longer support their cause until they publicly apologised for putting that trailer out there when I had said that I would support them and see what I could do for them. They did not even have the courtesy to reply to my letter.

MR P. MILES (Wanneroo) [5.20 pm]: I, too, had a visit from Dave Kelly shortly after I won the seat of Wanneroo. He was very happy to visit me in my electorate office with about eight or nine of his followers.

Ms J.M. Freeman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Nollamara, I am sure that you would like to say a lot about this particular motion that is before the house, but you should not continually interject on every speaker who stands. I formally call you to order for the first time.

Mr P. MILES: I do not mind the member for Nollamara. After I checked with the nine staff who came to my office with Dave Kelly to explain to me the pitfalls and the failures of the previous Labor government, we found out that only two of those people lived and worked in the electorate of Wanneroo. They are both very fine people. I have visited them and doorknocked them since. We have discussed the issue of pay over and over in this house. It is a matter for the private contractors tendering under the government procedure and procurement process that was laid down by the previous government. The member for Cockburn and Dave Kelly mentioned to me that the previous government made a commitment in February 2008. I cannot believe that it failed to deliver on that commitment by September 2008.

Dr M.D. Nahan: In the budget.

Mr P. MILES: We should forget about the budget. The government said in a cabinet submission that it would deliver on that commitment. The Leader of the Opposition said that he was present when that decision was made. I do not understand how the government could not deliver it in that short period.

Ms J.M. Freeman: You keep going on that we didn't deliver the teachers. You were happy to go and deliver that but you will not deliver this to these people, the lowest income workers.

Mr P. MILES: I actually had a second visit from Dave Kelly prior to his nomination for preselection for some Labor seat in the future. I welcomed Dave Kelly into my office with about 15 members of his union, who gave me 100 Christmas cards. There is a picture of me in the local paper happily receiving this Christmas card bouquet on behalf of the union. I was very happy to receive that. I have now received the names of 100 members of the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union. I have sent them all a letter thanking them for visiting my area.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr P. MILES: I agree that the LHMU spends too much time trying to get into this place instead of looking after its union members. That is the bottom line. The former government failed. That is why it is now asking us to fix its problems.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Bring back Di.

Mr P. MILES: She has gone. Bye-bye.

Mr P.B. Watson: More arrogance.

Mr P. MILES: That is the opposition's favourite word this week. That is why it is on that side of the chamber, I am here and former members have left this house.

I, too, have had the pleasure of looking at the daily photos of "Terrance the Trailer" that comes through the electorate of Wanneroo. Most of those pictures were taken on the same day. I have never seen the trailer. I am sure that the trailer has been out for only one day. It must be costing the union a significant amount of money to burn up petrol running the trailer up and down the freeway. It does not have a very good environmental record.

I will conclude by saying that the Labor Party failed. It is asking us to fix the problem and all members opposite can do is interject and throw smear. The final note is that \$167 943 paid for their election.

MR J.N. HYDE (Perth) [5.25 pm]: So far, the Liberal Party speakers have not addressed the relevance of the motion. Relevance is very important. Let us look at the motion. This motion contains some lovely verbs such as "support", and words such as "decent and fair". There is no verb in the motion condemning the government. This is a nice, good, healthy motion. We surely thought that the government would support this motion.

Mr P. Miles: Who said we're not?

Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

Mr J.N. HYDE: The member for Busselton. I will come to this division between government members later. If members opposite are thinking of supporting this motion—I urge all members to support the motion—they should think hard. They are in the Liberal Party of Australia, the party of Robert Gordon Menzies. The previous member for Nedlands always reminded us that members of the Liberal Party have a conscience vote on every single motion. Today they should stand up and use their right to speak freely about what they believe. The relevance of this motion is very clear. We are talking about the government of the day. Those opposite have been in government for six months. The government has the ability to act. Members opposite have to take that responsibility. They are members of the government; they should fix it.

