

INFRASTRUCTURE WESTERN AUSTRALIA BILL 2019

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR J.E. McGRATH (South Perth) [2.59 pm]: Before we broke for question time, I was discussing the fact that of course the opposition supports what the Premier is trying to do and that it is one of the government's election commitments. We would all like decisions about infrastructure projects to be made without them being politicised; indeed, our communities would like that to happen, too. We will have some questions about how the Infrastructure Western Australia Bill will be implemented and whether it will actually happen in the world of modern politics.

I want to go back over a little history. Our government was elected in 2008. Premier Colin Barnett was committed to rebuilding the state. He believed that his ascension to the Premiership had delivered him that opportunity because becoming Premier seemed unlikely at the time because he was on his way out of politics and was going to retire. His goal became more crucial when the global financial crisis occurred very soon after the election. In some respects, I still believe that if Alan Carpenter, whom I see swimming regularly at Port Beach, had not called an early election, it would have been difficult for us to win government on that occasion. It was a very close election. The global financial crisis hit when the election would have normally been held, and had it been held then, the circumstances would have favoured the incumbent government. At the time we won government, businesses and projects were on the brink of drying up and therefore a strong capital works program was highly crucial. The Barnett government delivered that with various projects, such as Elizabeth Quay, Optus Stadium, sinking the rail line in the CBD and building new hospitals. Those major infrastructure projects created employment and helped to stimulate the Western Australian economy.

In his second reading speech, the Premier said —

... the government's decision-making on infrastructure should be based on robust and evidence-based planning and not on short-term political gains.

I agree with that. He also said —

Quality infrastructure planning and decision-making based on sound analysis should not be left solely to politics ...

During the conversation, some reference was made to the Langoulant report, which was critical of some of the projects implemented under the Barnett government. I will look now at some of the major projects undertaken by the Barnett government, to name a few. There was no politics with Fiona Stanley Hospital; there was a need. There was no politics with Perth Children's Hospital; there was a need. There was no politics with the new hospital in Midland; there was a need. There was no politics with Karratha Health Campus; there was a need. There was no politics with the new stadium and its pedestrian bridge over the Swan River; there was a need. Subiaco Oval had become tired, old and run-down and Perth needed a new stadium. Even the previous Labor government realised that, but it did not pick Burswood as the site. The Perth City Link project was a visionary project that reconnected the CBD with Northbridge for the first time in 100 years. It is now an exciting commercial and entertainment destination. I was there just the other day and it is vibrant in Yagan Square. There was no politics with the number of primary and secondary schools that our government built in the growing suburbs. All governments have to do that because as suburbs grow and the population moves, families need to be able to send their children to school.

In his second reading speech, the Premier spoke about the need for an Infrastructure Western Australia body that would —

... support our economy, enable job creation and build better communities.

Under the model that we have now, the projects that we delivered did that. When a party comes to government, departments put forward a lot of projects, whether those projects are in the water or transport portfolios. There may be recommendations of new education facilities, such as schools, and the need for more investments in police facilities. Such project recommendations are being put forward now by government departments. We were aware that the Department of Transport had a number of projects in its forward planning. But it is up to the government of the day to decide which project to move forward. Sometimes that decision will be based on politics and the electorate the project is in. I have had very little luck getting projects that I believe are very important in my electorate of South Perth. My constituents sometimes say to me, "If only we were in a marginal seat!" I would be a lot older than what I am now if I were in a really marginal seat. They say that we do not get anything. Liberal governments do not spend much in South Perth, nor do Labor governments. That is about to change.

In the 13 years that I have been in Parliament, I have been pushing for a Manning Road onramp onto Kwinana Freeway heading south. I am not an engineer like the member for Nedlands, but I know it is a good project. My constituents know a good project when they see one. In all that time, I have not been able to deliver that project, even when we were in government. I asked the former Premier, “Why can’t I get this?” He replied, “Oh, well, you know, one day you’ll get it.” The federal government put some money into it because it is in the seat of Swan, which is a marginal seat. We went to the last election saying that we would finally build the ramp. We lost the election but the Labor government has agreed to deliver it. I thank the Labor government and my federal colleagues in the seat of Swan. I hope to be there when the Manning Road ramp is opened. I am sure the Minister for Transport will invite me as the local member. Under the system we have now, it is very difficult, and I am not sure whether this bill will change that.

Ms J.M. Freeman: What a shame your government didn’t honour MAX light rail.

Mr J.E. McGrath: I thought the Metro Area Express light rail was a good project, but I did not make those decisions. They were made by other people in our government. I like light rail. I go to Melbourne a lot and I love riding on trams. I think it is a great way to move people around. What I am saying is that as the system operates now, departments put projects together and when a new minister walks into the office on the first day, he would ask the director general, “What’s happening?” The director general would say, “There’s a lot happening, minister. We’ve been working very hard.” The minister would ask, “What have you got for me?” They would say, “We’ve got this project and we believe we should have a tunnel under the Swan River at the bottom of Berwick Street to bring traffic into the city and out to the western suburbs”, which is a great idea. The minister would go to the Premier and say, “I think we need a tunnel under the Swan River over at Vic Park to save all that traffic going through South Perth.” The Premier would say, “Go away, please. There’s more important things than that.” That is what happens. I will certainly be listening to the information the Premier provides us during consideration in detail. I like the concept, I really do, but can it be managed? People are saying that this bill is all about Premier McGowan controlling every bit of infrastructure and if a piece of infrastructure is recommended, Premier McGowan will be able to say, “No, we’re not going to do it.”

If this becomes law, another Premier—it might be a Liberal Premier—will be in the same position. We want to ensure that when it comes in, there will be a rock-solid system for the future infrastructure plans for Western Australia. I believe that the first plan will be a 20-year plan. Our city is changing by the day. I am mostly interested in traffic, because Kwinana Freeway is right on the edge of my electorate and there is a lot of through traffic. As the city grows and begins to burst at the seams, we will have to find other ways to get people around. I think this would be a no-brainer for the new body that will be put in place under this legislation.

How will this new body work with Infrastructure Australia? Infrastructure Australia does a lot of work on projects. In fact, it says —

High Priority Projects are potential infrastructure solutions for which a full business case has been completed and been positively assessed by the Infrastructure Australia Board. A High Priority Project addresses a major problem or opportunity of national significance.

Infrastructure Australia obviously recommended funding for the Perth Freight Link, which the current federal government agreed with. It was something that the previous government took to the last state election; it said that it would not build the Perth Freight Link. It put it out there and took it to the election and won the election. That is a policy that it did not agree with. What would happen if Infrastructure WA came up with the same proposal and said, “Although we did not do the Perth Freight Link in 2017, now is the time; we should do something.” It might put it forward, and it would then be up to the government of the day to decide whether to run with it. The Premier’s second reading speech states that Infrastructure WA will be able to hold the government to account. I wonder how much this statutory body will be able to hold an elected government to account. I would not think it would be that much. It could say, “We’ve put this forward; we think you should do it”, but, at the end of the day, all these decisions are made by the government of the day. It makes those decisions and it lives or dies on those decisions when it goes to the polls at an election.

Getting back to Infrastructure Australia, it also looked at Canning Bridge in South Perth, which is close to my heart and that of the member for Bateman. It put the Canning Bridge project forward as something that should be done. Infrastructure Australia included the Canning Bridge crossing capacity and interchange in its list of priority initiatives in the “2019 Infrastructure Priority List: Project and initiative summaries”. In that report, Infrastructure Australia stated —

Canning Bridge ... bus and rail services ... is forecast to become capacity constrained in the longer term.

I know that the Premier drives past it every day on his way to work. I have heard him say that sometimes he takes a little rat run off the freeway.

[Member’s time extended.]

