

Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Jan Norberger; Acting Speaker; Mr Matt Taylor; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Ian Britza; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Shane Love; Dr Graham Jacobs; Mr John Day

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**APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) RECURRENT 2012–13 BILL 2013**  
**APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) CAPITAL 2012–13 BILL 2013**

*Second Reading — Cognate Debate*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

**MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro)** [7.01 pm]: At the outset, and not wishing to reflect upon the Chair, the hair-trigger-like sensitivity of the Speaker yesterday prevented me from retracting an interjection I made in the house and resulted, quite fairly, in my being called a fourth time and asked to remove myself from this place. I was disappointed that I was unable to effect the retraction of the interjection, because I unfairly interjected across the chamber and insinuated that the Treasurer was dishonest. That is not parliamentary, and, of course, I would not repeat it, and it is not appropriate, because it is not the Treasurer who has necessarily been dishonest; the entire Barnett Liberal government has been dishonest with this budget. It is undeniable that every single one—and the observation has been made —

**Mr F.A. Alban:** Grow up! Stop accusing people you don't even know of doing something. The government is over there, by the way. The backbench is over there.

**Mr P.B. Watson:** So you have disassociated yourself from them?

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker):** The members for Albany and Swan Hills have not been given the call and should not have a debate across the chamber. Members, please, keep quiet unless you are asked for an interjection.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I do not mind the interjections; nevertheless I appreciate your protection, Madam Acting Speaker.

The observation has been made by many opposition members in this debate that in delivering this budget the executive has the support of the entire Liberal and National parties in Parliament. It does not do that on its own; it does not have the numbers. The budget is delivered and it must be owned by every single member of the Liberal–National government in this place. They must go back to their electorates and take ownership of this appalling budget. They are responsible for delivering a considerable list of broken promises to the people of Western Australia. All of them participated in the last election campaign and in the Liberal and National Party promises made to Western Australian electors. That is what got them elected. It got them the majority in this chamber and the power to form government. It is their responsibility when the Treasurer and the Premier deliver a budget that breaks the promises that they signed up to. It is their responsibility when land tax, which was not even mentioned prior to the election, is increased by 12.5 per cent. It is their responsibility when a fully funded, fully costed list of promises to deliver public transport in the metropolitan area evaporates less than five months after the election. It is their responsibility because they are part of the government. They were elected on these false promises. All government members own those false and broken promises.

**Mr F.A. Alban** interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** The member for Swan Hills in particular is responsible. If I were him, I would be sitting there very quietly.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Excuse me, member for Warnbro. I call the member for Swan Hills for the first time. Members should not interject unless they have asked the member on his feet to do so. This is not a screaming match.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I will not bait the member for Swan Hills anymore. He knows what he has done.

These broken promises are a badge all government members must wear for the next three and a half years. All the way to the next election, Labor Party members will be reminding the public of Western Australia about the broken promises of the government. The primary purpose of the opposition doing that is not only to bring to the attention of the people of Western Australia that the Liberal and National parties lied and were elected under false pretences—no doubt numerous other broken promises will be revealed in the coming months—but also to ensure that no one in Western Australia holds the false belief or misconception that anyone on that side of the chamber can be believed. All of the government's promises at the next election and the commitments in the next three and a half years will be viewed through the jaundiced eye of a public that knows not to trust the Liberal and National parties in Western Australia. That is the truth of the matter and that is why the opposition will continue to remind the public, because what the government has done is wrong.

The sad part about this, and looking beyond the massive debt we will all inherit—the \$10 600 per man, woman and child in this state, the \$3 000 per man, woman and child beyond the debt at the national level, which is the result of the Barnett government's massive blowout in debt; that is terrible—the worst part for those engaged in public office in this state is that the government has demeaned the office. The government has demeaned the currency of commitments made by political parties prior to an election to the extent that the federal member for

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Canning felt compelled to warn the electorate of Western Australia prior to the coming federal election that governments on his side of the political fence do not keep their promises after an election is over. He said that governments on his side of the political fence do not feel compelled to keep a commitment following an election. He has said that if the Liberal Party is elected at the federal election, it will drop that responsibility. At least, he was honest to tell the public about that. It is unusual honesty from those on the conservative side of politics in Western Australia—and he got a belting for it. The federal Leader of the Opposition, Mr Abbott, was in a remote corner of New South Wales, on a bus, out of mobile range, but he made sure the message came through the television set. He made sure that the message got back to Don: do not say that again. Reading between the lines, the message for the federal member for Canning was to retract that statement and keep quiet for the rest of the campaign. He had belled the cat; he had told the truth. He had indicated that as a result of living in Western Australia and being in the Liberal Party, he cannot pretend that promises he makes prior to an election are binding. However, he did have one rider, one additional comment that may mitigate his actions to some extent—he pointed out that he is not currently in government office so that if he were to win office, the books may not reflect what he was told prior to the election. That is a reasonable observation and it does not excuse the breaking of a raft of promises, but the Barnett government did not have even that excuse. The Barnett government was not a new government. The Barnett government was the old government. The Barnett government knew what was in the books because it cooked them prior to the election; it was the chef that cooked the books and presented a false indication of the state of the budget prior to the election. It is undeniable that it was not accurate because five minutes after the election the government revealed to the Western Australian public that most of what it had said was not true. And it got worse from that moment on. For the past few months it has been embarrassing to watch as the Premier, almost on a weekly basis, comes out and breaks a major promise to the people of Western Australia. It is extraordinary stuff.

