

Speaker; Mr Eric Ripper; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Dr
Mike Nahan; Mr Joe Francis; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Ben Wyatt

**INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA —
COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT FUNDING**

Matter of Public Interest

THE SPEAKER (Mr G.A. Woodhams): Members, today I received within the prescribed time a letter from the Leader of the Opposition in the following terms —

Dear Mr Speaker,

Matter of Public Interest

I wish to raise the following as a matter of public interest today.

“This House supports the provision of \$2 billion worth of infrastructure projects in Western Australia as committed to by the Commonwealth government.”

Members, the matter appears to me to be in order. If at least five members will stand in support of the matter being discussed—I note that there are—then the matter can proceed.

[At least five members rose in their places.]

MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont — Leader of the Opposition) [2.53 pm]: I move —

This house supports the provision of \$2 billion worth of infrastructure projects in Western Australia as committed to by the commonwealth government.

Western Australia is a huge state; more than one-third of the continent. It is a state with a huge need for infrastructure and a state with huge opportunities, if we have the courage to make the commitment to infrastructure that is required. The role of government is absolutely critical. BHP will not build the Northbridge Link; Rio Tinto is not going to upgrade the roads to the airport. The Association of Mining and Exploration Companies is not going to build a broadband network across Western Australia. The role of government is critical. The shareholders of these companies—especially those who live outside Western Australia, which is most of them—have to pay their fair share of tax so that Western Australians across the state get the infrastructure they need.

The context is that the state government of Western Australia is letting down Western Australians on the question of infrastructure. Let me give members just two examples: firstly, basic core infrastructure—electricity and roads. There is a \$650 million gap between what the Economic Regulation Authority has assessed as efficient—that is, necessary investment in the Western Australian electricity network in the south west of Western Australia—and what the government is prepared to allow Western Power to invest over three years. Think about what that missing \$650 million of expenditure on our electricity network means. It means more blackouts, more poles falling over and more fires. Year by year, the state of the electricity network will deteriorate because the government will not spend the money that an independent assessment says is required to maintain the network. Let me go to road funding —

Mr T.R. Buswell interjected.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Maybe the previous Treasurer can talk in this debate about road funding. The state government has cut investment in roads in Western Australia by \$260 million over four years. If we compare what this government is spending on roads over four years with what state Labor spent on roads over four years, this government is \$260 million shy of the mark set by the state Labor government. At the same time as the government is cutting expenditure on roads, the federal government is increasing expenditure on roads in Western Australia by \$400 million over four years. No wonder this government is making such a poor effort on state infrastructure investment. It does not have any strategy. There is no state infrastructure strategy to guide state government investments, and that is one reason basic core infrastructure such as the electricity network is ignored in favour of headline-grabbing pet projects of the Premier.

The whole program is being propped up by the federal government. What a good thing we have a federal government that is committed to investing in infrastructure in Western Australia. Thank God we have a federal government that is committed to that sort of investment, because on the Labor side of politics we understand that investment in this key, core infrastructure is absolutely vital to our long-term prosperity. We have a federal government that has shown by its record that it is committed to investing in infrastructure in Western Australia. We have a federal government that has demonstrated that it has a financial and economic plan to make the investments this state requires to prosper well into the future. On the other side, we have a candidate for Prime Minister in Mr Abbott, who wants to cut this expenditure. Let us go to the document that contains his cuts. He has flagged several episodes of cutting proposals. His total cuts agenda has emerged over several

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announcements. He announced some savings on 20 July. Right there, in the middle of those announcements, are the words “discontinue additional funding for the state infrastructure program—total cut \$400 million over four years.” That will hurt Western Australia. That was not all. He announced at another stage further cuts to the state infrastructure fund, and they total \$1.435 billion over four years. Those types of cuts, let alone his refusal to build the broadband network, the cuts to the trade training centres and the cuts to the super GP clinics, will have a serious negative impact on Western Australia. The thing about Tony Abbott is that he can be believed when he says he will cut funding to infrastructure because he was part of a government—the Howard government—that neglected investment in Western Australia. On the Labor side, there is a record of investment and a coherent plan for future investment, and on the Liberal side there is a record of neglect and its absolutely crystal-clear statements that it will cut infrastructure funding for Western Australia. As Western Australians, we have a real choice in this election. We have a choice between, on the one hand, Labor with real plans for investment in named projects and a history of commitment and, on the other hand, Tony Abbott, with announced plans for real cuts and his history as a senior minister in the Howard government, which had a record of neglect of Western Australian investment.

I know one of the answers that the Premier is going to give, because I have debated this sort of stuff with the Premier before. The Premier, I am sure, will talk about Western Australia’s share of the goods and services tax. Indeed, it is the case that Western Australia’s share of the GST is too low. But whose fault is that? How does that come about? It comes about because of what the Court government did with the Howard government in 1999 and 2000, when those two governments signed up to the GST deal. The Premier was a senior minister in the government that signed up to the formula that so disadvantages Western Australia now. It was not Labor, at either federal or state level, that signed up to that disastrous deal for Western Australia; it was a federal Liberal government and a state Liberal government, of which the Premier was a member, that signed up to that deal. Any suggestion that Mr Abbott and the coalition are going to give us a better deal on the GST is just pie in the sky. If the Premier thinks it is going to be any different, he should show us a letter—show us a written undertaking from Tony Abbott. He should table it today so that the people of Western Australia can see whether there is any justification for any such argument. I cannot see, given the deal that Peter Costello and Richard Court signed up to, that there is a real prospect of improvement in Western Australia’s GST share. But there is a very important consolation prize, and that consolation prize is investment in Western Australian infrastructure.