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 21 March 2019]

p1731a-1746a

Mr John McGrath; Ms Libby Mettam; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Zak Kirkup

Mr J.E. McGRATH: The Premier knows that there is a bottleneck in the Canning Bridge precinct. The Infrastructure Australia 2019 report goes on to state —

In March 2018, a peak month for boardings among students, there were approximately 4,000 average weekday train boardings (of whom over 2,800 transferred from buses).

It is a big connection where people come in from the suburbs and jump off a bus and onto a train. It continues —

The current alignment of the bus station also causes road congestion. Buses travelling east along the Canning Highway block a traffic lane when stopping at the bus station, interrupting other vehicles travelling along the Canning Highway. Similarly, buses stopping at the bus station during peak periods can block the northbound Kwinana Freeway bus lane access ramp. Along the Canning Highway, there is only one dedicated bus bay, which is in the westbound direction, close to the bus station.

This project is very high on Infrastructure Australia's priority list. It is up to the McGowan government to decide whether to put state money into this project for the member for Bateman and I, and all the people who live in the area, the people who catch the train and the Curtin University students who get off the train and onto a bus. There is a plan for a new bus exchange. I do not know whether it would be a \$100 million project, but if it was all bottled up together, it could be a \$100 million project and then Infrastructure WA could look at it. As it sits now, there is a Liberal seat on either side of the station—Bateman and South Perth—but the government might say that it is more important for it to put infrastructure into seats that are more marginal. I would hope that that would not happen, but those things can happen. The Premier is saying that he does not like this; it is not good politics. I could not get the Manning Road ramp from my Premier because I was in a safe seat. These are some of the issues. I wonder whether some electorates are missing out because of that politicisation. I think it will be hard to stop that, because, at the end of the day, a government wants to be re-elected. It does not want to lose an election because it has put infrastructure in the wrong place or somewhere it will not be a great vote winner for it.

The bill proposes to define “infrastructure” broadly to also include education and training. I wonder whether that would include new schools; I do not know. I will ask the Premier during the consideration in detail stage how widely this definition will extend to education and training. Two high schools in my electorate, Como Secondary College and Kent Street Senior High School, are both badly in need of a rebuild. When we were in government, we went to the last election saying that if Western Power was privatised, we would have a program in the state of rebuilding older high schools that were built in the 1960s and 1970s. Como Secondary College and Kent Street Senior High School would have got \$10 million each. If a batch of high schools around the state got \$10 million each, it would take only 10 schools to reach the \$100 million amount. I am not sure whether Infrastructure WA would also look at things like that.

In closing, I think this is a good idea. I would like to think it will work. The Nationals WA have some concern about the board and whether there will be country representation on the board. I note that the Premier has said that half the board will be non-government people and that no more than half will be government people. There will be a reasonable cross-section of people on the board. Obviously, it will have to be a very high powered board, with the processes that it will go through. How distant will the board be from the Premier? Will it just hand the Premier a list of infrastructure projects that it believes should be done?

The other thing is: would that board be able to meet with private sector operators that have an infrastructure project? There have been a couple of suggestions of building over rail lines; one came up when we were in government about building over the train line near Roe Street. I think that will happen. When you go to big cities around the world, if they need to build, no-one builds on a train line unless it is a government and it allows it. One day, if we get a train station in South Perth, there might be a building above it, and it could be privately funded. It happens around the world. We have all these rail reserves, including the rail reserve on the Fremantle to Perth line.

There is a lot of land there. One day, as our city grows, we will not want to live on the other side of Mandurah anymore; we have to make provision for density, and that is why I support density in my electorate. I know the Premier does, too.

These are big decisions that government can make. I am just wondering whether the new body will look around and say, “Oh well, I've got a good idea: why don't we look at the Fremantle line and we'll do a big development down the Fremantle line.” What will be the connection between the existing departments and the new body? The existing departments will obviously still be working on projects. I think the Premier suggested there might be a sharing of ideas or consultation between, say, the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and the new body, if there is a big project. I do not know how the Premier sees that happening, but we support the bill and I am sure some of my colleagues will have some questions about the project when we go into consideration in detail. It is something the government took to the election, and when you take something to an election and you are voted in, you proceed with it, so it will be interesting to see how this goes.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse) [3.21 pm]: I would also like to contribute to debate on the Infrastructure Western Australia Bill 2019 and acknowledge that the opposition supports it. This is legislation that will establish Infrastructure Western Australia, acknowledging that it was an election commitment of what is now the McGowan government. It is my understanding that the legislation will establish IWA as a statutory authority that will provide independent advice to government on the state's infrastructure needs and priorities. Although it is only right, appropriate and just for a bureaucracy to provide such advice, and there is much support for this legislation, it is also essential that decisions are made by government.

Many will agree that governments of the day are evaluated on their performance in infrastructure building—arguably more so than on what comes through this place in terms of the legislative agenda. It is the infrastructure program of a government that effectively defines that government. As the member for Vasse and shadow Minister for Tourism, I would like to take this opportunity to talk about two infrastructure projects that I would like this government to support. The number one infrastructure priority for the electorate of Vasse is the completion of dualling of Bussell Highway between Capel and Busselton. The 46-kilometre stretch of the Bussell Highway between Busselton and Bunbury is a four-lane dual carriageway, apart from a 17-kilometre section between Busselton and Capel, which is a two-lane single carriageway.

This is a critical road for the local community and an important link between the large regional centres of Bunbury and Busselton. It also links in with the Margaret River tourist area. We have all heard about the Road Trip State campaign promoted by the government, and it is very important that roads and carriageways, such as the dual carriageway I am referring to, are completed. The traffic flow to and from this important tourist region becomes very congested and slow-moving, particularly after long weekends. The most recent long weekend traffic counts recorded more than 20 000 vehicles between 27 December and 2 March. This section of road has also been identified by the RAC as one of Western Australia's most dangerous unfunded roads and one of the riskiest roads in Western Australia. Over the five-year period from 2013 to 2017 there were 134 crashes between Busselton and Capel in both the dual and non-dual carriageway sections, of which 65 included major damage. Between 2011 and 2015 there was a total of 74 crashes on the 17-kilometre stretch of non-dual carriageway on Bussell Highway. It is very important that this project is prioritised and completed.

In August 2017, I tabled in this place a petition with 4 273 signatures calling for the dualling of Bussell Highway between Capel and Busselton. Under the previous government there were completed planning and design works, approvals and service relocations to support the continuation of the dualling that had been completed between Busselton and Bunbury. The former government made a commitment to progress those works if re-elected. I hosted a community meeting between the shadow Minister for Road Safety and our local Road Safety Committee, as well as pursuing a portion of the federal government's \$44 million of regional road funding for this vital project.

The Labor Party has made all sorts of comments about this stretch of road and this project. On 3 March 2017, the Premier said —

... the Labor Party would ensure the continuation of Royalties for Regions, which would be put towards generating employment and fixing dangerous regional roads. Mr McGowan said the extension of the dual carriageway on Bussell Highway would be a measure Labor would consider if elected.

On 12 September 2017, the Minister for Transport stated —

“We recognise there are a range of pressures on roads across the state, which is why the budget included a 20 per cent increase in regional roads funding.

...

While upgrades to Bussell Highway did not get funding in this budget, we will look at opportunities through the Road Safety Program.”

The McGowan government's commitment to road safety is of concern. It said last year that there would be a 20 per cent increase in regional road funding, but despite Bussell Highway being identified by the RAC as one of Western Australia's most dangerous roads, it was not funded in the 2017–18 budget.

On 17 May 2017 I wrote to Hon Darren Chester, MP, the then federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, seeking federal government funding for this important project. His response stated —

While there is no funding available for additional projects in the South West Region at this time, funding could be considered in the context of future budgets with the necessary support of the WA Government. It would, however, be a matter of the WA Government submitting a detailed project proposal.

As such, I encourage you to continue to work with all levels of government in WA, including local, state and federal representatives to develop proposals for future consideration.