I will now focus a little on a couple of portfolios I hold responsibility for as shadow minister—namely, tourism, and corrective services. I will talk a little about those, and then I intend taking advantage of the freedom we have in the debates on these bills to focus on something that has been in the media a couple of times in the past week or so in opinion pieces by Paul Murray regarding the proliferation and apparently expanding role of accountability bodies in Western Australia and around the nation, but particularly in Western Australia. I intend to finish off a little on that.

The number of broken promises across a whole raft of portfolios is embarrassing for members opposite, otherwise it would not have elicited such an impassioned response from the member for Swan Hills, and so it should be. There are the big ones we have heard about in public transport that will impact on the part of the world that the member for Swan Hills represents, but within tourism there has also been a significant broken promise. A few weeks ago, when I think the Premier was the tourism minister, we asked him a question regarding the cut to the tourism budget. At the time he suggested that it was not large or significant, dismissed it and did not really respond to the question. I am new to and just learning about this shadow portfolio. What I find extraordinary about the cuts that have been made to tourism is that if the government invests a certain amount of money, it is the one sector in the state that—probably uniquely—is capable of saying precisely what the return on that investment to the state will be in the form of revenue to the businesses of Western Australia and jobs for the residents of Western Australia. Just by virtue of the science that has been applied around the world and in Australia in recent times, the accumulated knowledge, the precise nature of return on investment for spend in marketing, and the return, consequently, in the form of revenue to the state and jobs, it can be really accurately measured and, therefore, predicted. Therefore, it is extraordinary to me, as a newcomer to this shadow portfolio, that any government would consider that a sane and reasonable decision in light of the tapering off of the mining world and the investment in construction now being transitioned into the production phase in the mining world, and the reduction in jobs, expenditure and investment in the state in that part of that sector of the business world. It is extraordinary to me, knowing that a lever can almost be pulled and a certain amount of money can be injected and it can then be predicted exactly what the return will be, that that is not being done. In fact, we are doing precisely the opposite.

For instance, we know that for every \$60 000 spent on tourism marketing, a job is created in Western Australia. We know, for instance, that for every single dollar spent by the state on the marketing of Western Australia as a destination, \$10 is returned in revenue to the industry. That is because every dollar we spend can be matched by the industry itself, and that ratio of the return on investment is well known. It has been measured and demonstrated time and time again to be accurate. If the government knows that, why would it decide to break an election promise that the Liberal Party made prior to the election to commit an additional \$24 million over four years, with the resultant potential outcome of about \$80 million revenue to businesses in the state in the tourism sector, and 1 300 jobs? Why would the government decide to break that particular election promise? I do not condone it, but I could understand this government breaking election promises because of its poor fiscal management over a number of years now and its inability to rein in expenditure in the public sector. There is not

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a minister in the house at the moment, so I am probably talking to the more sane members of the party room on the Liberal side of the Parliament, but why would the government decide that? Members opposite should be asking the minister why she is cutting that particular promise, because it will have an impact. I am not making this up; we have seen in the media that the tourism industry has made very clear what the impact will be. The tourism industry has stated that by making that cut, many small businesses—there are big players, but the vast majority are small businesses; those people to whom members opposite might otherwise at another time in another place have appealed to as their heartland—will be hurt, because they will miss out on \$80 million worth of revenue over the next four years.

**Mr D.C. Nalder:** So if they spent \$10 of their own —

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** No. I am only learning about this myself, but when we invest in destination marketing, they benefit. The matching will not come from them; it will come from, for instance, an airline that a package might be marketed towards. The destination marketing might be used to promote Western Australia in Victoria, New South Wales or something like that, hook up with an airline and have packages coming into the state. That matching of the promotions and the actual packages offered is made from within the industry. But for every dollar we spend, if they match that dollar, we get a return of \$10 for every dollar we spend as a state. If we are talking about return on investment for state revenue—for a taxpayer dollar—there cannot be many more guaranteed returns such as that. If the member for Alfred Cove can think of some —

**Mr D.C. Nalder:** If I were a small business, I'd throw in \$20 to get the \$10 back, because I do not think it is going to small business.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** This is not a small business making that contribution.

**Mr D.C. Nalder:** But if the government is going to make the contribution —

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** That is the benefit. The small business is not the one making the contribution; it is the bigger players and those who are bringing people to the state as a package.

**Mr D.C. Nalder:** I see.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Our dollar is not being matched by those little individual small businesses. They are not putting in the dollar. I know, for instance, that if we were to offer up X million dollars, generally if there is an offer of that nature on the table, an airline such as Qantas will match it with a marketing program that then results in the return to the businesses that did not put in that money—the small businesses. They get the benefit because people come into the state and go off to destinations more widely.

**Mr D.C. Nalder:** But the \$10 is not going to small business; it is going to the big businesses.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** It goes right throughout the state. No, that return is across the state; it is not necessarily an individual. I am saying to the member that the vast majority of tourism businesses in the state that benefit from this sort of investment will be small businesses.

**Mr D.C. Nalder:** I just can't work out why private enterprise wouldn't make that investment to help get that model.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Why they would not?

**Mr D.C. Nalder:** Yes.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** They would. But the government has to make the investment initially. It is seed money.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I am going to have to push on.

**Mr D.C. Nalder:** Sorry.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** If the member for Alfred Cove is interested—I am still learning—I recommend that he talk to Evan Hall at the Tourism Council.