Let us look at some of the other government policies. The Minister for Energy is on talkback radio and everywhere else saying that he is demanding that the SEC, Horizon or whatever the government is calling it this month go in and bat for Western Australian workers and not outsource jobs to Mumbai. Those opposite have the ability to have a view and to act on this issue. They have the ability to determine the direction of the contracts that are being negotiated so that the money that is going to the contractors goes to the workers, the people doing the work. That is all this issue is about. A number of members have stood up and said, “It is not the responsibility of the government.” Of course it is the responsibility of the government. That is where the money is coming from. There is a “buy local” policy. The government is very good at thumping the tub regarding “buy local” in regional Western Australia. Government members have the ability to have a say in the operation of government contracts. We are urging them to use it. We are urging them to follow the member for Morley. He is saying quite clearly that cleaners deserve a pay rise, no matter whom they get it from. It will ultimately come from the government of the day. Those opposite are members of the government of the day. They should use their position.

When the Treasurer speaks, I think he will be speaking from the progressive wing of the Liberal Party, so perhaps he will urge support for this motion and a quick vote so that we know exactly where members stand. The Liberal Party in this place has a proud record of supporting minority groups; therefore, we urge it to support the cleaners of this state. The cleaners are not the biggest pool of workers in this state and they are not the loudest pool of workers in this state, but we have seen in recent weeks that the Liberal Party has a proud record of supporting minority groups, going out to the oppressed, those who are downtrodden and those small in number. Of course, we are talking about the good people of the Duchy of Grand Fenwick—those who live in Peppermint Grove. We urge the Liberal Party to transfer the same compassion and the same empathy that it has for minority groups and the downtrodden to the contract cleaners of this state.

The member for Jandakot established himself as the saviour of cyberspace. I am delighted that he is going on Facebook and rooting out the evil that “Terrance the Trailer” is apparently wreaking on him. I have a couple of real weirdos stalking me on Facebook, so I think I will switch them over to the member for Jandakot to see what he can do with them.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Similarly, when the Nigerian scammers next email me, I will pass that email on to the saviour of cyberspace.

The member spoke also about the wonderful Transperth and how this government department will be able to stop “Terrance the Trailer” on Transperth land. If suddenly members opposite have this ability to direct a government department in that way, although they cannot direct a government department regarding the payment of wages, could they also ask about another type of trailer that is allowed on Transperth land at the moment—namely, coffee trailers. The owners have no doubt paid for and got the contract to sell coffee, but to a large extent they also sell cigarettes. If a government department is enabling the sale of cigarettes through a loophole of going through a coffee machine, I think that is something the government should stop. Therefore, if the government has the ability to stop poor old “Terrance the Trailer”, let us have a look at some real issues as well.

The member for Riverton has discovered that cleaners and other lowly paid people are at fault because they have not benefited from the boom. This is very much the politics of envy and a total incapacity to understand how capitalism works and how managing directors of start-up share market companies that did not actually produce anything paid themselves \$1.2 million, while cleaners and a whole range of employees in regional Western Australia who were not directly on mine sites were diddled and had to work three jobs during the so-called boom. The member’s analyses of capitalism and the boom and his finding fault with cleaners and those who are lowly paid are quite abhorrent. We have already seen this attitude in government policy for electorate offices, because we have received memos suggesting that we as members of Parliament should encourage the cleaners in our offices to go off-wage, to go off-salary and stop getting their superannuation and other entitlements and to, in effect, accept the Liberal mantra of “Get an Australian business number”. The solution to not having a pay rise is

Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

to magically get this ABN, which sounds very much like the “New Guinea helicopter coming to fix up all the problems” mantra. Suddenly, this ABN is the government’s mantra for fixing low wages.