[Quorum formed.]

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 21 March 2019]

p1731a-1746a

Mr John McGrath; Ms Libby Mettam; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Zak Kirkup

Ms L. METTAM: On 10 November 2017, the Liberal member for Forrest told the *Busselton Dunsborough Times* that, unfortunately, this project was not a priority for the state government.

This takes me to Labor's infrastructure priorities and I refer to an article in *Business News Western Australia* with the heading "Labor resets priority projects" —

Mark McGowan and his team committed to about 90 new and existing infrastructure projects worth more than \$5 billion during the election campaign, according to the Civil Contractors Federation.

This includes Labor's signature project, the \$2.75 billion Metronet heavy rail package, which the government aims to deliver over the coming six years.

To put this in perspective, the Barnett government's capital works budget for 2016–17 was \$5.5 billion, with nearly one third committed to transport infrastructure.

With Labor aiming to lift spending on public transport while keeping total spending under control, priorities will have to be reorganised to compensate.

The government provided some clarity on its path last month when it released a list of 17 new road projects that are fully funded, courtesy of a deal between the state and federal governments.

There is a list of the major projects. Clearly, we see by this list that Labor's approach to infrastructure has a strong emphasis particularly on regional Western Australia, favouring the seats of Albany, Bunbury and Collie. I hope the establishment of Infrastructure WA will lead to addressing the blatant focus on the Labor-held seats in regional WA and outstanding needs such as the dual carriageway, which largely not only affects the community of the Vasse electorate but also has big implications for regional road tourism.

This is an issue that has not been identified and addressed by this state government. As I said, it is an issue that needs to be underlined. I do not necessarily have much confidence, but I hope that the government makes this project a priority. The Minister for Transport has said on multiple occasions that she would lobby the federal government for funding. I have asked in parliamentary questions exactly which minister she has lobbied, and I look forward to receiving responses. This is essential infrastructure and I very much hope it will be identified by Infrastructure WA in its 20-year state infrastructure strategy.

I acknowledge the value of another piece of infrastructure that relates to the south west region and tourism in general, and that is the Busselton–Margaret River Regional Airport. It is a key transformational project for the south west tourism industry, a project that has been supported by all 12 local governments as their number one most significant project. It is an exciting and unprecedented opportunity for further growth in tourism and visitor numbers to the south west region, something this state certainly needs to support and endorse. It represents great opportunities into the future for air freight and agriculture as we look towards developing this airport to cater for the international Asian markets. As identified in the former government's business case, it has the potential to develop jobs and maximise diversity in the region. For that reason, through a business case that was supported by government, the former Liberal–National government provided funding of \$45 million through royalties for regions, \$10 million through the Department of Transport, \$300 000 through the South West Development Commission and \$250 000 through Tourism WA. This was backed up by a commitment of almost \$10 million from the commonwealth government. It represents a huge opportunity in the area of tourism for the region. In the south west, particularly in the Margaret River region, interstate tourism numbers remain relatively strong. There has been a 29 per cent growth since 2016 in the number of interstate visitors choosing this most popular tourist destination outside Perth, with a three-year aggregate growth of 14 per cent. That reinforces the importance of a commitment from the McGowan government to show some real support for this project. It also represents a huge opportunity to, in time, connect the region to Asia. Some excerpts from an article in the *Australia China Business Review* of April 2018 state —

If Western Australia can crack the challenge of air access, the state seems perfectly poised to capitalise on China's outbound tourism boom.

...

... with the latest data from Tourism Research Australia indicating that more than 1.2 million Chinese made their way to Australia, it is easy to see upside for further growth.

...

Chinese tourists are now largely chasing new experiences, described in Mandarin by the term shendulü, meaning in-depth travel.

With WA's tourism offering comprising a raft of unique experiences, from the high adventure of Bungle Bungles in the Kimberley or swimming with whale sharks at Ningaloo, to the gourmet delights

of the Margaret River wine region, it would be easy to see the state swiftly rising up the list of desired destinations.

Of course, standing in the way of the WA government's ambitions of becoming a top tourism destination for the Chinese is getting them here in the first place.

...

Regional airport upgrades have promised better access, but with the City of Greater Geraldton still looking for funding and the City of Busselton's airport upgrade on ice until an airline commits to an eastern states route, any potential direct connection to the regions from China seems like a distant dream.

That article indicates the great potential for regional aviation and access. It also refers to the lack of commitment to an airline. However, I highlight how this process and the Busselton airport has, unfortunately, been politicised by this government. When Labor was elected in March 2017, it announced a funding review and stalled the airport development, which saw the project delayed originally by six months and clouded by uncertainty. Major issues around openness and accountability showed the politicisation of this project.

Despite support from Tourism WA, the Minister for Tourism claimed that the stakeholders had been sold a pup in their belief that international air carriers would consider routes to Busselton. Tourism Minister Papalia said the demand was simply not there; it would be great if airlines were interested but, unfortunately, there was no sound business case. Through FOI, I uncovered a letter written in June 2017 from the director of aviation development and policy, Tourism WA, that stated quite the opposite. It stated that the most recent meetings the city and Tourism WA had undertaken in Sydney and Melbourne in late March 2017 identified positive levels of interest by all three airlines that they met with. The airlines indicated a level of seriousness in their view. They also indicated an interest in flying as early as the latter part of 2017. The Minister for Tourism also stated that the government, through Tourism WA, was working closely with the city and airlines to develop services for the airport. This also was not the case, because we know that shortly after Tourism WA penned a letter that indicated a level of support and seriousness in seeing airlines commit to flying into Busselton, Tourism WA was removed from airline engagement. This government is meant to support regional aviation and the communities of Western Australia.

I refer to the commitment that the Minister for Tourism had made, stating that he would facilitate improved regional aviation practice across all parts of WA as a key part of the "Two Year Action Plan for Tourism Western Australia—2018 and 2019", and would continue to work extensively in this space. That is quite the opposite of what happened. The McGowan government has done all it can to undermine this project, which highlights the selective nature of the government's enthusiasm for regional aviation development.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms L. METTAM: Although the Minister for Tourism had illustrated that the government was committed to regional access across all parts of WA as a key part of the two-year action plan, we saw something different. In fact, the government removed Busselton–Margaret River Regional Airport as an objective in the two-year action plan, despite it being drafted and in the original document that was prepared by Tourism WA. The Minister for Regional Development, Alannah MacTiernan, continues to say—as recently as December last year—that the government is working to secure an airline through the South West Development Commission and Tourism WA. But, again, the material retrieved through the FOI process, this time dating back to May 2017, shows something quite different. In fact, it highlights the fact that Labor was looking to unpick this project.

An FOI request uncovered emails from the South West Development Commission to the Office of the Minister for Regional Development. The South West Development Commission's view is —

... that given the status of the project, having commenced construction and given the interdependencies of the airside and landside components (required for ongoing viability) it may be difficult to 'unpick' ...

For this FOI request, it took over 200 days to receive the information from Minister MacTiernan. We are also aware that the minister advised the City of Busselton to terminate the contract only two days after it had been signed. The South West Development Commission advised that it was only aware that the contract for the terminal was awarded on 5 February 2018, despite attending a meeting of south west tourism operators at Bunker Bay on 2 February at which the city advised that the terminal contract had been awarded. Yet again, an FOI uncovered that the Minister for Regional Development's office was well aware that this decision needed to be made prior to the contract being awarded. An email dated 18 May 2017 to the minister for Regional Development's office from the Minister for Transport's office states, according to my notes —

I met with Aviation team at DoT today, and they think the runway project is too late to be altered. Also, the City has started the pre-tender qualification process for the terminal project. The Government will need to decide and inform the City ahead of this contract is let.