I am going to push on. That broken promise is going to be devastating. It has been identified as a key broken promise by the industry, and the minister and the government have been castigated over it. I will skip corrective services because I can talk about that at another time, as I have done in this place on many occasions. I will take the opportunity to talk about something that was written in *The West Australian* by Mr Paul Murray in his opinion piece in the last couple of weeks. I know many members of Parliament would have been aware of the subject of the speech by the Chief Justice that elicited these pieces from Mr Murray. If members are not aware of them, then I would commend the Whitmore Lecture 2013. It is an address by the Chief Justice, Hon Wayne

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Martin, and like me, if members have read it, they probably would have found it quite disturbing, which was a word he used quite regularly throughout the speech and I share his view. From discussions I have outside of the chamber with many people in Parliament, I understand it is a view shared by many. Despite the member for Collie–Preston's observation that it seems to have elicited no response from Parliament, I can assure Mr Murray that in the previous Parliament, the Joint Standing Committee on Corruption and Crime Commission was not so much concerned by the proliferation of these bodies, but by the creation of what has been called the Integrity Coordinating Group in Western Australia, which is a body that is a loose affiliation of some of these oversight bodies. The previous CCC standing committee had expressed its concern about how they were operating in discussions around the fourth arm of government. I note for Mr Murray that it had drawn the attention of the previous Parliament; that attention was probably diverted by other more pressing matters leading up to the election and then by the election. I can say to the house—I have sought approval from my colleagues on the standing committee—that the standing committee for the CCC intends to conduct an inquiry into the implications for the CCC of this Integrity Coordinating Group.

I have no idea, but I would not be surprised if other committees might be considering similar inquiries because it is undeniable that the concerns raised by the Chief Justice are legitimate. There has been a proliferation of statutory agencies performing integrity functions and reporting directly to Parliament; he listed a number of them in Western Australia. We know that five of those bodies—namely, the Auditor General, the Ombudsman, the Information Commissioner, the Public Sector Commissioner and the Corruption and Crime Commissioner have formed this body called the Integrity Coordinating Group. I share the Chief Justice's concern that a lot of these bodies have increasingly appeared to be starting to act in a fashion that does not necessarily impose on themselves the same level of accountability and transparency that they expect of everybody else. In their role as the integrity watchdogs, it does not necessarily appear to be applied to themselves, and that is of concern. I find very disturbing the suggestion that they are a fourth arm of government. I share the Chief Justice's view that we have quite enough arms of government with three; and that they have worked well. I believe we inherited the best system in the world and we made it better. Having the executive, the Parliament and the judiciary balance each other works well. I am not saying there is no need for these oversight bodies nor any call for them, but I will place on record my concerns about what appears to be an evolving expectation on behalf of some of the people engaged in this world of integrity that they are a fourth arm of government; that they appear to be independent; that there is merit in them forming some body without parliamentary oversight, without a minister responsible for their behaviour or expenditure of funds, or even tasking. If they are coordinating themselves by getting together as a body in the absence of a parliamentary oversight committee or any oversight directly from the Parliament—in fact, they are taking an action in the absence of any tasking from any particular minister, and therefore from the executive—that is worthy of closer scrutiny in my view. I am not comfortable with it. I am made less comfortable by the fact that it appears to be almost an accepted wisdom in many parts of the integrity world that they are the fourth arm of government. Recently, we attended a conference in Melbourne and it was implied that that was the case. There is almost a language employed by many involved in this integrity world suggesting that not only is it an accepted wisdom that they are a body, but they have to work together coordinating their efforts almost against parliaments and other people in the public sector. But as I said, that assumption is made in the absence of any accountability and transparency that they expect from all people who are subject to their scrutiny, and who are called upon to exhibit greater levels of accountability and transparency than many of these bodies do.

I will take the opportunity to point out that in Western Australia the one body that seems to be significantly expanding its role at the behest obviously of the executive, but without any additional scrutiny resulting in a reduction in scrutiny and public transparency in a number of cases, and being the subject of a great deal of focus in the Chief Justice's paper, was the Public Sector Commissioner. Acting under the Public Sector Management Act, being tasked with inquiries beyond the Public Sector Commissioner, other individuals are being tasked with inquiries under the Public Sector Management Act to conduct inquiries which appear to be invariably conducted without transparency nor accountability to anyone other than the minister who tasked the individual conducting the inquiry. It then invariably results in very little additional information being provided to the public and often exoneration of whatever government body or agency or minister was the subject of the inquiry.

The Chief Justice gave four specific examples. They are worth recalling; namely, where the Public Sector Management Act has been employed to conduct an inquiry which in the past would almost invariably have been conducted by a royal commission. As the Chief Justice indicated, that does not necessarily result in a compelling openness and transparency, but we have an expectation that those inquiries are conducted in that fashion, as well as a historical expectation, setting a precedent that would normally result in getting that transparency. Four separate inquiries were conducted that did not result in that transparency and they drew the attention of the Chief Justice. The first one to which he referred was the appointment of a special inquirer to investigate the Katanning hostel abuse incidents. Again, he pointed out that a royal commission is actually being conducted at the federal

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level into almost exactly identical circumstances. Yet in Western Australia, we chose not to have a royal commission; we chose to appoint an inquirer. He ended up having a fairly open and transparent inquiry, but he did not have the powers to investigate police officers or local councillors—two types of people who would have been subjected to scrutiny under that inquiry if, in the normal course of events, it was a royal commission. There were two other inquiries into bushfires around Perth, and the final inquiry to which the Chief Justice referred related to the Peel Health Campus. I agree with his observations that the individual appointed to conduct the inquiry did not have the power to compel a private company.