What will happen, if the election goes Tony Abbott’s way, is that Tony Abbott will take away that consolation prize. It is well worth Western Australia campaigning on the question of GST share, but the objective should be twofold: get an improvement of the GST share if we can—that is very, very difficult because of the position of other states; and, if we cannot, get the consolation prize of federal investment in our infrastructure. We have won the prize with federal Labor. The federal Labor government is committed to investment in Western Australian infrastructure, and committed to investment in things like the Gateway WA project. It is worthwhile looking at what that project will do. It will widen the Tonkin Highway to a six-lane freeway. It will build an interchange at the intersection of Leach and Tonkin Highways. It will build a grade-separated interchange at the intersection of Tonkin Highway and Horrie Miller Drive at Kewdale Road. It will do other things as well, but members should think about how important that project is. Anyone who drives out to Perth Airport at three o’clock on a weekday afternoon knows how important that project is. There are horrendous traffic jams out there, affecting people in High Wycombe, Forrestfield and the City of Belmont and anybody who wants to use the airport. Tony Abbott wants to stop that project. He wants to cut that investment; he does not want it to go ahead. Therefore, there is a real choice for Western Australians on Saturday, and this house should strongly and unanimously demand substantial federal government funding for the infrastructure that we need in Western Australia for our roads, for our ports, for our schools, for our hospitals and for our rail. What has happened in this state, in every month of every year of his government, is that the Premier has gone to the federal government and asked for additional support and additional funding for Western Australian investment. How can the Premier possibly support the election of a man and of a party that want to cut that investment? This is a serious issue, the interests of the state are at stake, and this house should send a very clear message to the federal Parliament and to both sides of politics that we demand federal investment in Western Australian infrastructure.

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland) [3.05 pm]: I support the motion that has been moved by the Leader of the Opposition. In doing so, I want to point out to this house that the eastern region of the Perth metropolitan area stands to lose up to \$1 billion worth of funding if Tony Abbott is elected this Saturday. For starters, the Gateway WA project that the leader has referred to is a \$600 million project that was put forward by the Western Australian government. The commonwealth has undertaken to fund 80 per cent of that project, as it is doing with a number of other projects; \$480 million will come from a re-elected Gillard government. That is in addition to the \$280 million for the Great Eastern Highway upgrade. Also at risk is the \$181 million that the Gillard government has promised for the Midland hospital. No such commitment has been given by Tony Abbott.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

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Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I am not listening to the Premier about this because when he came to office, he did not care what we had in the forward estimates; he cut that money off so that he could fund the projects that he had promised during the election. The GP super clinic is yet another project that is at risk. In addition to the GP super clinic already being planned for Midland, a further one is promised for Northam, in the Pearce electorate. Tony Abbott has unequivocally said that, if elected, he will totally cut the funding for GP super clinics. That would get cut in week one. He also said that in week one he would cut the trade training centre money. That means that schools like Sevenoaks Senior College, in the East Metropolitan Region, would lose their trade training centre. That is not the only education project that would lose out in the East Metropolitan Region, as Tony Abbott has also said that he will cut the Building Education Revolution funds in week one.

Mr T.R. Buswell: They are all already contracted.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: They are not all contracted; it shows how little the member knows. Does the member know —

Mr T.R. Buswell: They are contracted, have a look.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: We have a bit of ignorance; no wonder the member is not the Treasurer anymore, because he has had his mind on other things! He does not know what is happening with education infrastructure. The fact of the matter is that there are private schools that have not got that money yet. Members should look at Tony Abbott's balance sheet on which he shows his funding commitments and where he is going to save money; that second column shows the money that he is going to save by not continuing with the BER projects. He has that in his budget as a cost-saving measure. Since the member has not been Treasurer, he obviously has not had his eye on the finances of this state or what is happening with the finances at a federal level, because that is one of Tony Abbott's cuts. It is one of the things that he says he will cut in week one if elected, and if people look at the balance sheet that he has been touting during this election campaign, they can see how much money he intends to save by not continuing with the BER funding.

The election of Tony Abbott will also mean that \$1.2 million in funding for Kalamunda road infrastructure will not go ahead; nor will funding for Kalamunda that builds upon the \$2.4 million given to Kalamunda Community and Cultural Centre or the \$500 000 for the Kalamunda Aquatic Centre. The Premier knows what an important project the Gateway project is, yet he has no answer for us today. The fact of the matter is that he has no commitment from Tony Abbott on how that can be funded if Tony Abbott were to be elected. The Gateway WA upgrade project is an important project that will provide a significant and much needed upgrade to the infrastructure around Perth Airport, particularly transport infrastructure. Western Australia has the strongest growing economy in the nation. Air travel is set to double in coming decades; in fact, if we do not proceed with this project it is said that the cost of urban congestion in Perth will rise to \$2.1 billion by 2020. We have an expanding economy; therefore, the government needs to support Perth Airport and the Gateway upgrade project. We need an interchange at the intersection of Leach and Tonkin Highways; we need the widening of Tonkin Highway to six lanes between Great Eastern Highway and Roe Highway and we need a grade-separated interchange at the intersection of Tonkin Highway and Horrie Miller Drive and Kewdale Road. Further, an upgrade is needed at the intersection between Roe and Tonkin Highways to a full freeway interchange, a flyover is needed at the intersection of Leach Highway and Abernethy Road and an upgrade of Orrong Road is needed from Leach Highway to Graham Farmer Freeway. We will not get any of those if Tony Abbott is elected as Prime Minister on Saturday. The Premier has made no commitment as to how those upgrades will be funded because, at this stage, the state government is contributing only 20 per cent of the cost with 80 per cent being met by the federal government.