The issue again in this motion and behind all of this is that the money is available; the pay rise is being factored in. But the pay rise is being creamed off; it is going not to the workers but to somebody else. We say that members opposite need to use their influence as members of Parliament and ministers to make sure that the money goes to workers. It is really interesting that previous people in the chair have not picked up members not speaking to the motion. It is interesting to look at the people opposite in the class of 2008—“the September ‘08ers”—who have been sent to the front line to speak. A few wiser heads down this end of the chamber have rightfully ducked for cover. It is very interesting to see what the Premier is doing, because the Premier as a lone hand has brought the Liberal Party to the centre. On a whole variety of issues, the Liberal Party has been refashioned as the party of moderation and the party that, like Robert Gordon Menzies, looks after workers, the low-paid and small business. Somehow the Liberal Party jihadis, the fundamentalists and the economic wackos are being kept in check and they are agreeing to the quite progressive moderate policies of the Premier because he is letting them off the leash for an hour a week to give their very interesting analyses of capitalism and society.

Mr T.R. Buswell interjected.

Mr J.N. HYDE: But in the end they will support the Premier; they are going to be able to support —

Mr P. Miles: You don’t know what we’re going to do!

Mr J.N. HYDE: Again, I am heartened by the member saying that he does not know what he is going to do.

Mr P. Miles: No, you don’t know what we’re going to do!

Mr J.N. HYDE: The government’s deputy leader who got rolled by the Premier last night has said that government members are not going to vote for this motion. I will not use my full time allocation; I will sit down very quickly so that I can listen to my good friend, a man of reason, a man who understands working people and people in the service industries and who understands low-paid, part-time and casual workers, so that he can give some sort of rationale for why the government will not vote for this motion. Then, let us make sure that we do vote for the motion. We have heard about time management from the absent Minister for Police in his guise as Leader of the House, so we can manage the time and be finished with this motion well before six o’clock and have the vote and see where members stand.

Finally, I will talk about the member for Wanneroo. What amazed me was how, again, the new chums are taking so much umbrage at “Terrance the Trailer”. For those of us who have been involved in politics for a while, “Terrance the Trailer” is, I think, a very, very good political campaign. However, members opposite think that it is the end of the world; they want “Terrance the Trailer” banned—he is the same as bikies and members opposite want to outlaw him. Just wait until members opposite have the nurses in their electorates! Just wait until they have the next police enterprise bargaining agreement! The government thinks the police are out of the way, but another election is coming in four years’ time and another police EBA. If members opposite think “Terrance the Trailer” is bad news, just wait until Constable Care and his trailer and the police start turning up at their electorate offices. We will see whether members opposite come into this place expressing umbrage and disgust that a democratic group in our community has come to them saying, “Hey, we want a fair wage.” That is what this motion is about.

The novices in the Liberal Party have spoken; some are walking on water and some still think they are. Their world view, in light of their blaming people who are not getting big or proper wages, is quite scary. I know they are overjoyed at speaking after having sat in this place for nearly 18 hours yesterday and having to be quiet. Welcome to four years of that. The Premier in his wily way has let members opposite off the leash for an hour, so they will go home tonight thinking that they gave their world view and told us how society works and how the problem is the fault of workers for not having an ABN. If only everyone had an ABN, everyone would be rich! Members opposite can go home, pat the dog, feed the tropical fish and think that they have espoused their Liberal philosophy. The Premier, who is really running the show and has brought the Liberal Party to the middle ground, will be happy because he has kept the members in check; he has stopped them from doing any real damage and from getting any of their beliefs in the public arena and from really influencing ministerial policy. The Treasurer will now be given the opportunity to carefully explain the situation; he will make all the noises that say that he supports workers, but he will then say that unlike for the police and others, where he can and has done something, he will not do anything for the cleaners. We urge the Treasurer to think again because he has the power. He has incredible power. He is doing amazing things, and with the stroke of a pen he can do this. The Treasurer can be the saviour of “Terrance the Trailer”. He can be a Facebook groupie. He can be in the top 50

Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

list. Here is an opportunity. I urge the Treasurer and my good friends and colleagues in the Liberal Party who have had the sense to keep quiet during this debate to think about voting in support of this motion.

MR T.R. BUSWELL (Vasse — Treasurer) [5.40 pm]: I am thoroughly put off and upset after the member for Perth's last couple of comments.