**Mrs G.J. Godfrey:** What are you proposing?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I am drawing it to the attention of the house. If the member for Belmont is not aware of the Chief Justice's paper, I ask that she read it. I am drawing members' attention to my concerns at the proliferation of these bodies, the expansion of their roles, particularly the role of the Public Sector Commissioner, the apparent lack of transparency and accountability of these bodies and the suggestion that they form a fourth arm of government. All of those things concern me. I am bringing those concerns to the attention of the house, and I commend the Chief Justice's address to the Whitmore Lecture 2013 to the member for Belmont, if she has not read it.

Beyond that, I indicate to the house that the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission will be conducting an inquiry into the Integrity Coordinating Group, inasmuch as it impacts on the operations of the Corruption and Crime Commission. Why would we do that? Most members in this place would be aware of this document. It is a folder that is produced by the Integrity Coordinating Group, subtitled "Promoting and Strengthening Integrity in WA Public Bodies", and titled "Gifts, benefits and hospitality: A guide to good practice". It is quite a substantial document with plenty of flyers inside it; it is well printed—expensively printed! On the back of that document is a photo of the five individuals who form the Integrity Coordinating Group. Even further back, on the back page of the folder, are the logos for each of the bodies that form the Integrity Coordinating Group. My question to that group is: Who paid for that? Which minister felt that was appropriate, and authorised it? What part of the executive was consulted on the activities this group is conducting under the terms of being an integrity coordinating group; and how far do they see their powers extending with respect to their cooperation as a body, a notional fourth arm of government? Is that how members of this group see themselves? If they do, I have concerns about that. I intend, with my colleagues, to consult further about that and to investigate with a view to finding some answers to those questions. If anyone is not, or has not been aware, of the Integrity Coordinating Group until now, I commend the Chief Justice's speech to them and ask that they look into it themselves.

**MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland)** [7.32 pm]: It is with little joy that I rise to respond to the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013–14 Bill 2013 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2013–14 Bill 2013. I would like to have risen in a circumstance in which there were things in the budget I could have welcomed, particularly things I could have welcomed for my electorate of Midland. I would, for example, like to have welcomed a commitment to the relocation and renewal of the Midland train station. Yet there is no commitment to that in this state budget, so I am unable to welcome that. I would also have welcomed \$22 million that the Premier promised at the recent state election for a university campus in Midland. That was supposed to be the state's contribution for tertiary education in Midland. Yet there is no allocation of even \$1 million, let alone the \$22 million that the Premier promised before the election. I do not just say that that money is not in this year's budget, it has not even been placed in the forward estimates. There is no forward estimate for the Premier or his government to spend that money next year, the year after or the year after that.

During the election campaign the Premier announced with great fanfare that he would support tertiary education in Midland; yet we have seen nothing in this state budget. That was supposed to be at the Midland railway workshops, and I earnestly hope there is still the potential for that to occur and that the government will work with Curtin University and that Curtin will consider the placement of a future medical school in Midland. But, at this stage, the money is simply not in the budget. I would have also liked to have welcomed some things in policing, such as the upgrade to Morley Police Station or, indeed, a real 24-hour police station at Ballajura, which was promised during the election campaign. My colleague the member for West Swan held up photos of signs that were in evidence throughout the electorate of West Swan during the campaign. I saw those signs as I travelled in, around and beyond the Midland electorate, which were a false promise to the people of West Swan by the Liberal Party of this state. I can welcome none of these things, because with a speed that would make Usain Bolt seem like a somnolent snail, the Barnett government has run away from its own strident supposed fully funded and fully costed campaign pledges.

Former Liberal Prime Minister John Howard made the famous distinction between what he called core promises and non-core promises. At the very least, the inference was that there was an inviolable set of principles that guided his government. But this budget has shown that the Barnett government has no core. There is no promise

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that it will not break, no commitment that it will not dishonour and no solid undertaking upon which it will not renege. This is a government that is without principle; willing to say whatever it takes to get power and then do what it likes once in power.

Let me turn again to my electorate of Midland. In late January, the Premier made a royal progress through Midland. He came to accept the homage of his loyal subjects and launched a failed campaign. One of the places he visited that day was the Centrepoint Shopping Centre, where his photo was taken with the coordinator of the Yellowbird project. This not-for-profit organisation has run a scheme called First Click, which developed digital literacy amongst seniors and others—a project that was launched by the minister in only the year preceding that. Imagine the hypocrisy of the Premier showing up for a Liberal Party campaign launch in Midland, coming to the Centrepoint Shopping Centre, standing there with the coordinator of the Yellowbird project and then, following the election, dishonouring the commitment to the project. The First Click project is not being funded in this year's budget and will cease. What hypocrisy! Since the March election, the announcement has been made that that project will be disbanded. It is all right, before the election, for the Premier to visit Yellowbird, have his picture taken with the coordinator and get a puff piece in the local newspapers, but after the election, when no-one is looking, the funding for this organisation and its excellent work is quietly rubbed out.