The federal Labor government's spend on roads and transport infrastructure increased by 70 per cent when compared with John Howard's rate of spending on infrastructure in Western Australia. There will be further cuts to that funding if Tony Abbott is elected Prime Minister on Saturday.

If Tony Abbott is elected, another project that will not be funded is the more than \$1.4 million to redevelop the Walter Padbury Active Reserve in Thornlie, a project committed to by Anthony Albanese, the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government. It is part of an overall \$2.8 million project and includes the expansion of three ovals, new cricket wickets and new pavilions.

Mr T.R. Buswell interjected.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: It may not be important to members opposite, but it is much needed infrastructure in the Gosnells area. Those projects will not go ahead if Tony Abbott is elected, because he will not raise the money that is needed to fund these infrastructure projects through a mining tax.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Do you support the mining tax?

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Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I support infrastructure for Western Australia. The Premier has not done his job. He has no undertaking from Tony Abbott. These projects will not go ahead if Tony Abbott is elected. The state government does not have the money to fund them and a Liberal federal government will not provide those funds. WA will continue to be sluggish with the goods and services tax and it will miss out on much needed projects.

MR A.J. WADDELL (Forrestfield) [3.15 pm]: I, too, rise to support the matter of public interest. The projects listed earlier by previous speakers are critical to my electorate. At the moment Tonkin Highway is a car park. Cars cannot move freely because of the congestion. They do not have the capacity to do so because Tonkin Highway is a key road that delivers the majority of freight within this state. Within an hour the road in front of my electorate office will look like a car park. Kalamunda Road does not have the capacity to hold the traffic that goes past at this point. The reality is that the eastern corridor is the powerhouse of Perth. It is where a great deal of industry is, where a great deal of growth occurs and where the state government needs to urgently invest in infrastructure.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Do you support the mining tax?

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Yes, Premier, I do. When I was preparing for this debate, I thought I would be clever and do a bit of research and, in doing so, I came across one of my favourite quotes. In 1899 Charles Duell, the Commissioner of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, declared that “Everything that can be invented, has been invented”. Unfortunately, Mr Duell lacked vision. I decided to look at the history of Western Australia to determine who were its visionaries and what the debates were at the time of federation. This research took me on an interesting journey, because I learnt a great deal about the history of our state. I learnt about the struggles that our predecessors had with the other states to get infrastructure for Western Australia. One of the big ticket items in the beginning was the Trans-Australian Railway. Without the Trans-Australian Railway, the state would not have been opened up. It became the corridor that delivered the wealth that was being generated from the goldfields across this nation. Yet those in the east constantly complained that the railway was too expensive, that it was not affordable and that it was not justifiable. WA stood up and said that it needed that railway because that infrastructure would deliver its economy and take Western Australia forward. WA had people of vision who pushed for the railway. They did not worry about the little dollars, about whether they could afford it this week or whether it was going to be cost effective at that point in time. They had a vision about where they wanted the state to go. They invested in infrastructure and they understood that they had to collect tax to pay for that investment.

This evening we will be briefed by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research on our progress on the bid against South Africa for the Square Kilometre Array project. It is an important project to Western Australia. However, it is reliant on infrastructure such as the national broadband network, infrastructure that the federal Liberal opposition—supported by the state government—does not support. It does not support the national broadband network, which is a key piece of infrastructure for Western Australia that will revolutionise our digital economy. It will solve problems that we grappling with, such as aged care. We do not have enough nursing homes and we do not have the capacity to build extra nursing homes. How will we deal with that problem? We will deal with it by enabling people to continue to live in their homes and be monitored via the national broadband network. We will deliver medical benefits to people via the national broadband network. We will deliver a range of 21 services via the national broadband network. Members opposite cannot wrap their tiny minds around that concept.

I refer to a newspaper article from a 1922 edition of *The West Australian*. According to my notes, it reads —

That the provision of direct telephonic communication between Perth and the Eastern capitals would be a great convenience is undeniable; but such a project would require to be justified on economic grounds ...

In view of the recklessness with which money has often been squandered by the Commonwealth Government on various enterprises it is understandable that the citizens of this State should show a disposition to sharing the distribution of the spoils without counting the cost.

Some people had little minds and little vision. They did not understand what a national telephone network would mean, in the same way that members opposite cannot see what a national broadband network means today. It continues —

It is not suggested, however, that the erection of a direct telephone line between Perth and Adelaide cannot be amply justified. To do this it would not be necessary to show that the line would be a commercial success from the outset. It is a truism that the improvement of the means of communication is a vitalising factor in business.

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That remains true today. It continues —

Apart from this, the economic saving to the community as a whole may more than offset the apparent losses.

The reality is that in 1922 they could see what it was.

I am running out of time, Madam Acting Speaker, but I want to raise one other matter. This was something I came across from the Legislative Council in 1888. Mr Shenton, MLC, asked the then Director of Public Works whether, in view of the large income received by the telephone department, arrangements could be made to remove the iron wire between Fremantle and Perth and replace it with copper wire. This was in 1888! That is the copper wire that the Liberal Party wants us to build the twenty-first century on.

MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Premier) [3.20 pm]: I agree with the member for Forrestfield: the history of this state has been one of big thinking and large infrastructure projects. However, I remind the member for Forrestfield that the same big thinkers of that era also built the rabbit-proof fence that had somewhat limited success.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! I have given the call to the Premier.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Big infrastructure projects are important and are the nature of the history of this state. This particular debate obviously has a purpose; that is, trying to enhance Sharryn Jackson's prospect of holding the seat of Hasluck. The Labor Party's difficulty is that when we compare Sharryn Jackson as a candidate with Ken Wyatt, the people of Hasluck will reach an inevitable conclusion about the qualities of the two candidates. That is the problem for the Labor Party. Although members opposite may argue about the policies of the major parties, it is a straight comparison and —

Mrs M.H. Roberts: Don't be personal.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is not personal; it is a straight comparison of the qualities of the two candidates. Who would the member vote for—Ken Wyatt or Sharryn Jackson?

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Who would the member for Victoria Park vote for?

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Sharryn Jackson!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The people of Hasluck are looking at the candidates and realising that Ken Wyatt is an outstanding person and they will hopefully cast their vote accordingly.

I want to say a little bit about this matter of public interest. This is primarily about an infrastructure fund to be funded out of the mineral resource rent tax. By supporting this fund, members opposite are supporting the imposition of this new commonwealth mining tax. At least the member for Forrestfield had the integrity to admit that he supported the tax.

Mr E.S. Ripper: We all support the tax.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I just want to make a couple of comments about the implications of what members opposite are saying and about this tax.

For a start, I repeat what we should all know. The mining industry is the backbone of the Australian, and particularly the Western Australian, economy. It is a \$70 billion industry in this state alone. It employs 75 000 people directly and many times that indirectly. This state accounts for 60 per cent of the nation's mineral production and 70 per cent of the nation's petroleum. We dominate national exports—nearly 40 per cent of national exports—and we dominate Australia's trading relationship with China and Japan and increasingly with India, simply because of the mining and petroleum industries.

The federal government first mooted this tax when Kevin Rudd was Prime Minister. Do members opposite realise that the commonwealth government had implicitly assumed that the states would hand over totally taxation of the mining industry? It had assumed that the commonwealth would take over all royalties from all states.

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I was at the Council of Australian Governments meeting in April and I said, "Excuse me, Prime Minister, Western Australia will not be doing that." Members opposite should understand that that was the deal that federal Labor was trying to put in place, and some Labor Premiers went along with it; that is, to hand

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over basically the whole of the administration and the ownership of the mining industry to Canberra. That is what it was based on. When I and a couple of others objected, the deal started to fall apart.

The commonwealth government went back and reworked its policy. Julia Gillard now claims that she has reached agreement with the mining industry—the mining industry as represented by BHP Billiton, Rio Tinto and Xstrata. However, she did not consult with the states, the owners of the natural resource, and she did not consult with the hundreds of mid-level mining companies in this state.

Mr E.S. Ripper interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Minerals Council of Australia—I would not give it the time of day!

I want to go through why Labor Party members think the mining tax and therefore by implication this infrastructure funding is a good thing.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I have yet to come across a single person in the mining industry, including those in the major companies, who actually believes that this mining tax mark 2 will survive in its current form if Labor is returned to office. Not a single person believes that that tax will stay as it is proposed.

I will tell members why—and this goes to the infrastructure fund. The proposal mark 2 is that this tax will raise \$10.5 billion over a two-year financial period from 2012 to 2014. Sixty-five per cent or \$7 billion will come out of the Western Australian mining industry, and most of the rest will come out of Queensland. Even a person appointed to the so-called mining tax implementation committee, Erica Smyth, has said that she does not believe it will raise anywhere near that amount, and that, in fact, the way it is structured, it is likely to raise \$3.3 billion. Yesterday, I met with a group from the mid-level, mid-cap mining companies who have done their own analysis, and they basically concur with that view; namely, that this tax will not raise what is purported. How could that be? How could the federal government be so wrong? Is the federal Treasury totally hopeless? On this, it is. The federal Treasury has no understanding of royalties. Initially, it claimed that royalties were collected simply on a tonne basis; it did not know that royalties were an ad valorem duty. That was the level of ignorance. So great was the federal Treasury's level of ignorance, it approached the Western Australia government to provide some expertise from the Department of Mines and Petroleum on how it taxed the mining industry. It had no idea at all, and that situation continues.

The second explanation might be that the big mining companies, BHP Billiton, Rio Tinto and Xstrata, are pretty comfortable. They may be fairly comfortable with this arrangement because there is a huge difference between them and the mid-cap mining companies. The big mining companies have existing infrastructure in railways, ports and power stations, and they can write off or deduct the value of that infrastructure from this new tax. If companies do not have that infrastructure, they have nothing to deduct. Therefore, there is a major difference between the mid-cap companies and the major companies who are comfortable with this proposed tax. Indeed, some people—many people—in the mining industry are suggesting that the big three may actually pay no more tax than they pay now, because they can deduct. They have the infrastructure expenses to deduct. They have what has become known as the infrastructure shield against this tax. The mid-cap miners do not have that shield. The mid-cap miners and the consultants in that area estimate that the effective rate of tax under this regime, which includes royalties—although royalties strictly should not be under “tax”—with the mineral resource rent tax and company tax will mean that the big miners, the ones who agreed, will pay an effective tax rate of about 40 per cent, whereas the mid-cap miners, Australian companies, will pay at least 50 per cent. Therefore, the smaller emerging companies, the vast majority of the mining industry, will pay a higher rate of tax than will the big three that agreed to this tax. That is why the smaller companies do not agree with the tax. As I have said, some believe that the large companies will pay no more tax than they currently pay.