Mr M.P. Murray: Just get your chequebook out and I will be happy.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes; we have done that a number of times in Collie recently, and I am sure the member is happy.

I wish to make a couple of introductory comments and then deal with some of the issues and the detail of the matter. I will do so in a fairly matter-of-fact way because I think it is an important issue that requires important consideration. I ask the member for Nollamara, who is not present, to pass on that, although people have talked about "Trevor the Tractor" or "Terrance the Trailer", I have not seen him in my electorate and am feeling particularly unloved by Terrance. Perhaps he is not a long-distance trailer. That notwithstanding, the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union has a right to make a political point. I suspect that as we move through the rolling series of EBA negotiations, the government has to engage with a whole range of public sector unions and these types of campaigns will be waged, particularly against our backbench members, and in particular against new members. We have had conversations around that very point. Members will be aware that the government handed down its new public sector wages policy yesterday. For my sins, or otherwise, cabinet has asked me to have carriage of those negotiations for the short to medium term—probably until I keel over. I am mindful that I offer comments today in that light.

I think people have made some interesting contributions, and some in relation to minimum wages. Members have talked about their backgrounds, and I wish to point out that I am familiar with the miscellaneous workers' union. In my early days, before I had my damascene conversion and saw the light, as the house is well informed, I was a member of the Australian Labor Party. During my early years at university, I used to attend meetings of, I think, the "Broad Left" as it was then called, before it splintered and we then had Peter Cook's "Centre Left" faction. One of the factions used to meet in the miscellaneous workers' union building on Thomas Street. I still try to sneak in to illegally park under the building when the football is on, but I notice it is getting a bit harder to do now because it is barricaded off.

Mr F.M. Logan: I knew you were a leftie!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: As I said, I had a damascene conversion. I am now very happy to be with my colleagues on this side of the house. My mother, who worked at the local high school in Busselton and as a single working mum raised my sister and me, was a member of the miscellaneous workers' union. She was a teacher's aide in the home economics area at the local high school. It was great; I could toddle around to the home economics room and mum would cook my lunch every day. It was really good until I got to the age at which having my mother do the washing and hang my underpants out on the clothesline in the middle of Busselton high school became something of a social inhibitor, and so last year I said, "Stop it mum; stop it!"

Several members interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I move now to the substantive issue and the government's position. I heard the point the member raised about the Public Transport Authority's enterprise bargaining agreement. My advice is that the circumstances surrounding the PTA EBA and its complexities are not consistent with the issue that we are looking at here. I do not accept that the Public Transport Authority EBA is a precedent for the issue we are discussing; this is a separate issue. I made a decision very early on in the process that we would not use government procurement policy to deliver wages outcomes. As everyone in this place is aware, there are mechanisms by which wages are determined in this country. The member for Nollamara confirmed, as I suspected she would, that a large percentage of the people talked about are employed by proprietary limited companies that have won government contracts. By default, they operate in the Australian federal industrial relations system. Some good points were made about minimum wages, and some very good points were made about the impact of a low income on families, including social exclusion and a whole range of other such matters. Interestingly, the Australian Fair Pay Commission recently conducted its minimum wage review and that review process is now closed for submissions. We made a submission to the review, but the Labor Party did not.

Mr F.M. Logan: But you should make a submission.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: As the opposition, the Labor Party also had the opportunity to make a submission and chose not to. The simple point I wish to make is that Labor members come here and criticise the government for not using its procurement policy to deliver wage and employment outcomes—I have stated that we will not do

Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

that—yet when the opposition has an opportunity to affect the minimum wage paid to not only cleaners, but also every person in Western Australia, it chose not to participate in the process. Similarly, the state industrial relations system had a minimum wage review —

Mr F.M. Logan: Treasurer, this is not about the minimum wage; this is above minimum wage.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Hold on; hold the bus! A large number of speakers in their presentations continually referred to the minimum wage, so I took that to mean they had issues with the minimum wage. The point I am trying to make in a very polite way —

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The member should talk to his members about it! I am trying, very politely, to make the point that there is a mechanism for setting wages in this country. There was a process by which the opposition could have contributed, and it did not. That is my only point.