That should read “ahead of it being let”. There is a grammatical error in the quotation. This email raises some concern. For a range of reasons, the south west region community should feel concerned about this government’s commitment to regional aviation and the Premier’s commitment to be a Premier for all this state. Let us look at the series of actions that this government has undertaken in relation to that project. For example, Tourism WA was removed from leading aviation development, just months after it wrote a letter proposing that there was a level of interest from at least three airlines, one of which was very serious about operating later that year. The government halted the project and tried to hold it up for over six months. The terminal is still yet to be completed. I am aware that many airlines are using as a negotiation tool the fact that they know that if they make a commitment to fly into Busselton, the local government of Busselton will receive the benefits of a completed terminal. As such, they are using that in their deliberations.

It also raises the issue of this government’s level of seriousness about building tourism across the state, because from the tourism figures, we know that growth in WA is certainly small compared with the rest of the country. A national tourism boom is happening across Australia, but WA is not enjoying the benefits of that boom. Most importantly, when we look at those figures, we see that fewer people are spending time in regional Western Australia. They are spending less money and they are staying for shorter periods than they did previously. I understand that the Premier held a roundtable when Labor first came into government, and the issue of the Busselton airport was raised. He asked people around that table a couple of questions. I caution the Premier that with any advice he receives on the Busselton airport and the merits of this project, he takes into account the advice of Tourism WA, the development commission, industry and stakeholders and all those local governments that have supported this project so well.

The Busselton airport makes sense. I think the expansion and dualling of Bussell Highway also makes sense for very obvious reasons. Why that project should be progressed is quite logical. I hope that Infrastructure WA and the McGowan government realise the potential of those two projects. The Busselton airport is a game-changing project that needs support. We know that regional aviation is a significant challenge, but the reason that we talk about it so much and that there is an effort to invest in this area is that when regional aviation is successful, it pays significant dividends to not only the tourism sector but also the surrounding small businesses. For those reasons, I encourage the Premier and the government to find some support for the airport and Bussell Highway projects.

I will leave my comments there. As I stated in my introduction, it is the infrastructure projects in Western Australia that define a government. The Premier has stated that he will be a Premier for all of Western Australia. How he approaches issues in regions such as this one, supporting a high-demand area of great tourism potential, will also define his government.

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.49 pm]: I rise to contribute to the debate on the Infrastructure Western Australia Bill 2019.

The premise of this legislation is that infrastructure planning in Western Australia has occurred in an ad hoc manner and could be improved. I accept that planning for public infrastructure can always be improved. However, I would like to put on the record that there was effort put into long-term planning for Western Australia under the term of the Barnett Liberal government. We had the Directions 2031 planning document and on top of that we built Perth and Peel@3.5 million. Changing the title and the target of that document to focus more around population growth was deemed to be a smart way to look at infrastructure planning in the long-term, because population growth in Western Australia clearly surged during the eight years of the Barnett Liberal government. That put a lot of pressure on the government at the time to keep up with infrastructure needs. Indeed, it would have been difficult to predict that so many people would move to the state in such a short space of time, and that had not been incorporated into any of the planning documents existing at the time. Learning from that mistake, the Barnett government geared the subsequent planning framework Perth and Peel@3.5 million and then “Perth Transport Plan for 3.5 million and beyond” around reaching certain trigger points when we achieved different population milestones.

A lot of consultation occurred around those planning documents. Consultation on the transport plan in particular commenced in 2011. Indeed, a number of contributions from various people and organisations went into the document, including submissions from 27 local government authorities, seven local government groups or bodies, three political members, 12 government departments, and six local community and public advocacy groups. Two universities, 10 industrial advocacy groups, and 12 land developers, planners and consultants also contributed. Perth Airport put in a submission. Then there were 62 submissions from the public via a comment line or emails. There was a lot of consultation; over 1 000 submissions were received in total in the preparation of that document. Out of that document came “Perth Transport Plan for 3.5 million and beyond”.

The transport plan is obviously very important when we are looking to provide the big public transport infrastructure projects and for road network infrastructure planning. Leading up to the last election, strategic elements from the transport plan were plucked out by the then Labor opposition, and the Liberal government as

architect of the plan. As happens with a lot of infrastructure projects, the time frames to achieve some of the priorities were brought forward or put out to the community as election commitments. Out of that process, we now see commitments that the government has to honour for parts of the transport network that may not be required yet. As an example, when we look at the public transport rail network in the planning document, “Perth Transport Plan for 3.5 million and beyond”, we can see different staging of the rail link. The city to Marshall Road, east Wanneroo rail link would be required when we achieve a population of 2.7 million. The Marshall Road to Joondalup line —

[Quorum formed.]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The transport plan included the spur to Ellenbrook that would be required at a population of 3.5 million. The Perth orbital rail link from Stirling to Murdoch, Murdoch to Bayswater, and Bayswater to Stirling would be needed, once again, at a population of 3.5 million. The Bayswater to Stirling link would be required once we surpass the 3.5 million population mark. Having a look at the radial extensions, the Joondalup line to Yanchep would be required when we are looking at a population of 2.7 million and the Midland line to Bellevue at 2.7 million. The Armadale line out to Byford would be required by the time we achieve a population in Perth and Peel of 3.5 million and Cockburn Central to Thornlie would be required at 2.7 million.

The transport planning was very comprehensive and the major public transport infrastructure projects were detailed. With the introduction of this new body, the questions we are asking the Premier are: Are these previous iterations of planning documents going to be tossed out or will they be superseded by Infrastructure WA? Will departments still do the long-term planning that they did when we occupied the government bench? I know that in my police portfolio one of the first things that I requested of WA Police was that it gave me its capital investment priorities. Police, at the time, with the help of an external consultant, did a stocktake of all of its facilities. It is fair to say that it was found somewhat wanting. I think that work commenced under the former member for Hillarys, when he was Minister for Police. Out of that asset stocktake, we prioritised all of our police stations as those requiring maintenance, those that were beyond capacity and those that required a rebuild. It was a very comprehensive piece of work. It was very useful for me as a minister to take that strategic plan for Police, which told me the prioritisation of stations, in to the Expenditure Review Committee and cabinet around budget time. Informed by Perth and Peel@3.5 million, we knew where the population corridors were growing and where new police stations would be required. We knew that we would soon need a police station at Harrisdale, for example. I was very privileged as police minister to open the police station in Mt Magnet. There were upgrades at Derby and Fitzroy Crossing Police Stations. Clarkson Police Station was expanded to allow for additional detectives. Mirrabooka, Morley, Scarborough and Warwick Police Stations all had substantial upgrades.

We built capacity into those programs to ensure that there was room for additional police officers as the metropolitan area population density increased, and more police officers were required to manage it. Ballajura and Cockburn police stations were big investments, as was the Carnarvon Justice Complex, an integrated police and court facility. It was a magnificent project that I was privileged, as Minister for Police, to open with the then Attorney General, Hon Michael Mischin. Mundijong Police Station was an \$8 million investment that was unique as a development for police at the time. Because of its location, so close to areas subject to bushfires, Mundijong Police Station had water storage tanks and an independent power supply, so that the station could operate should power and water be cut off in the event of a bushfire emergency. We rebuilt Eucla Police Station, an important little outpost that does a lot of drug detection. Many drug couriers bring contraband across the Nullarbor, and Eucla police are very busy. It is a very interesting spot to do a policing stint. Augusta station was rebuilt, and Waroona, Yalgoo, Three Springs and Margaret River had major refurbishments.

We also committed \$86 million to the Armadale justice complex, in the last year of the Barnett Liberal government. We had been preparing for that for quite some time by purchasing the land for the new justice complex. The justice complex at Armadale had been in need of replacement for quite some time. I am pretty proud of that investment. People talk about the politicisation of capital projects. We are never going to win too many votes as a Liberal Party in Armadale, but we put \$86 million aside to invest in the Armadale Police Station and justice complex, because it needed doing. It was WA Police Force’s number one capital investment priority for that year, so we prioritised it and put the investment behind it. The police officers and all the people who work in the court at Armadale will be very appreciative of that project when it is finalised, and so will the victims of crime and the witnesses to crime, who previously would have to cross paths with the perpetrators of the very crimes they might be coming to court to give evidence about, or as a victim they might have to cross paths with the perpetrators in the corridors while waiting to go into the court. Once we were apprised of those problems, the government made a choice to prioritise the funding to go towards a new complex.