The people of Midland have long been promised a university; in fact, they were promised a university by the former Court government, which was never delivered. It is the same old Liberal promise, but it never seems to have any dollars attached to it. The Premier reaffirmed his support for a university in Midland at the Swan Chamber of Commerce breakfast. On Tuesday, 12 February, during the election campaign, the Premier gave that support a number when he promised \$22 million towards the establishment of a university in Midland. One wonders where he came up with that figure. It seems a rather specific figure. It is not just \$10 million, \$20 million or \$30 million, but \$22 million. It gives it an air of sincerity; it sounds like a real number and that the figure has been worked out somewhere. Why is that figure not in this year's budget? The local media went wild. Pamphlet after pamphlet went out to my electorate from the Liberal candidate saying that a university for Midland would be funded with \$22 million. It is really a pea-and-thimble trick, because all of us know the government cannot build a university for \$22 million, as that would go nowhere near the cost of building a university or even a single school of a university, such as a medical school. This is dependent on a commitment from Curtin University, and that would involve federal funding. Surprisingly enough, a lot of commitments made by the Premier during the election campaign were dependent on federal funding. Given that the Premier had not organised federal funding in advance—certainly not with the current federal Labor government and he certainly got no commitment from Tony Abbott—these were promises that I suggest he never intended to keep. They were on the never-never.

I compared that promise to the commitment the Premier made for the Cottesloe and Scarborough beachfronts. I think the figure was \$60 million; it could have been \$80 million. Maybe the member for Scarborough remembers the amount that was in the press release—the \$60 million or \$80 million for the Cottesloe and Scarborough beachfronts. I distributed that press release to people in Guildford so they could see the money that was on offer to the electorates of Scarborough and Cottesloe. I suspect the Premier will keep that commitment and that money will be spent in the electorates of Scarborough and in his own electorate of Cottesloe. That is a lot more money to tart up their beachfronts than he committed to progress a university in Midland and yet we see zero dollars for that at this stage.

I come to another great raised expectation—the moving of the Midland railway station. The Premier said it should be done. He came out to Midland twice during the campaign. The first time he said, “Yes, I've seen the railway station. I drove by. It looks like it could need an upgrade.” Then he came out a second time and told the Midland Chamber of Commerce and Industry as much. After driving past it again on 23 January, the Premier said, “Yes, the Midland train station looks like it needs to be done.” Of course the media reported that the Premier said the Midland train station needs to be upgraded. Is there any money in the budget for that? No; not a cent. I have said this before but I will say it again: there was once money in the budget for a new Midland train station. It is something that I had been campaigning for for a number of years. In the 2008–09 budget—delivered by Eric Ripper; the last budget of the former Labor government's term—\$22.5 million was set aside for the project. It was put on budget that year. As history reflects, the then Premier called an early election in September of that year. What happened after the September election? In the Liberal Party's first budget, that money was removed. It simply disappeared off the books. We fought long and hard. I certainly fought long and hard to get that budget commitment for a new Midland train station. It needs to be moved in an easterly direction to be closer to the Midland hospital and to be fully integrated as part of a project by the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority. The sum of \$22.5 million was taken off budget in the first budget of the current Liberal government.

What else were the people of Midland not told? Not only were they not told there was no money on budget for the university or for a new train station, but also they were not told that for the first time commuters would have

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to pay for all parking at Midland railway station. There are currently a large number of free parking bays. There are other bays in a fenced-off area where commuters have to pay \$2 a day but the rest of the parking is free. What does the Treasurer say about this? He says, "Well, it's only a gold coin donation"! It might just be a gold coin donation for people in more affluent areas but this so-called gold coin donation, I will make the point, is \$2 a day—it is \$10 a week. To park at Midland train station 50 weeks a year will cost \$500 a year. There is also the increase in the two-zone train fare. If a person travels two zones, their fares will go up in the first instance, in this year's budget, in the order of \$500. That is \$1 000. I think that is a little more than a gold coin donation. Maybe \$1 000 here or there is not much to people who live in the Cottesloe or Nedlands electorates, or it might not be much to the Treasurer, but I can tell members that it is significant for people in my electorate particularly when they are facing much heftier household bills.

What else were the people of Midland told? They were told that utility price rises would not rise any more than the rate of inflation. That is what the Premier advised. Like every household in this state, the electorate of Midland was advised that the worst was over. Yes, the government had massively increased electricity, water, gas and other household charges during its first term, but the worst was over. From now on, it would keep roughly in line with inflation. Now that lie, that broken promise, has been exposed. We now find that even bigger price hikes are just over the horizon. Why? The answer trotted out was that it is to achieve cost reflectivity.

A lot of people understood beforehand, but what others did not understand was this Premier's and this Treasurer's cavalier attitude towards ordinary people facing household budgets and how difficult they are finding it. One of the most flippant comments that this Premier has made was, "Well, just don't have air conditioning. Don't have these luxuries. You don't need all those things. If you want to reduce household charges, perhaps you do not need air conditioning." He then commented that he did not have air conditioning at his house. The fact of the matter is that people who live in the eastern suburbs do not live in Cottesloe; they are a long way from the sea breeze and it is bloody hot in summer. There is no sea breeze in Midland. What little breeze there is comes very late at night. People need air conditioning, which costs money. This government has dramatically increased those costs.

Now we hear another one of these flippant offhand comments from the Treasurer who says, "Two dollars a day is just a gold coin donation." For someone who travels from Midland to Perth every day and currently parks for free at the station, the cost of transport will go up \$1 000 alone. That is quite apart from the massive increases in gas, electricity and water, and the flow-on effect of local government rates which will inevitably follow when we see that the Department of Fire and Emergency Services levy charged by government as part of local government rates has gone up by way more than the inflation rate, as has the cost that the state utility charges local governments for its electric poles. That is a rise in the order of just under 12 per cent. Inevitably, these costs are passed directly onto householders.