Ms J.M. Freeman: The issue is that currently these workers are for the most part being paid under Australian workplace agreements—albeit a minimum wage. They are being paid under the contract award but the issue for you is whether the Australian Fair Pay Commission gives an increase. It would never have got to the level of increase to have equity with workers in government. That is what this is about. This will bring them to equity with government wages. Treasurer, before you say what you are about to say about the state wage case, submissions to that are, as I understand, still open.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Good; perhaps the shadow minister will —

Ms J.M. Freeman: You said yourself that they are mostly in the federal system.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes, they are; notwithstanding, if the concern is at a generic level about minimum wages that are being paid then —

Ms J.M. Freeman: No; the concern is about getting these people up to a level —

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No. Listen. A number of opposition members spoke about the broader social consequences of the minimum wage. I have acknowledged that their points were well made, but I have said very clearly that currently there are mechanisms in play to review that wage and the opposition shadow minister did not participate. The opposition criticises the government because we will not confuse procurement with —

Mr C.C. Porter: But they can!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: And they do! We will not confuse procurement with delivering wages outcomes. The opposition had the opportunity to participate in a process that I suspect it did not even know was happening. That is the first point.

Mr F.M. Logan: Treasurer, you know that is not going to have any impact on what we are speaking about.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The member should make a submission and see what happens. I also want to draw to the attention of the house the award modernisation program being undertaken by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. That modernisation program, in my view, will cause significant difficulties from the point of view of the employer; notwithstanding, it is happening. The number of awards is being compressed, as are the number of bands in each award. The modernisation process probably should have happened a long time ago, but I suppose that if it had happened a long time ago, we would not be calling it modernisation. The preliminary advice I have received is that the cleaning services industry award modernisation exposure draft—the technical term for the document they want us to look at before the process is finalised—indicates that for a large number of cleaners, pay rises will be over and above outcomes for the minimum wage.

Ms J.M. Freeman: Are you going to agree with those?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: That process is being determined by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. It will deliver a set of outcomes. The point I am trying to make is that a perfectly legitimate mechanism exists in this country by which employers and employees—in many cases, employees through the bargaining agent of a union—have an opportunity to participate, and the opposition chose not to participate.

Ms J.M. Freeman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Nollamara!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The member for Nollamara chose not to participate, and that is fine. I know that the member for Nollamara has people in the gallery to whom she owes her preselection. However, I want to point out to them that this is the first time for some time that I can recall the member for Nollamara making a contribution. That is interesting.

Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

Ms J.M. Freeman: We are debating low-paid workers.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes, and I will tell the member for Nollamara what I will do.

Mrs C.A. Martin interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: As I indicated, member for Kimberley, I was raised by a low-paid worker. I am fundamentally aware of the social challenges that those people face. We never wanted for anything, but I can tell the member that I am aware of the sacrifices that people in those households have to make.

What I will do, as some really interesting issues were raised about the effectiveness of unions in delivering wage outcomes, is ask the labour research section of the Department of Commerce to conduct an analysis of this issue. I would like that section to look at wage increases across occupation and industry groups over the past five or six years and to track that against union coverage in those industries.

Mr F.M. Logan: That has been done.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Then I will do it again. It is not a pure reflection of the services that unions offer their members. I have looked at this union's website. When I was in opposition—for a little while when I could work my laptop—I looked at websites, the ones that are appropriate.

Mrs C.A. Martin: So you say.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Maybe the CFMEU website is a bit iffy! Anyway, notwithstanding that, I think they offer some tremendous services. In fact, most modern unions offer a wide range of services, not just bargaining for their members, and so they should because they operate in a competitive environment. That is a good outcome. I am very interested in such an analysis, and I will ask for that research to be done and perhaps we can have some more facts to sit behind that. Maybe that sort of effectiveness measure is something we might be able to discuss at another time, perhaps in a more public forum.