What are the other implications? Because the revenue will not be there, because it sets up a discriminatory system in two respects—that is, favourable to big companies and unfavourable to emerging companies—and because it is also discriminatory in that it taxes iron ore, coal and petroleum, but nothing else, there is a concern; that is why people know this tax will not survive —

Mr M. McGowan: Do you want to expand it?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The fear is that that is exactly what will happen: the tax will be expanded across gold, alumina, nickel and so on. With Bob Brown and the Greens in the mix, does anyone seriously think this tax will not apply to uranium? Of course it will!

Mr E.S. Ripper interjected.

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Mr C.J. BARNETT: No; I listened to the Leader of the Opposition in silence.

The second implication is: what does that mean for this so-called infrastructure fund that Labor is putting all its weight on? It is not going to be \$10.5 billion; it is certainly going to be well less than that—maybe down to \$3 billion. One of the companies has been informed by the federal government that if the \$10.5 billion is not raised, for every dollar that is not raised, a dollar will come off the infrastructure fund. There will not be much of an infrastructure fund; it will disappear because the tax will not raise the money.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Who told you that? What is your source for that?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I will continue.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Which company? Come on; are you just making this up?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Why does the Leader of the Opposition not talk to some of the companies instead of hiding during the whole election campaign?

I now turn to examples of the projects. Members opposite are correct; Julia Gillard has included the airport-related projects as part of this infrastructure fund to be funded out of the mineral resource rent tax. It is tied directly to that. That is the case. A week ago she allocated \$2.1 billion towards the Parramatta–Penrith railway in western Sydney. Was that tied to the mineral tax in Western Australia? It was absolutely not tied to it. There are grants to New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, but Western Australia will get something out of the commonwealth only if it has the mineral resource rent tax and, by the way, the commonwealth is going to take \$7 billion from Western Australia and give \$2 billion back. That is not a good deal. What does Bob Brown, the emerging deal maker, say? Bob Brown thinks that it is a great idea. He thinks that the rate should be higher and that it should apply right across the mining industry so that he can build a light rail system in Canberra. The next time that members opposite get stuck in a traffic jam on Mugga Way or cannot get to their favourite restaurant in Manuka, they can thank Bob Brown and the Western Australian mining industry for a light rail system in Canberra!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.M. Harvey): Order, members! The Premier has the call.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That gives members a bit of a clue to where this infrastructure money is going. Western Australia is going to be taxed to the hilt, the mining industry is going to be taxed, and the money, with no strings attached, is going to go into western Sydney, into a light rail system in Canberra and into a whole lot of others projects on the east coast. And Western Australian opposition members support it. That is what I find incredible; they support it.

The mid-caps will be absolutely squeezed by this tax. They will pay a higher rate of tax than will the large companies. They do not have the cash flow; they have to go into equity markets. As a result of this, the returns they will be able to offer to shareholders will be reduced. They can no longer compete with the big companies. As one owner said to me yesterday, his business in Western Australia is 80 per cent Australian and 20 per cent offshore, and under this regime within a decade, his company will be 20 per cent Australian and 80 per cent offshore.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Which company?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I will tell the Leader of the Opposition why I will not answer that question. I have been told directly by at least one company and indirectly by others that they have been no less than threatened by Labor's federal colleagues.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I assure members that I am not. I would not repeat the foul language that was used by a federal minister in threatening a Western Australian mid-cap miner for daring to oppose this tax. I am not going to repeat it. I am not going to even give members a hint of what the words were.

Mr E.S. Ripper interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The federal government does not understand the mining industry. It has criticised it and abused it through this debate. It does not even understand the difference between magnetite and hematite iron ore. It says that all iron ore is in. Hematite ore is 60 per cent grade and magnetite is 25 per cent grade, but the federal government thinks it is all the same. It thinks that the industry is made up of billionaires, and yes, there are a few.

Several members interjected.

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Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member for Forrestfield may laugh, but he should not. I was at a mining services company in his electorate on Saturday morning.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I want to repeat what I have said previously during the federal election campaign, because, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, I have been invited to play a role. Yes, there are some extremely wealthy people in the mining industry. That is not the face of the mining industry. The face of the mining industry is the young apprentice I saw working to get his qualification in a mining services company in the member for Forrestfield's electorate. The face of the mining industry is also the couple who get in their car and leave Sydney or Melbourne to work in the Pilbara and live in a caravan to make good money and make their way ahead. It is also the guys and women who drive the trucks. It is the young mother in a Perth suburb raising her children by herself while her husband makes his way in the Pilbara. That is the face of the mining industry. Members opposite do not understand it and they do not care about it. Of course, this government believes that Canberra should spend more —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! We have a matter of public interest before the house. The Hansard reporter is having difficulty recording the debate. The Premier has the call.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I will conclude. Unlike members opposite —

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro, I call you for the first time.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Unlike members opposite, the Liberal and National Parties will not give up our sovereignty over our minerals and natural resources. We will not hand that to Canberra.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We will work for a fair outcome on the GST. We will not give up on a fair deal on the GST. Members opposite are seeking to justify the mineral resource rent tax through this infrastructure fund. Do they have any understanding at all of the damage this has done to the mining industry and the damage this has done to investment? Again, I will not name the companies, but I have been personally approached by the chairmen of one of America's largest companies, one of China's major government trading enterprises and one of Japan's top two or three companies, who have expressed to me formally their absolute concern, to put it politely, with the behaviour of the federal government on the mineral resource rent tax. I am talking about some of *Fortune's* top 50 companies. It is unprecedented for the chairmen of major companies to approach a state Premier. I will not name those companies because of the behaviour of the federal ministers over the past two weeks. I know that those companies would be victimised and abused, just as Labor has done to companies in this state. It is a pity that members opposite do not stand up for their state, it is a pity that they do not stand up for mining companies, and it is a pity that they do not stand up for jobs in Western Australia.