When the Premier talks about cost reflectivity he does not talk about his own failures and responsibilities in this area. We were promised that Muja refurbishment would cost \$100 million and be privately funded, not that it would cost the state \$100 million. The government effectively said that someone else was going to spend the \$100 million to do it privately. We started off with a figure of minus \$100 million. The reality is this figure is now somewhere north of \$330 million. That is a difference of over \$430 million since we were supposed to get it.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** It was supposed to cost \$100 million, which we were not paying for. We were promised that the solar feed-in tariff scheme would cost \$60 million. Now the cost is looking to be about 10 times that amount. The government being rightly shamed into reversing its decision to renege on contracts entered into under the scheme does not diminish the significance of the monumental incompetence of the scheme to begin with. These are the things consumers are being asked to pay for—not for a cost overrun here or there or a replacement or whatever, but nearly \$1 billion worth of mistakes by the Barnett government. That is the true cost being reflected. But the Premier will not say that. He is happy with the bland slogans, another clever con and another great big fib, to keep the common people in their place.

I wonder how happy the people of Midland will be when they find out that their heritage is being sold off for the Premier's pet projects. The Midland railway workshops were the heart of Midland for nearly a century. They were abruptly shut down and left to ruin by the Court Liberal government in breach of yet another solemn campaign promise. There is clearly a pattern here. In 1993, when the current Premier was the deputy leader of the Liberal Party, the Liberal Party commitment was that a Liberal government would expand the workshops and turn them into a centre of engineering excellence. Having promised that in the lead-up to the 1993 election, within a couple of months of being elected the Liberal government announced the closure. It did not announce an

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expansion into a centre of engineering excellence, but the closure. They were then mothballed for years. I am certainly proud to say that as the member for Midland, after they had been mothballed for a number of years, I made the original suggestion that led to the establishment of the Midland Redevelopment Authority. I continued to campaign for its establishment and succeeded in having it established. That authority has done great work in rehabilitating and developing the workshops site.

One of the important features of that site, put in place by our government, was the interpretive centre, which was closed in 2009. We were then told it was a temporary measure, but it has never been reopened. I have asked questions in Parliament to the minister responsible. I have also had articles in the paper and sought the response of the minister. I have also written to the minister. Despite all those protestations, the Liberal–National government has refused to reopen the interpretive centre. It seems to me that it is a matter of money. The government would like to fob off responsibility for it and the costs associated with it to the City of Swan. For its part, the City of Swan says, “If the government wants us to run it, give us the money to do so and we’ll do it.” This is simply a matter of cost-cutting. Now we discover that the movable heritage, the objects and artefacts that are so much part of the site, are to be auctioned off on 10 September. Now we know what the first sentence of the Liberal heritage document means when it states —

The Liberals understand that the conservation and re-use of buildings and places of heritage significance is fundamental to the integrity of the State’s cultural history.

It is now clear what this means. It means that the value of the heritage for the people of Western Australia is market value. I wonder now what will happen to the proceeds of the fire sale. Will it go to the black hole that is Elizabeth Quay, for example? One thing of which I am certain is that the money will not stay in Midland. Our heritage is being plundered for the Premier’s pet projects.

Before the election the government ran a series of advertisements, under the guise of informing people about traffic changes, and advertised its public works program that was “All part of the bigger picture”. At the time, that begged the question: what is this bigger picture a picture of? The budget shows just what the picture is. It is an inflated and grandiose portrait of the Premier, like David’s *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*. It is a portrait of an imperious man on a high horse trampling lesser beings on his way to a self-imagined place in history. I tell the Premier this: his place in history will be one of a debt legacy. The Premier will be remembered for the legacy that he has left this state in state debt. The debt was \$3.6 billion in June 2008 and we are now looking at well north of \$20 million. Indeed, I asked a question of the Premier or Treasurer of the day a few years ago in the Liberal–National government’s first term about whether it had a cap at \$20 million. The Premier said, “Yes, we will not go over \$20 million.” He is already on his way to considerably more than that.

We on this side of the house certainly will not be paying any homage to this Premier. Rather, we will continue to point out that his government has been built on a foundation of falsehoods and broken promises. We will continue to hold the Premier and the government that he leads to account for the promises that they have broken, the untruths that they have peddled and the arrogance with which they have so casually breached the trust of the people of this state.

**MR N.W. MORTON (Forrestfield)** [7.56 pm]: Before I begin my speech in earnest, I was just flicking through my notes that I drafted yesterday in preparation for this and I noted International Left-Handers Day was celebrated yesterday. As a south paw, I felt compelled to acknowledge, albeit belatedly, International Left-Handers Day.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** You know that means you have a decreased life expectancy?

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** I would not be talking about life expectancy with the margin the member for Midland has. I want to start —

**Mrs M.H. Roberts** interjected.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** I let the member for Midland speak without interjection.

I want to start my speech on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013–14 Bill 2013 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2013–14 Bill 2013 by shining some light on some of the major developments and projects that the Liberal–National government has undertaken and is working towards completion. There is a long list; I will just mention a few: to start with, Elizabeth Quay; the new Burswood stadium; the sinking of the rail line, which will connect the city; and the Riverside project.