I want to touch on a couple of points made by the Leader of the Opposition, who again rushed in here to put on a bit of a performance and then went up to the gallery to make sure that everyone heard what he had to say. A number of members commented on the procurement mechanism and implied that we have this nasty government procurement mechanism. That mechanism was designed to give good value for money, and I actually support the procurement reforms. Do members know who drove the procurement reforms through government? It is the person who stood in this place and criticised them! The former Treasurer was a great champion of the Office of Government Procurement and the procurement reform processes. I support him in that. However, this is an outcome of that process and he is attempting to construe perverse outcomes from that procurement process.

The Leader of the Opposition made another interesting point. I wrote only two down. He said that the \$8.5 million per annum—which is the advice I have from the Department of Commerce and/or Treasury—is an amount of money that “should be well below the radar”. I just wish the Leader of the Opposition had set the radar for all the members who wasted 11 hours of our time yesterday dealing with issues that by his definition are now “well below the radar”.

Mr E.S. Ripper: What would it be for the average department?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The advice I have is that it is \$8.5 million in one year; that is \$34 million across the out years.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Divide that by more than 20 departments.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The Leader of the Opposition has form in this. I am constantly reminded of the member for Willagee, when he was the Minister for Education and Training, refusing point blank to give up the external contracting arrangements for school cleaners. He was pursued by that union over that—the member for Nollamara's union. That union pursued him and they vilified him because he would not overturn that decision. Do members know why he would not do that? It was because he was advised it would be an inappropriate use of taxpayers' money to move away from that contracting relationship in schools. It is difficult to get an exact figure on the cost, but it has been suggested to me that we would have had to pay at least \$10 million per annum if the former minister had overturned that policy. Good on the member for Willagee, the former Minister for Education and Training, for refusing to do that! Of course, his replacement as Minister for Education and Training, Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich, very quickly rolled over and had her belly tickled by the miscellaneous workers' union

Mrs C.A. Martin: Do not be so gross in your description of a previous minister. How rude is that!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It is a common turn of phrase to say that someone has rolled over and had her belly tickled.

Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

Mrs C.A. Martin: What sort of man are you? You are a disgrace.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I could use some of the more colourful language that the member for Kimberley is known for as she shares her love for the drummer of Midnight Oil. I think she was right in relation to that.

Notwithstanding that, as a fundamental policy position we are not going to confuse procurement processes with delivering industrial relations outcomes. There are plenty of processes in place, some of which I have outlined, that deliver industrial relations outcomes.

I want to point out to members that Western Australia has an existing policy—the minimum standards and conditions of employment policy of 2002. I have been advised that it applies to most contracts for goods and services supplied to the state government. Under this policy, contractors and subcontractors must ensure that employment conditions are consistent with industry standards as expressed in awards and agreements. Western Australia already has a safety mechanism in place for government agencies that procure goods and services.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Is that a corruption of the procurement process? Can't you simply change the standard?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The standard will ensure that things are done properly and in a lawful way, and that is a fair policy. That is the policy for which we have reiterated our support. We are not going to adopt the former government's fair pay and conditions policy.

Mr E.S. Ripper: So you have an unfair pay and conditions policy.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Did the Leader of the Opposition make a submission in relation to minimum pay?

Mr E.S. Ripper: A red herring!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The Leader of the Opposition sent in a red herring! Did he send a red herring off to Julia Gillard? Has the Leader of the Opposition raised the issues with Julia Gillard, his federal colleague? Has the Leader of the Opposition got on the blower to Julia Gillard and said, "Listen, Deputy Prime Minister, we have a real issue"? Did the Leader of the Opposition mount an argument when he was in government on the basis that the cost of living in Western Australia is higher than it is around the rest of Australia, so we should be helped out? Did the Leader of the Opposition do that?