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton) [3.37 pm]: One of the big questions facing us is: how did we get to the situation in which we are now?

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.M. Harvey): Order, members! Member for Midland, I have given the call to the member for Riverton.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: How did we get to the situation in which huge portions of the state's wealth —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, I call you to order for the first time. I have just called the house to order.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: How did we get to the situation in which huge portions of the state's wealth are redistributed to the eastern states by both the Commonwealth Grants Commission and others? And it has been getting worse and worse each year. I think we now see what happens. When it comes to standing up for our state, Labor has decided that it would rather go with its Labor mates than stand up for this state. Labor is willing to give away the state's financial lifeblood to protect and support its eastern states mates. That is what it has decided to do.

Several members interjected.

Speaker; Mr Eric Ripper; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Joe Francis; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Ben Wyatt

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! Member for Cannington, if you seek the call, I will give it to you. I have given the call to the member for Riverton at this time.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: This is a time when Labor should say, "Enough is enough. It has gone too far for too long. We have to keep our revenue here." There is a whole range of other things about this tax that members opposite are refusing to acknowledge. Firstly, as the Premier argued, it is an extremely destructive and dodgy tax. It is based on ripping off Western Australian firms. It is based on ripping money out of Western Australia to transfer to the eastern states. For every \$3.50 taken out of this state through this tax, the federal government gives \$1 back. That satisfies members opposite. For each \$3.50 in tax raised, the federal government offers \$1 back. More importantly, they are saying to us, "We will only give you infrastructure if you agree to the tax." Unlike New South Wales, Queensland, Northern Territory and all the other states, Western Australia has to pay not only for its own infrastructure, but for theirs as well. That is discriminatory, but members opposite support it. That is ripping off this state, but members opposite support it. This is the time that members opposite should stand up against it, but they do not. Why? Because their allegiance is not to the state, it is not to their electorates; it is to the federal Labor Party. That is what this is about! How could members opposite justify this tax otherwise? When the first tax came in, members opposite supported that. They quibbled around the sides, but we now know that that tax would have raised \$25 billion, largely from this state. What did members opposite say? Nothing! Members opposite were quiet.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: That was not the case.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: That was the case! Treasurer Swan agreed to it. It would have raised in the vicinity of \$25 billion. What did members opposite say? Nothing! Then the federal government revised the tax and negotiated only with the large multinationals. It excluded negotiating with Western Australian firms. It has not talked to them. It told them to nick off! It only talks to the big ones! Members opposite supported that. How could a state-based party support a commonwealth government that excluded negotiating with Western Australian firms?

Several members interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Members opposite do! Then the federal government goes out and says, "We want money from you, but we are willing to give back \$1 for every \$3.50 taken." How could members opposite support that?

Mrs M.H. Roberts: This is a like a fairytale. You make up analogies. Where are your facts?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: No, it is true! If this tax raises anything, it will raise \$7 billion from this state, and, if the federal government meets its promise, it will give back \$2 billion to this state. I might add that Rudd came to power in 2007 promising \$100 million a year for the Gorgon revenue.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Never see it!

Dr M.D. NAHAN: We will never see it! The federal government was going to set \$100 million aside for the Gorgon fund. We have not seen it! They were going to set money aside. Have they negotiated the fund? No! They have not funded it.

The real issue here is that we have a significant imbalance in our share of revenue. This will create a worse imbalance, and it is time to stand up against additional taxation on Western Australia. Stand up!

Several members interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Members opposite might think this is funny, but when this tax comes in and destroys our workers and affects our economies—

Mr E.S. Ripper: It will not!

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes, it will when fly in, fly out workers start getting laid off in droves!

Mr E.S. Ripper: No, they won't.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes, they will! Members opposite will be held responsible for that.

MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot) [3.43 pm]: I want to make a quick contribution to this debate. I will start by saying that I recall quite clearly my first speech to this house in which I said that I am a member of the Liberal Party because I believe that governments should spend money where a community requires it and not because of how they vote. This is a serious situation in which the federal Labor government has breached the trust of the Australian people. I will go into why this state is the worst affected of any.

The federal Labor government has abandoned Western Australia. On the way out the door, it has slammed us with a mining tax to pay for its excesses over the past two and a half years in office. It attempted to buy our

Speaker; Mr Eric Ripper; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Joe Francis; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Ben Wyatt

silence with \$2 billion worth of infrastructure. WA is receiving about \$2 billion out of the \$6 billion to \$7 billion regional infrastructure fund, yet it contributes 60 to 65 per cent of Labor's new mining tax. We contribute 65 per cent, but we end up with only 30 per cent back. I have a question for the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Does the member concede that most of the Rio, BHP, Xstrata, and so on, shareholders actually live outside Western Australia and they will pay more by dividend to people in London, Los Angeles, Sydney —

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Those three companies—in fact, all of the mining companies in WA have a very proud record of employing Western Australian people and investing money back into our community.