I have noticed that in my brief time in this place thus far I seem to have acquired somewhat of a nickname—“Junior”, I believe. I am not completely sure what that name is in reference to, but if it is in reference to my years, yes, I am junior in years to many members opposite. If it is junior in my time in this place, then, yes,

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that is also a fact. I cannot compare to the length of service of the Leader of the Opposition, for example, who has spent some 16 or 17 years in this place. I commend the member for his length of service.

I remember a pivotal point during this campaign. In fact, I remember it so vividly that I know where I was and what I was doing. I was in my car driving down Hale Road. For those members who do not know, Hale Road is pretty much in the heart of my electorate.

**Mr S.K. L'Estrange:** It's in my electorate!

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** The member for Churchlands has one, too. Mine is better!

I remember this point vividly. I was driving in my car down Hale Road, which is in the heart of my electorate, and I was towing one of my sign-written trailers. It is so crystallised in my mind this point of time; I was in my car driving down Hale Road at school drop-off time. I remember this point in time so vividly because the Leader of the Opposition was being interviewed on ABC radio. It is something the Leader of the Opposition and I have in common; we were both interviewed by the ABC during the campaign. However, he was interviewed a few more times than I was! During that interview the Leader of the Opposition was asked two questions pertaining to the new stadium and the foreshore development. I remember this point in time because the Leader of the Opposition's answers to both of those questions were about change—a different direction. He was saying to the people of Western Australia that a vote for Labor was a vote for risk and that a vote for Labor would not ensure that these projects would be delivered for the people of Western Australia. Even with my junior service and “junior” label in this place, it is my humble opinion that at that point in time the Leader of the Opposition seriously misjudged the people of Western Australia. I think, having grown up in this great state, that the people of Western Australia were sick of waiting for these projects to be delivered. The people of Western Australia are very proud people. We want to be proud of our capital city and that is something that this Liberal–National government and this Premier have undertaken to achieve for the people of Western Australia, not just now, but for generations to come. Pertinent to that development is Elizabeth Quay and the other projects I have mentioned. Furthermore, the people of Western Australia want to have key infrastructure that other capital cities have.

**Mr P.B. Watson** interjected.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** The member can have a look at the handwriting—it is left-handed!

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** Keep talking up WA, member.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** I thank the Minister for Police.

The people of Western Australia want the key infrastructure that other capital cities have.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney):** Members!

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** Perth needs to appeal as a destination, not only for business but for tourism, that suits our geographic location and that appeals to Asia.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** Part of that is a train line to Perth Airport. Importantly for the people of my electorate, it will not stop there; it will continue on through to the electorate of Forrestfield. This train line will give the people of the east a connectivity that they have never had before, the connectivity that people in, say, the electorate of Mandurah, take for granted. It will be connectivity to their CBD and to their airport that other members and their constituents take for granted.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members! Member for Mandurah, I will have to call you in a minute if you do not desist.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** This train line will give the people of the east, the people of my electorate and those in the member for Kalamunda's electorate, connectivity to their CBD and to their airport, which they have never had. It obviously has other added benefits for the state and for the eastern suburbs, which is a rapidly growing region in the Perth metropolitan area. It will obviously ease congestion on our roads and it will significantly enhance the alternative means for getting to and from the airport for the large number of fly in, fly out workers residing in my electorate due to the convenience of the airport being so close. We start to imagine what residents of other suburbs have potentially taken for granted for some time. We start to imagine a Saturday afternoon on which a dad wants to take his kids to a simple, humble football game. He drives to the state-of-the-art Forrestfield train

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station, delivered by this Liberal–National government, and they catch the train to the brand-new, state-of-the-art Burswood stadium.

**Mr P.B. Watson** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member of the Albany, I will have to call you to order if you continue.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** Time to go!

**Mr P.B. Watson:** How many am I on?

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Two.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Can Mr Acting Speaker check mine as well while he is there?

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Zero.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** Before I was interrupted, I was saying that a simple, humble game of football will be able to be enjoyed because it can be easily accessed by public transport and viewed from the comfort of a new state-of-the-art football stadium. That is a significant investment in infrastructure for the state, but particularly for the people of my electorate, and I thank the Premier for his vision and for recognising the need in the east.

I want to bring things even closer to home and talk about a \$6 million commitment made and being delivered by this Liberal–National government—that is, the Hartfield Park sporting complex. This sporting complex is an ageing facility in the heart of my electorate, just off Hale Road in the suburb of Forrestfield. This sporting complex has been around for some time and, as I said, it is beginning to age. People in my electorate are very proud of their sporting clubs, and sport is very much a vehicle for community engagement. As a side point, I acknowledge and congratulate the government on the fantastic KidSport program that has been rolled out. I think some 21 500 young people now participate in community and organised sport who would not otherwise have been able to do so. A conversation with the Minister for Sport and Recreation during a visit to Hartfield Park provided some impetus to get that program going, and I am glad that my electorate could provide some benefit in that fantastic program that continues to support some of our disadvantaged children.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** Hear, hear!

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** Absolutely.

This \$6 million upgrade will transform this ageing facility into a modern hub of sporting activity within the electorate. It was very rewarding to have spent most of my summer doorknocking from house to house, street to street in the suburb of Forrestfield to try to garner support for this commitment. Indeed, I must acknowledge the Premier, who during the campaign came to the electorate without fanfare or bells and whistles and spoke to a small number of key stakeholders and said that if the Liberal–National government was re-elected, it would commit \$6 million to upgrade the facility. It was a fantastic day and I could tell that the people there were thrilled that the Liberal–National government would commit to this project in the eastern suburbs. It may only be small in the scheme of things, but that \$6 million will mean a lot to the local community. Furthermore, it was great to hear the Treasurer mention it in his budget speech, and on the following day, on the Friday, the Minister for Sport and Recreation came out to the electorate and made the announcement to a small but important crowd of local stakeholders that the project would be delivered by a Liberal–National government. That is a great outcome for my electorate.