We also invested in other infrastructure for police, including a new police plane. The *Cygnets V* was a nearly \$3 million investment in the water police, providing a boat that could travel continuously for something like 13 hours, from memory. That gave police the capacity to get to places such as Steep Point, for example, where fishermen get washed off the cliffs into the drink. We need to get a search and rescue operation underway very

quickly. The *Cygnets* had the capability for victims, or people being rescued, to be airlifted out of tricky places and deposited onto the back of the boat. It was designed specifically to help in search and rescue operations that police are involved in as part of their daily grind.

There was significant investment in road infrastructure projects. It would be interesting to see what Infrastructure WA has to say about the Roe 8–Roe 9 project, which has been on the books as an essential component of the metropolitan area's freight network. Clearly, it is not a priority for this government. It made an election commitment—a political commitment—around not progressing with the Roe 8–Roe 9 project. I believe that Infrastructure WA is there to remove the politicisation of road projects. I would be interested to see where Infrastructure WA will land when it comes to finding an alternative to the freight and motor vehicle congestion issues in that southern corridor that were the reasons the former government put the money behind Roe 8–Roe 9. Commuters in the southern corridor have a commute time that is 20 per cent longer than any other in the Perth metropolitan area, such is the congestion. Roe 8–Roe 9 was designed to separate more of the trucking movements from the commuter movements and free up congestion in the southern corridor, giving those commuters their time back. Time spent in a car is time spent away from family, and that is why we thought that was a good project.

We also invested in information technology, making a \$142 million investment in the police digital radio network. That was essential infrastructure for police. Police in regional areas would often be attending crash scenes and, before the digital radio network came in, they would often have to leave one officer at a crash scene, while the other officer drove off to get to the top of the nearest hill to operate the radio to contact other emergency services. The digital radio network investment, opening up that access to the radio frequency for not only police, but also fire and emergency services and corrective services, was a very significant infrastructure investment that will ultimately be saving lives, as we speak, because we will be getting people from crash scenes to the medical treatment that they need in a more timely fashion. We also invested in a new computer-aided dispatch system. That is one of the tools that police use to understand the job they are going to, and perhaps the history of any people they might find there. It was an \$11 million investment with Motorola to provide that system, giving police modern operability in their vehicles as they go about their jobs. That is not a terribly sexy commitment to sell, but it is an important asset investment to improve the effectiveness of our police officers.

[Member's time extended.]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: There was also a lot of investment in the TAFE system, including \$12 million at the Australian Centre for Energy and Process Training to provide training for the resources sector; \$17.85 million at Esperance TAFE, which I know the member for Roe and the former member for Eyre were very grateful to see; \$9.5 million for the Pilbara electrical centre at the North Regional TAFE; and \$9 million in the Durack Institute of Technology at Geraldton TAFE to train people in the Geraldton region in the electrical and engineering trades. I know the members for Mandurah and Dawesville were very happy to see investment in the Peel TAFE. There was also a \$6 million investment in Challenger TAFE.

To go back to the premise of Infrastructure WA, that the planning in government has been ad hoc, the reason for the investment in Challenger TAFE was the need to expand healthcare training in the Peel region, because the agencies did some work on this and found that the over 70-year-old demographic in that Peel area was going to increase from 14 per cent of the population to 20 per cent of the population by 2026. We obviously needed a training facility close to where people lived and close to where it could provide services for people aged over 70 years who often at that point start to require additional services for their health and mobility and those sorts of things. We made an investment in Challenger TAFE because the agencies had a growing demand to train people in these areas and the TAFE needed the investment to provide trained people to deliver those services.

The interesting thing with Infrastructure Western Australia is whether it will be involved in assessing all the government's infrastructure projects. Obviously, Infrastructure Western Australia will be set up before the government's Metronet agenda is finalised and new projects commence. Given those Metronet projects are significant in nature, one would hope that before investment decisions are made, Infrastructure Western Australia will assess the investment decision before it is finalised to commence and progress those works. Similarly, I see Infrastructure Western Australia as being one of those bodies that could provide support for a government when it makes significant decisions about the information technology infrastructure that will support Metronet. Had Infrastructure Western Australia been in place, perhaps a different decision would have been made about the Huawei contract—a \$206 million investment in a mobile phone network for train drivers—with a company that cannot provide any of the additional benefits that were anticipated at the time of the tender. At the time of the tender, we needed a mobile phone tower, communications and data cabling network that could provide not only a communications platform for train drivers, but also an emergency mobile service and automated train control. Of course, that project has now gone to a company that has been banned from delivering some of those services. The question remains whether we will need to invest with another company to provide a framework that can facilitate the other services that will be required for the future of the rail project.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 21 March 2019]

p1731a-1746a

Mr John McGrath; Ms Libby Mettam; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Zak Kirkup

It will be really interesting to see Infrastructure Western Australia's assessment of the expansion of that IT framework. Often one of the most expensive areas of investment in government is in IT and intelligence and communication solutions. Governments often come off poorly with some of those products. The Office of Shared Services is an example of investment made in an IT product to provide the ultimate solution to streamline all government human resources—management, wages, payroll et cetera. I am here to say that that kind of utopia does not exist in government. I do not think there is a seamless way of providing centralised control of everything governments do because governments are so big and diverse in the services they provide. A one-size-fits-all approach does not work well, even though conceptually one would think that it would.

What I see as absent from the legislation, which I think is a shame, is management control over projects. From my time as minister, the most vexing problem often faced by ministers and governments in general is public servants and public servant lawyers being involved in the drafting of contracts, putting together tenders and basically setting the framework for the contracts we enter into in government. Public servants are exactly as they are labelled—servants of the public—and are there to serve the community. I fear that when public servants are sitting down in negotiations, they think that the businesspeople with whom they are dealing have the same frame of mind. They forget that businesses are there to make a profit. They think that businesses also want to serve the community in the way that public servants do. Government agencies get stitched up when they put contracts together. There could be a real benefit in having corporate expertise on a panel such as Infrastructure Western Australia because that corporate expertise could be involved in constructing the tender documents, analysing the projects and constructing the contract. The members of Infrastructure Western Australia will have their business hats on when they put contracts together and they would have corporate expertise in managing those contracts on behalf of government. People who manage big projects out in the private sector seem to manage them more effectively than governments. I think the gap in the ethics and purpose of public servants versus those in the corporate sector is where we are sadly wanting. The gap in this legislation—I stand to be corrected if I am wrong—is that Infrastructure Western Australia will not be involved in the management of projects and the analysing of contracts. Its role is more about the strategic planning and checking before a government investment decision is made to fund particular infrastructure projects, but when it comes to pulling contracts together and managing them, we will still be in the same system so the same problems will continue to occur.

That was indeed one of the issues with Perth Children's Hospital. The contract in the first place probably could have been tighter, and that is where government really needs support or it needs to pay the corporate sector for that support in drawing up contracts. I see the Infrastructure Western Australia legislation as a missed opportunity to include as part of Infrastructure Western Australia's remit oversight of the contractual arrangements that governments enter into on behalf of taxpayers to ensure that the interests of taxpayers are protected. I am not here to bag the corporate sector; it does a good job. It has to make money because if it does not, it cannot employ people and expand. That is what it needs to do but government pays too much because the big players in the sector know that as they get into a project, they will find problems with it.