I have a question for the Leader of the Opposition; however, I will make this point first, going on from what the member for Midland said. In November 2009, this government, led by Premier Barnett, made application under Infrastructure Australia for \$600 million to upgrade roads to Perth airport. That is because the Liberal–National government knew that infrastructure was needed. That is why it was on our wish list. This was not funded. Kevin Rudd was the Prime Minister and he was going pretty well in the polls. Basically, he said, “No, it's not on the list.”

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Hang on! I will get to the member for Midland in a second!

It was not funded. However, two weeks ago Julia Gillard announced that the federal government, if re-elected, would fund \$480 million for this very important project. The problem is that the Prime Minister cannot be believed on this commitment. My question to the Leader of the Opposition relates to the one time in Australian political history in the past few years in this state where the blame game could not have applied—from November 2007 to September 2008. I ask the Leader of the Opposition, as Treasurer of this state at the time, did he once ask the federal Labor government for funding for this infrastructure?

Mr E.S. Ripper: We asked for funding for Great Eastern Highway —

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Did you get it?

Mr E.S. Ripper: And we got it.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: For the airport precinct?

Mr E.S. Ripper: For Great Eastern Highway.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Did the Leader of the Opposition ask for funding for Oakajee, the Ord or the Northbridge Link? The Leader of the Opposition did not ask for funds for any of those projects! The Leader of the Opposition did not ask for money for the airport project, and that is why he has no credibility on this issue whatsoever. During the time that the Leader of the Opposition was Treasurer of a state Labor government there was one period—nine months—during which there was also a federal Labor government in Canberra, and the former Treasurer achieved nothing. There was no blame game; there were two Labor governments and the former Treasurer achieved nothing! I make this point about the resource super profits tax, as far as the economy is concerned, in opposition Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard —

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Listen to you, “little Miss So Hard Done By!”—“If you had picked me instead of Alan Carpenter I wouldn't have lost the election!” You just need to learn when to have your say and shut up! Now that Alannah has gone I have got you sending me deaf yelling in my ear! “If you had picked me, I wouldn't have lost the election!”

Mrs M.H. Roberts: You know, that when people have lost an argument they —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.M. Harvey): Member for Midland!

Point of Order

Mr M. McGOWAN: I want to draw the house's attention to the fact that members should be referred to by the title of their electorate, and that members should perhaps adopt a little decorum in the way that they speak to other members in this house.

The ACTING SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I was referring to a previous member in this house.

Debate Resumed

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: In opposition, Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard ridiculed the Howard government's economic credentials by claiming that the economy was going well only because of the mining industry. Now, the Prime

Speaker; Mr Eric Ripper; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Joe Francis; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Ben Wyatt

Minister is claiming that the mining industry had absolutely nothing to do with Australia avoiding recession and it was all her hard work—or Kevin Rudd’s hard work—and that we will now be lumbered with a new mining tax without retarding our economic performance. What a load of hogwash! The Prime Minister cannot have it both ways. The Labor government said something totally different before the last election and now it is trying to tell us that the mining industry had absolutely nothing to do with Australia avoiding recession.

Perth as a whole has been drastically let down, but the real issue here is: why has it come down to this? It has come down to this because the reality is that there is only one key seat up for play in Western Australia, and that is Hasluck. If Western Australia was in the same situation as New South Wales, which has just been given \$2.1 billion worth of commitments towards a 14 kilometre railway link, it would be a different story. That is why I will move the following amendment.

Amendment to Motion

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I move —

To delete all words after “house” with the view to inserting the following words —

supports federal government infrastructure funding for Western Australia but opposes the federal government’s proposed minerals resource rent tax.

In closing, I will keep going on this other point. The location of the marginal seats in this country is determining where the federal government will spend money. As I said, \$2.1 billion will be spent in New South Wales, and anyone would think that Bennelong is a marginal seat! In Queensland, \$742 million is promised for the Redcliffe to Brisbane rail link—once again not tied to the mineral resource rent tax. That cuts through the marginal seats of Petrie and Dixon. It is hypocrisy by the federal Labor government and it should be condemned for it.

MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham) [3.50 pm]: I want to make plain to the house the huge infrastructure demands that are required in not only the city, but also the country to support industry around Western Australia. I will begin with the south west. The “Roads to Export” report was put together by the Bunbury Wellington Economic Alliance. That report recommended allocating \$733 million to free up the roads around the south west, diverting the Preston River, completing the Bunbury outer ring-road, fixing the Coalfields Highway and so on. In the north west, the Newman – Nullagine – Marble Bar Road needs upgrading. People are dying on that road. Connections between Wiluna and Great Northern Highway are needed to ensure a more direct route from Kalgoorlie to the Pilbara to make it easier for business and mining operations to transport their products, and a transport hub is needed at Kalgoorlie. The government issued a press release saying that Karratha will run out of water if something is not done. All these things combined require billions of dollars to be spent. We cannot avoid fixing most of these problems. The south west and the north west need fixing. Water needs to be provided to Karratha and decent infrastructure is required around Western Australia. All that needs to be paid for, and there are two options for doing that. The first is the commonwealth could provide billions of dollars of expenditure. Western Australia has never before seen the likes of that amount of money from the federal government for mining infrastructure. The second alternative is to do what this Premier and this government have been doing, which is to slug ordinary families.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr M. MCGOWAN: The member for Riverton can laugh all he likes, but there has been a 40 per cent increase in water charges and an 80 per cent increase in electricity and power charges. Rates are going through the roof. My rate bill arrived yesterday, so I know exactly how high they are going. There are all sorts of taxes and charges going up on Western Australian families around this state. That is the other way by which this infrastructure can be paid. The choice is really quite clear: do we get the companies that have agreed to pay this tax—the iron ore companies that the Premier described in this chamber on 25 February this year as “getting away with murder”—to pay for this infrastructure, or do we get families on \$50 000 a year who are currently struggling with massive cost increases on their family budgets to pay for this infrastructure? It is really quite a simple choice. That is what is put before the house today. Do members support getting the money from the companies that have agreed to pay it, or do they support getting the money the other way, which is the government’s way, by slugging ordinary families, people, pensioners and the poor around the state? It is a simple choice. We are on the side of ordinary families and the government is on the side of ensuring that we do not get this money other than by slugging ordinary families.