Mr E.S. Ripper: Use the power you have got. Do not ask other people to use powers they have not got.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The Leader of the Opposition did nothing, and we have made those submissions that the former government for some bizarre reason chose not to make. For some bizarre reason the former government chose not to participate in the proper processes by which wages are set in WA. The Leader of the Opposition comes into this place and criticises this government because we will not confuse procurement with labour market outcomes, yet members opposite refused to participate in that process.

Amendment to Motion

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I wish to move an amendment to the motion. I move —

To delete all words after "offices".

MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont — Leader of the Opposition) [5.57 pm]: It is extraordinary that the Treasurer has sought to delete the words that support the member for Morley. The member for Morley said that in his view the hourly rate for cleaners was not only abhorrent but also just plain wrong, and he sided with the cleaners for a pay rise, no matter whom they get it from. That is what the member for Morley said, and the Treasurer has moved to delete the suggestion that the house support those statements of the member for Morley. How embarrassing for the member for Morley that when the opposition suggests that the house support his views, the Treasurer moves that that support be deleted.

Several members interjected.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: The Treasurer has moved to delete those words. We do not support the deletion of those words.

Mr I.M. Britza: That does not change the outcome.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: There will be a debate on the amendment. We do not support, and cannot support, the deletion of those words because they go to the crux of the issue, which is the rate of pay for people who could be employed directly by the government but who, because of a decision to contract out that service, are employed by the private sector on a lower wage.

Mr T.R. Buswell: You made that decision when you were in government.

Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

Mr E.S. RIPPER: We made a decision to put a new standard into the contracting arrangements, which the now Treasurer calls corruption of the contracting arrangements, so that financial managers in the public sector would have no incentive to save money by contracting out a service through cutting cleaners' wages. The government has it within its power to uphold that decision or reject it. The government has made a clear, moral choice. It has decided that the purity of the procurement policy is to be placed above the demonstrable needs of some of the lowest income workers in our community. That is the choice the government had before it; that is the choice the government has made and no amount of blame shifting or obfuscation about submissions —

Mr I.M. Britza: What?

Mr E.S. RIPPER: The member heard the word—obfuscation. Obfuscation is a hard word to say but I have said it three times now and I will not attempt a fourth occasion. No amount of that will divert us from the clear choice before the house. To reinforce that choice, we will not support the deletion of the member for Morley's words; we think they are appropriate words to describe the situation that cleaners are in and we will vote to retain those words in the motion.

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn) [6.01 pm]: As the Leader of the Opposition indicated, the Labor Party will oppose the deletion of those words from this motion. To take up a couple of issues raised: I put it to the Treasurer that it is custom and practice in both the private and public sectors that principals who contract services get involved with the wage outcomes of their contractors and their employees because, at the end of the day, they pay for them. It is not unusual. The private sector does this all the time because the people involved know that they must carry the wages bill, the extra cost that the contractors will pass on to them. Therefore, they get themselves involved, some times to a significant extent, with the contractors' negotiations and their employees. They do not leave it just to the marketplace. For obvious reasons they do not simply say, "Look, this is a matter between the contractors and their employees". They must pay the freight at the end of the day and they want a sustainable wage outcome that will be passed on to them as the principals. That is all we are asking for here.

If the Treasurer has a problem with the whole content of the fair-pay policy, that is one thing, but a component of the fair-pay policy is the wage increase for those very, very low-paid workers who clean government office buildings. It is not outside any procurement policy for the government of the day, acting as the principal, to involve itself in wage negotiations between the contractors and the employees. It cannot rely only on the minimum wage outcome, because the money being sought is over and above the minimum wage outcome. The only way that can be achieved is by agreement. That is what this fair-pay policy was. It was an agreement between the contractors' association representing all the contractors, the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection representing the government, and the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union. It was an agreement to pay over and above the minimum wage.