The nature of infrastructure projects is that they are big and complex, and the big players build risk into the contract price. Before a government project even starts, some companies will build 20, 30 or 40 per cent risk into every component of the contract to ensure that they are covered for variations and problems that they know will happen because of the weakness in the expertise of those in government agencies who manage contracts and put them together. They know there is a weakness with the corporate skills and business acumen of the public servants who put tender documents and business cases together. I do not say that to criticise public servants. They come from a different paradigm. They come from the view of serving the community. They want the projects to move forward because they know they will be good for the communities in which they will be built, but not everybody thinks about the good of the community when they enter into contracts with government. The reality is that that is where we always get burnt. We will interrogate this legislation ruthlessly, as is our job in opposition. We know it is a commitment of the government. Our intention is never to needlessly delay the passage of any legislation through this place. We take our job very seriously. A number of members occupying the opposition benches have been in government and managed big projects and big asset programs, so we will have something to contribute to this debate.

In closing, the one issue that I can see arising as a result of the introduction of Infrastructure WA is that we may end up with just another big government agency that adds a further layer between a decision of the government and an infrastructure requirement in the community and a project commencing. If Infrastructure WA ends up being the roadblock to infrastructure, we will have a serious problem in this state. That is one of the issues that I can see arising out of the creation of this Infrastructure WA bureaucracy. Another layer of bureaucracy running a fine toothcomb over agency priorities may not be a good thing.

[Quorum formed.]

MR Z.R.F. KIRKUP (Dawesville) [4.22 pm]: I also rise and join the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in speaking to the Infrastructure Western Australia Bill 2019. I understand that the member for Hillarys will speak after me. It is a very important piece of legislation that the opposition supports. As the member for Scarborough pointed out

in her very extensive contribution, there is a clear need for a long-term plan for infrastructure in Western Australia. I realise that the 20-year state infrastructure plan was a concept mooted by the Labor Party in opposition and is now being delivered with this legislation. It is obviously a step towards moving decision-making out of an electoral cycle—out of what some would consider to be the short-term political gains—and into a situation in which experts can be part of decision-making and planning for the future. This was supported and introduced in New South Wales by the Liberal government. There were some obvious issues with infrastructure in New South Wales. I note that there is an interesting situation with the stadiums and inner-city rail system. Infrastructure New South Wales recommended some stadium rebuilds, so it will be interesting to see how that plays out.

One of the areas that I am most interested in is the composition of the panel that will put these expert recommendations to government. I note that in New South Wales, there are seven public servants—directors generals or secretaries—and the Premier, and the remainder are from the private sector. I think the state government wants it to be relatively 50–50, or certainly to have much more outside involvement. That is a good step to ensure that we get as many people as possible from the community who have an interest in the future of Western Australia. It would give certainty to business and the like about where the government will spend its money and how it will plan for the future.

The member for Scarborough has gone through some of the infrastructure achievements delivered by the previous government, and I am keen to do the same. Certainly, the previous government's record shows that it made significant investment in my district of Dawesville, in the Mandurah community and in the Peel region more broadly. During the election campaign, the contribution of the former government to critical infrastructure in Mandurah came up quite a bit. The reports put out by Infrastructure New South Wales, the most recent of which was released just this year, cover the entirety of New South Wales, not just specifically Sydney. Infrastructure New South Wales looks at growth rates everywhere and the opportunities that exist right across the state. It has a regional focus for new infrastructure opportunities. I hope that Infrastructure Western Australia will have a strong focus on Mandurah and the Peel region as a regional centre to make sure that there is a continued focus in the community on a growing population with unique age needs. As the member for Scarborough pointed out in her contribution—a number of us have noted it—Mandurah has an ageing population. It continues to be the most senior and most experienced district. The population of Dawesville continues to age, and I suspect that the member for Mandurah's district is also going that way. I think we have described them as bookends. I have heard the member for Mandurah say in this place that the number of young families in my district is growing and there is an ageing population. People are either ageing in place or moving to Mandurah to retire. There is no better place to retire than Mandurah. Of course, that means that unique infrastructure is required for that population. It is obviously one of the reasons that I have been going on about Peel Health Campus. It is very important to our community, but I suspect that members have already spoken at length about that.

When we look at the other important infrastructure requirements in Mandurah, we have to look at where money has already been spent. Of course, the previous government spent \$42 million on the Mandurah aquatic facility. It is amazing, with swimming pools and gyms. I have run into the member for Mandurah there in my bathers far too many times as I have gone for a swim!

Mr D.A. Templeman: I know; I feel very unwell after that!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: The member for Mandurah feels unwell about it. I feel unwell about it. It is not something I want to do on a Saturday—run into him in my shorts, but here we are! It is a very important facility, especially for the ageing population in our districts, because people can use the facilities to keep up their levels of exercise. The member for Mandurah and I have spoken about the need for hydrotherapy services and the like.

Mr D.A. Templeman: It is the thing they missed out on.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Yes, indeed; they did miss out. We should have looked to fund it, or certainly the city should have put that together initially. It was an opportunity missed, but perhaps under this legislation, as a regional health and sporting facility in Mandurah, it would have been picked up. I hope that there is a specific plan for Mandurah, which is an important regional city, and other regional cities such as Geraldton, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr I.C. Blayney), and those in the midwest and right around Western Australia. Dedicated plans for the infrastructure needs in the centrepiece towns throughout regional Western Australia that were deemed to be SuperTowns by the previous government would be welcomed to provide certainty to local governments about where they need to go and also to provide support to those local governments so that they can best plan for the future. As we have seen, some local governments have their own ideas, but, ultimately, the state government is in power to make sure that they deliver services for those communities. The state government has a very robust role to play in helping those local governments come up with future plans for those communities and regional cities for decades into the future. I am talking about 20 years in this case. It would be fantastic and welcome to see such a state infrastructure strategy rolled out for those key towns right throughout Western Australia, especially as we look to decentralise the population outside of Perth.

The Minister for Planning has rightly referred to the changing topographical nature of Perth. Obviously, we are looking to the regions to help share some of that load. It builds on the achievements of the previous Liberal–National government, particularly the regional members in this place, including those in the National Party and you, Mr Acting Speaker, who advocated very strongly for their towns to be much more of a focus for government investment and infrastructure spending so that the population can be moved out of the city into the regions to keep them alive. I find it fascinating, when we look across Australia, that Western Australia is very much centralised only around Perth, but when we look at Queensland, in particular—the state that I think best mirrors ours—it has a very regional population, and there is no reason why we should not have the same here in Western Australia. When I reflect on achievements in Mandurah —

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: If Queensland mirrors our state, is Mandurah the Gold Coast?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Something like that—not so glitzy, but we certainly have —

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: The Sunshine Coast!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: That is right. I am not sure we are the Gold Coast in Mandurah, but —

Mr D.A. Templeman: Which serves our argument about why we’re a region.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: That is right. By virtue of that, the distance from Brisbane alone —

Mr D.A. Templeman: The Gold Coast is not part of Brisbane.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: That is right; it is its own regional centre. We could absolutely make the point to reinforce the member for Mandurah’s —

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: You’re a regional city. We accept that!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: That is right. All on this side! It has been an important process of education —

Dr M.D. Nahan: The Gold Coast is actually a city.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Indeed, so is Mandurah, Leader of the Opposition. We can go through and name all these cities and regional centres, but I think we all agree that Mandurah is certainly one of them, member for Geraldton, and an important one at that.

Mr D.A. Templeman: We could always secede!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I would not mind, but here we are!

Mr M. McGowan: The republic of Mandurah!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Not a republic; certainly a commonwealth, I suspect!

Mr D.A. Templeman: I can be the king; you can be the prince!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: That would be fine! That is already the case now, member for Mandurah! The Premier rightly calls the member for Mandurah, “Mandurah’s favourite son” or “Mandurah’s man”—something like that. I think that sounds about right.