MR T.R. BUSWELL (Vasse) [3.53 pm]: In 2007, Kevin Rudd offered Western Australians \$100 million a year if they voted for Labor. He said that the money would begin to be paid in 2012. Not one cent of that is in the forward estimates and not one cent will be paid to Western Australia. In July this year, during the Senate estimates committee, the commonwealth Treasury was asked if it had modelled the impact of the new tax arrangements on jobs and investment. Treasury replied that the commonwealth government had asked Treasury

Extract from Hansard

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Speaker; Mr Eric Ripper; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Joe Francis; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Ben Wyatt

not to do that. Why would that be? We all know that this will erode investment and jobs in Western Australia and that this tax is fundamentally bad for the people of Western Australia. The member for Rockingham has touched on one truism—the need for significant investment in Western Australia. If there is one thing that I have learned in my brief time in this place, it is that we cannot rely on the commonwealth. We have to get off our backsides and do it ourselves. That is one of the reasons that in this year's budget the state government committed a record \$25 billion for capital investment in Western Australia. If we had waited for Julia Gillard, we would be waiting for a long, long time. If there is one classic example of why we should —

Mr E.S. Ripper: Don't start waiting for Tony Abbot.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will not wait for the Leader of the Opposition because in two weeks he will not be there.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Would you like a wager on that?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No, because I have heard what the left is going to do. If we put money into a central fund and waited for it to come back, we would not get our fair share. In 2009, the nation building infrastructure plan allocated \$8.5 billion for projects around Australia, including the Midland hospital, which we co-funded with the commonwealth and which, member for Midland, will be built irrespective of who sits in Canberra. The member for Midland cannot peddle mistruths in here. That hospital will be built. Of that \$8.5 billion, Western Australia received \$575 million; that is 6.8 per cent. Is that a fair share? No. If we let this money go across to Canberra, would we get a fair share back? Never.

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park) [3.56 pm]: I rise on behalf of the opposition to make the point that the former Treasurer, the disgraced member for Vasse, said that we cannot rely on the commonwealth. The Premier certainly did a bit of that over the past couple of years. Look at Oakajee and the Ord and compare the generosity of the commonwealth under the Rudd and Gillard governments with John Howard's government. The state got nothing in return from John Howard other than the one bequest that he left the state—the GST. That is what he left us. The member for Vasse carried on about Gorgon. Do you know why it was not paid earlier, you twit? It is because the money has not started flowing yet, you dimwit. That is why Gorgon has not started paying early yet. The money from Gorgon—the \$100 million a year from a Labor federal government—has not been paid yet. If the state government is to ask to get money from the commonwealth government early, perhaps it should get its finances in order and stop blowing out debt to 10 per cent of gross state product before it goes rattling the tin to the federal government.

Amendment (deletion of words) put and a division taken with the following result —

Ayes (28)

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

Noes (24)

Ms L.L. Baker	Mr J.C. Kobelke	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr P.C. Tinley
Ms A.S. Carles	Mr F.M. Logan	Ms M.M. Quirk	Mr A.J. Waddell
Mr R.H. Cook	Mr M. McGowan	Mr E.S. Ripper	Mr P.B. Watson
Ms J.M. Freeman	Mr M.P. Murray	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Mr M.P. Whitely
Mr J.N. Hyde	Mr A.P. O'Gorman	Ms R. Saffioti	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr P. Papalia	Mr C.J. Tallentire	Mr D.A. Templeman (<i>Teller</i>)

Pairs

Mr I.M. Britza	Mrs C.A. Martin
Mr B.J. Grylls	Mr T.G. Stephens

Amendment thus passed.

Amendment (insertion of words) put and a division taken with the following result —

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Speaker; Mr Eric Ripper; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Dr
Mike Nahan; Mr Joe Francis; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Ben Wyatt

Ayes (28)

Mr P. Abetz	Mr V.A. Catania	Mr A.P. Jacob	Dr M.D. Nahan
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Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr P. Papalia	Mr C.J. Tallentire	Mr D.A. Templeman (<i>Teller</i>)

Pairs

Mr I.M. Britza	Mrs C.A. Martin
Mr B.J. Grylls	Mr T.G. Stephens

Amendment thus passed.

Motion, as Amended

Question put and a division taken with the following result —

Ayes (28)

Mr P. Abetz	Mr V.A. Catania	Mr A.P. Jacob	Dr M.D. Nahan
Mr F.A. Alban	Dr E. Constable	Dr G.G. Jacobs	Mr C.C. Porter
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Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr P. Papalia	Mr C.J. Tallentire	Mr D.A. Templeman (<i>Teller</i>)

Pairs

Mr I.M. Britza	Mrs C.A. Martin
Mr B.J. Grylls	Mr T.G. Stephens

Question thus passed.