I understand why the Treasurer is taking the position he is in wanting a clean, defined procurement policy. He made the point very clearly, to which, as then Treasurer, the now Leader of the Opposition similarly argued. But that does not impede the Treasurer from passing on an increase in the contractors' costs that will eventually flow on to workers in their wages. He can do that and pass on those costs to the contractors—cross his fingers and hope they pass them on to the employees. They may or may not. Whether they would pass on the higher contracting rate they would receive from the government to their employees was the issue that took the time between February and the election, although it was not resolved even by the time the election happened.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Were there any discussions about the union demands for right of entry as part of that contract?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That was all resolved in the agreement, as the Treasurer knows. It was written into the agreement in February.

Mr T.R. Buswell: What was written in; it was not just about wages, was it?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: No. There were a number of things in the fair-pay policy; I accept that. That is why I said that if the Treasurer has a problem with the whole policy, that is one issue. Perhaps from his perspective—not that I agree with him—it would be preferable to ditch that.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I thought the metalworkers and the missos got on.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I am putting to the Treasurer that there is a component of the whole policy that goes to these low-paid workers' wage increases. If the Treasurer does not like the policy, for crying out loud, he should at

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Mr Fran Logan; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Ian Britza; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Joe Francis; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Paul Miles; Mr John Hyde; Mr Troy Buswell

least pick that up and pass it on to the contractors and have no more to do with it. Let the market sort itself out from there, hoping the contractors will pass on those increased rates to the workers as higher wage rates.

It was that issue—to ensure that all those contract companies that cleaned government buildings would pass on that wage increase—that took the length of time between February until the election, but it was still not resolved. Treasury wanted to know about it; Treasury wanted to ensure that the extra money those contractors would get would end up not in their pockets but in their workers’ pockets. That is why Treasury was involved in the negotiations, which took the time running up to the election, but was not resolved. Here we are now saying to the Treasurer, if he does not like the policy, ditch it, but take out the component that deals with those workers’ wage increases and pass it on. That is why the opposition opposes the deletion of the wording.

MR I.M. BRITZA (Morley) [6.07 pm]: I want to briefly speak to the amendment. Contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition said, the amendment does not embarrass me at all. It keeps the motion in line with our hearts’ desire, which is to take care of the cleaners. I received my “payment” today through all the wonderful compliments from the other side. That is enough for me; I am very happy. The amendment does exactly what we on both sides of the house want it to. The second reason I support the amendment is that it would be very difficult to convince me that the opposition wants the full motion passed for any reason other than purely to make a political point. That is not enough for me.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result —

Ayes (29)

Mr P. Abetz	Mr M.J. Cowper	Mr R.F. Johnson	Mr A.J. Simpson
Mr F.A. Alban	Mr J.H.D. Day	Mr A. Krsticevic	Mr M.W. Sutherland
Mr C.J. Barnett	Mr J.M. Francis	Mr W.R. Marmion	Mr T.K. Waldron
Mr I.C. Blayney	Mr B.J. Grylls	Mr P.T. Miles	Dr J.M. Woollard
Mr I.M. Britza	Dr K.D. Hames	Ms A.R. Mitchell	Mr J.E. McGrath (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr T.R. Buswell	Mrs L.M. Harvey	Dr M.D. Nahan	
Mr G.M. Castrilli	Mr A.P. Jacob	Mr C.C. Porter	
Dr E. Constable	Dr G.G. Jacobs	Mr D.T. Redman	

Noes (28)

Ms L.L. Baker	Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr A.P. O’Gorman	Mr T.G. Stephens
Mr J.J.M. Bowler	Mr J.C. Kobelke	Mr P. Papalia	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mr A.J. Carpenter	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr A.J. Waddell
Mr V.A. Catania	Mr J.A. McGinty	Ms M.M. Quirk	Mr P.B. Watson
Mr R.H. Cook	Mr M. McGowan	Mr E.S. Ripper	Mr M.P. Whitely
Ms J.M. Freeman	Mrs C.A. Martin	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr J.N. Hyde	Mr M.P. Murray	Ms R. Saffioti	Mr D.A. Templeman (<i>Teller</i>)

Amendment thus passed.

Motion, as Amended

Question put and passed.