Mr M. McGowan: The greatest person ever to emerge from Mandurah!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: The greatest person ever to emerge from Mandurah! That is quite a bold claim from the Premier, but here we are. I think he has been there 30 years now. Is it 31? He has been there for a year less than I have been alive, and has raised his children there and certainly has been a strong contributor to the fabric there.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: Brian Taylor was from Mandurah; he kicked 100 goals for Collingwood!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: As we are going through the list, I look forward to the member for Mandurah’s bronze statue at some point in time perhaps being a focus of the state’s infrastructure strategy! We might have to make it slightly larger than life-size, member for Mandurah—ever so slightly!

Dr M.D. Nahan: How would you keep the birds off?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: We could make a giant top hat or something like that!

Mr M. McGowan: It would be Saddam Hussein-like!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I am not sure there would be so many people trying to rip it down, though, Premier!

Mr M. McGowan: When you get into office, you can pull it down!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Nonsense! I would revel in such a statue, should there be one erected in honour of the member for Mandurah!

I go back to where I was before we started on this deviation; the member for Mandurah is absolutely enjoying this, I suspect. I was talking about infrastructure that has already been invested in in our important regional city, and in Peel more broadly speaking. The previous government committed \$49.3 million to industrial diversification through

Transform Peel. That was certainly an important investment and another example of a project with cross-party support. It has been taken up by the present government, and the Peel Development Commission continues to invest in it. It will hopefully bring about 30 000 to 40 000 new jobs and help expand the economic base in Mandurah. It is certainly something that has been needed —

Mrs R.M.J. Clarke interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: And, indeed, the Bushfire Centre of Excellence, as the member for Murray–Wellington rightly points out, to help try to expand the economic base that has been sorely needed in Mandurah for some time. Perhaps if we look at something like a state infrastructure strategy —

Mrs R.M.J. Clarke interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: In the Shire of Murray—there we go. The Peel region might have a focus to make sure we can continue to deliver such long-term projects that were, in the case of Transform Peel, conceived by the former Liberal–National government. I also know that Infrastructure Western Australia will be looking at things like transport links. There was \$155 million under the previous government to help secure and complete Mandjoogoordap Drive, which is an important road link for our city, connected to Forrest Highway. It has cut a significant amount of travel time for people who have to travel up to Perth and back by car. If they do not have the opportunity to catch the train, it is important to make sure that there is that vehicular link.

Mr D.A. Templeman: What do you think of the artwork there at Mandjoogoordap Drive?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: It is interesting; what do they call it?

Mr D.A. Templeman: It's a crab net being drawn. I call it the carcass.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: The carcass?

Mr D.A. Templeman: It's got the rib-like look. I like it!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Do you?

Mr D.A. Templeman: Yes, I do!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Obviously everyone has a different perspective in their taste in art.

Ms A. Sanderson interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Subjective indeed, member for Morley. I am perhaps a bit more traditionalist; I would not mind a big sign with “Welcome to Mandurah”!

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: It would not be bad there! We can all drive around it and check out the member for Mandurah from 360 degrees in our cars as we go by!

Mr P.A. Katsambanis interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Put it on the bridge as we go over the island, I think! I do not mind the artwork there. I think we have to try to get the water towers as you go into the town painted. The one that sits on Mandjoogoordap Drive cannot be painted because of radiation from the telecommunications masts, which is a bit unfortunate. That is an important welcome statement, I suppose, to our city as part of the initial investment, and the prawn that sits on the train station —

Mr D.A. Templeman: No, that's a tuart—the shoot of a tuart.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Is it? I always thought it was a prawn. Again, I refer to the member for Morley's point about all art being subjective. I assumed it was a prawn of some sort! Okay; it is a tuart shoot.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: My art knowledge, Leader of the Nationals WA, is clearly found wanting! In any case, I would not mind something a bit more iconic, I suppose, but given that the member for Mandurah enjoys it, I am certain it will not change until we replace it with a miniature of his!

The member for Scarborough pointed out the investment in the TAFE in Mandurah—again, trying to make sure that we have an important reorientation of our local workforce to address the needs of the ageing profile of our community there. There was \$1.07 million for the Mandurah workforce development centre. Again, we get a very strong feeling about the economic diversification that is required in the City of Mandurah and the Peel region more broadly. That will obviously be a goal of something like Infrastructure Western Australia, and although it certainly will be looking at major infrastructure proposals, there is an obligation for it to also look at regional infrastructure requirements that may not be such big-ticket items, such as a stadium, a major roadway or a major hospital. I find it interesting that the legislation defines “prisons”, but when we are spending upwards of \$1 billion on facilities to incarcerate people, although we probably already have the land identified, I understand that there might be

a requirement to look at the future custodial needs of the state going forward over a 20-year period. We obviously want some sort of flexibility, because incarceration rates across the nation have changed over the last couple of years in respect of women's prisons. A lot of people could not necessarily have forecast that because of the nature of crime and how it develops. We would have to make sure there was some sort of flexibility in new infrastructure proposals when it comes to custodial facilities. In Goulbourn they are building a nearly \$1 billion prison, so that would come within the remit of an infrastructure organisation such as Infrastructure Western Australia. Although we are not talking about big-ticket, billion-dollar items, we would want to make sure that we still have a very strong focus on regional Western Australia and the projects that are delivered therein.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I saw that the member for Mandurah made reference to that. For those who do not know or studiously read the *Mandurah Mail*, the member for Mandurah recommended a third AFL team based in Mandurah. I absolutely support that; I think it is a great idea.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: I disagree with that. It should be in Joondalup.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: The parochialism of all members in this place will show, I suspect, as they start to fire up and the member for Cottesloe will be asking for one in Cottesloe.

Dr D.J. Honey: I think a third western suburbs team.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: A third western suburbs team; that is right. I think it is a grand idea, member for Mandurah.

Mr D.A. Templeman: It's a stroke of genius really —

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: A stroke of genius indeed.

Mr D.A. Templeman: — with my football prowess.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I have always known the member to be very much the sportsman.

Dr D.J. Honey: You and H.G. Nelson.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Don't get me talking about my football career.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: He and I have sat down before and talked about football.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: That is right. The member for Mandurah and I have spoken about football many a time. His passion for football knows no bounds.

Mr D.A. Templeman: One goal, seven for Three Springs.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: There we go. How many decades ago was that, member for Mandurah?

Mr D.A. Templeman: Some time ago. I kicked the goal of the year and promptly retired that night. I still have the chaffing to show for it.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Retire on a high is what we always say, I think, in politics. It makes sense for the member for Mandurah to refer back to his exceptional football career. It is like the time the former member for Cottesloe apprised us of his time at the Claremont Football Club, in C grade or something like that.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Was he the drinks man?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: His achievements there were endlessly spoken about.

Dr D.J. Honey: They were legendary.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Indeed, member for Cottesloe.

Of course, member for Mandurah; a football team based out of Rushton Park is not a bad idea at all. It is a regional centre that has seen significant investment of \$6 million, I think, in the last term of government and a commitment from, I think, state and federal governments to look at any expansion opportunities in the future. I can understand how the member for Mandurah would want to base a football team there. It is not a bad suggestion and certainly one we would support.

When we look at Mandurah's infrastructure needs, very clearly there is a need for some focus on the ageing population, so, of course, health will become an important part of that. I note that yesterday or today Andrew Hastie of the coalition government announced 246 aged-care beds to be built in Halls Head and Dawesville in particular. That is a great announcement for my community to see those aged-care beds put in place there. They are really needed because of the ageing population. It is great to age in our own place and I could not think a better spot than two particular parts of the City of Mandurah. There is a critical need for that development. The one in Halls Head will sit right in the middle of a suburb that desperately needs new investment. A commercial centre is being built across the road and there is cleared outland that will be great for the new aged-care facility. It is a fantastic proposal, and I look forward to that opening in coming years. It will be very important to the future and vibrancy of the area.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I will be quick, member for Hillarys.

Ms S.E. Winton interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: For you, member for Wanneroo, I can keep talking. I know how much you enjoy it!

Ms S.E. Winton: You've done better, I have to say.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: It is a Thursday afternoon.

Ms S.E. Winton: I know. Now finish on a high!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I am being very considered in this case with my contribution, member for Wanneroo.

We talk about ageing in place, and it is a challenge that occurs across a number of regional towns. From the number of times I have heard all members of the Nationals talk about ageing considerations and health concerns in their communities, it is very clear that we need to make sure there is a long-term focus on health in regional centres in particular, just as much as there should be in city centres and Perth more broadly speaking. Something like Infrastructure NSW, will, hopefully, look at what we can do for that ageing population, such as ensuring great health services and facilities are extended to them based on a 20-year plan. Maybe we will not end up with constraints such as those at Peel Health Campus where contractual agreements are rolled over. It would be great to have those needs mapped out over a 20-year period. It would allow us all to plan for the future in a much better fashion.

Last week I received an answer to a question from the Minister for Education and Training about a Dawesville senior high school proposed to be developed for the better part of nearly two decades, as I can best understand it. Governments of all sizes have noted that there needs to be a senior high school south of Mandurah. To the envy of many members on this side I have only one senior high school to, I suppose, represent.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: I have none.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: There you go. The member for Darling Range has about 20 schools, more broadly speaking. I have only one senior high school in my electorate. With a growing younger population in Dawesville, it was anticipated that a senior high school would be built there over a number of years. The minister's answer last week said a prospective Dawesville senior high school would not be built for another decade. It keeps getting pushed out. That probably shows a flaw in the long-term plan. It is not necessarily a flaw, but what we need to anticipate.

Ms M.J. Davies: Do they all go to Mandurah?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: They all go to Mandurah. They travel for about 20 minutes to the Halls Head College or to John Tonkin College, another public school in the town site more broadly, across to Mandurah Catholic College or to Frederick Irwin Anglican School, which is also in north Mandurah. They have to travel quite a distance from Dawesville, which services the areas right through to Lake Clifton. The member for Murray–Wellington's district would probably pull people into what would be Halls Head College at the moment. They would go to the proposed Dawesville senior high school. A need has certainly been identified that one should be built in Dawesville. I certainly intend to prosecute a campaign over the coming year or so.

Dr M.D. Nahan: How many students?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: In the first year group, I think we would be looking at a couple of hundred conservatively, but there certainly will be the demand. The concern at the moment is that many parents do not send their children to the nearest high school, which is Halls Head College, because there have been some historic issues with that college. It is a school into which investment has been made to upgrade significantly. It is doing a great job now, but there is a perception, I suppose. People are sending their children to Mandurah so they are not being counted as part of the population demand in Halls Head. If the student population at Halls Head were larger, it might speed up a commitment to build a high school in Dawesville, because the government would see that the nearest-placed school is quite constrained.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Does it have land?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Yes; the previous Liberal–National government bought a patch of land on Katanning Avenue, I think in Florida, to build a new site. We are talking about a senior high school in Dawesville.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Yes.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: It is certainly an issue I will seek to prosecute in the coming year or two to make sure we keep that momentum, so that attention is paid to it.

Mr D.A. Templeman: The numbers are not quite there yet.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: They are not there just yet. As I was discussing with the Leader of the Nationals, I put something on Facebook less than 10 days ago targeting parents in new Dawesville, not even old Dawesville,

suggesting that if people would like a new high school, they should sign and provide their details so we could stay in touch. Two hundred and fifty people said they wanted to be informed about what was going on with that high school.

Mr D.A. Templeman: You have only two primary school feeders. You have Ocean Road and Falcon.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: We have only Ocean Road Primary School and St Damien's Catholic Primary School, which feed in. As I was saying, a lot of parents are not necessarily sending their children to Halls Head College, as the member for Mandurah knows; they are sending them to even John Tonkin College, if they can get in rather, than to Halls Head. It is an interesting prospect.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Some of them are sending them to Mandurah Baptist College, too.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: That is true, but it is further away again.

Mr D.A. Templeman: It is a regional city, member for Hillarys.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: The member for Mandurah has every high school in his district except one. He has Coodanup as well.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Coodanup College, John Tonkin, and the new Coastal Lakes College.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: And Freddies.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Frederick Irwin.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: And MCC.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Mandurah Baptist College

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: And MBC, so there are heaps.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Mandurah Catholic is on the border with you.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: That is right. Every school sits within the member for Mandurah's district, yet the population we send them from is quite some distance away. When we talk about Dawesville senior high school, we will look to prosecute that a bit more locally just to keep people informed about the plan. The land is set aside, Leader of the Opposition.

Dr M.D. Nahan: What is the population growth?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: The land developer there is selling a block a month at the moment in Florida.

Mr D.A. Templeman: It's very slow.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: It is very, very slow and construction is slower again. Blocks are not selling nearly as fast as the developers thought they would. Indeed, based on the composition of the population, I anticipate people would have thought it was a new younger family area. But I am seeing a lot of retirees and a lot of caravanners there. They want to be further away from Mandurah centre but they still want to be within Mandurah, if that makes sense. They want to build their own home and there are not many greenfields opportunities left, certainly not on the island or in Dawesville suburb.

Mrs R.M.J. Clarke interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I do, member for Murray-Wellington—the oldest population and it continues to go in that direction.

Mr M. Hughes interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I appreciate the member for Kalamunda's interjection, as always.

Mr D.A. Templeman: The most growth is in the north.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: That is right; we managed to spend 30 minutes on Mandurah.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I am very pleased that we discussed Mandurah. It is very appropriate.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: That is fantastic to hear. I understand the merits of this bill; it is important legislation. The opposition looks forward to going into consideration in detail and to understanding a bit more of the mechanics of how it will work here and how we will achieve some of the goals the government set when it drafted this legislation. I look forward to seeing what the contrast between the New South Wales legislation and the Western Australian version might look like. When I think about the future and the 20-year period that the state infrastructure strategy is looking towards, I think of autonomous vehicles and the disruption that will occur and the impact they will have on our city. I am interested to see how the state infrastructure strategy might deal with something like that. The replacement of automobile ownership and an automated fleet will be interesting prospects for governments across Western Australia to deal with. It will especially affect local governments that rely on parking fines and parking fees, more generally speaking, to ensure that they have a revenue source.

Several members interjected.

Ms M.J. Davies: We are listening.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I thank the Leader of the National Party. Those parking fees generate income for local government authorities. That revenue source is not insignificant for the City of Perth. I will look at the state infrastructure strategy to see how it deals with the lower income into the City of Perth in particular, because we know that vehicles will not be around in 10 or 20 years. We are already seeing partial automation now. I am very interested to see what the state infrastructure strategy will say about automobiles and driverless cars. I have a very strong interest in that issue. We can look to other cities, but, hopefully, we can lead the way. Infrastructure New South Wales mentions the issue, but does not go into much depth on it. The disruption will be huge. Everyone has a garage or carport in their home. New homes will not be built with garages anymore. Our homes will change considerably because we will not need to own a vehicle.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: New South Wales will need a new power grid to plug them into.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: That is right. It will need new energy.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Infrastructure Victoria has put a lot of work into this.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I looked only at New South Wales, but the Leader of the Opposition let me know that Victoria has done a lot of work. I look forward to what it will look like in Western Australia and Perth, which is very reliant on automobile transport. I appreciate all members' indulgence here this afternoon.

Mr D.A. Templeman: As long as there is enough light to light up my bust!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Indeed, we will get the Leader of the House a bust—a statue. We will have plenty to drive past.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): I want it to be a gold statue in Mandurah.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I could not possibly argue with you. Gold—ha, ha!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Mr Acting Speaker, thank you for your time and I look forward to the progression of this bill at a later date.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House)**.