There are a few more things I would like to touch on, one being this Liberal–National government's commitment to law and order—a commitment to fund another 550 police officers. This is at the heart of protecting our community and, certainly, as I doorknocked and got around my electorate during those 12 months of the campaign period, law and order was at the top of people's minds when I was engaging with and speaking to them. I commend the government for its commitment to law and order. On any day of any week of any year a Liberal–National government will always be more committed than members opposite to the security and the safety of our community through law and order measures.

Several members interjected.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** Members can laugh, but let us go back to when the previous Labor government was in power.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members, I want to hear the member in silence, please.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** As I was saying, the previous Labor government's tough stance on law and order was to soften this and to legalise that.

**Mr P.B. Watson** interjected.

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**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Albany!

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** Then the Labor government tackled sentencing, but it turned that into such a farce it looked more appealing to criminals than sales on Boxing Day. Our track record and our future record will speak for themselves.

There is another commitment I would like to mention.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Bedtime, Junior, you'd better go home!

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** The member for Mandurah will not want to miss his train! It will be eight bucks well spent!

Another commitment by the Liberal–National government in this budget that I would like to mention is the 40-kilometre-an-hour flashing signs at schools. As a former educator, I do not think the vocation ever truly leaves a person, although I must confess that I lose track of time now—I was always far more cognisant of school hours when I was a teacher working in the system. I can safely say that as someone who has worked in the system and who is now out of it that those flashing signs certainly resonate with me. Again, I commend the government for its commitment to community safety, particularly in the peak periods of our school pick-up and drop-off times in our school precincts. That is another good outcome.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** What did you have for recess?

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** I cannot remember! Finally, I want to mention the Midland public hospital. Every time I drive through Midland, which is not too often but often enough, I see this building rising out of the ground like a phoenix rising out of the ashes. I have seen the Midland public hospital taking shape. This state-of-the-art hospital will service the eastern corridor for many years to come. It is a fantastic initiative of this Liberal–National government. It is a great commitment to health and health resources, not just in the north and south of this city but in the eastern corridor of this city. I commend the government again for its commitment to rebuilding our health system, in particular, committing another \$146 million to the Midland public hospital, which will potentially affect my constituents the most.

In my final comments, I also want to acknowledge that this government and this Premier have the vision and the foresight to recognise that the eastern suburbs are coming of age. Now they need the infrastructure and resources that the north and south of Perth have had for some time. It is interesting that a Liberal–National government takes the lead on this and then suddenly the people of the eastern region realise that if they are to get anything, they need to vote Liberal. We need only look at the map and get the blue texta out to realise that it obviously resonated with the electorate, with the election of the members for Belmont and Forrestfield and the very slight margin that the member for Midland sits here in the chamber with.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** You reckon you'll still be here after 2017, do you?

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** I do not know. The way the member carries on, I will be here longer than he will.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney):** Member for Mandurah! I am hoping to hear the rest of the member's speech in silence.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** I will not say much more; in fact, I think I am pretty much done. That concludes my comments tonight. In the time that I have been on my feet, I have highlighted several reasons why this is a responsible and visionary budget that will deliver real outcomes, not just for the CBD but for people in the outer suburbs of Perth. I commend the Premier, the Treasurer and the cabinet for its 2013–14 budget.

**Mr J. NORBERGER (Joondalup)** [8.13 pm]: I thank the member for Forrestfield. That was a rousing speech. I am more enthused than I thought I would have been at this time. If I was not already fully convinced that the Liberal–National government is the correct government to lead this great state of ours in the future, I certainly am now. I suggest that members opposite would probably be tempted to cross the floor when it comes time to vote for the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013–14 Bill 2013 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2013–14 Bill 2013. I would be hard pressed to imagine why members opposite would not.

I had a bit more tactical forethought this time around before rising to speak tonight insofar as I checked to ensure that the member for Mandurah did not follow me. I checked the speaking order very carefully —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Last time you rushed out.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** I did indeed. My concern is that I cannot do it this time. My knees are a bit sore at the moment. I had to put a bit more thought into it. I felt reasonably assured that I might be able to stand tonight and deliver my speech without a hasty retreat thereafter.

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**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I'll be gentle with you.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** Please. Thank you. I have checked; we are not in official duck season. I should have brought my little rubber duck with me to hold as a stress ball.

I want to follow the member for Forrestfield, a good colleague of mine, and address some of the main aspects of the budget. Tonight I want to have a quick chat about what this budget means for my electorate of Joondalup and the northern suburbs slightly more broadly. I want to look at what this budget does for Western Australia. I want to look at the government recurring expenditure and asset investment, which has been spoken about in quite some detail in the past couple of days. I want to finish by talking about our fiscal action plan.

If we look at Joondalup and the northern suburbs, I am absolutely delighted to see the full \$20 million in funding for upgrades at Arena Joondalup. This is an outstanding investment into the sporting future of the northern suburbs. We have some outstanding sporting clubs that call the arena home. It is already an outstanding facility, but with this investment it will become an absolute centre of sporting excellence for the northern suburbs. I know that I speak on behalf of the likes of the West Perth Football Club, the Wanneroo Wolves basketball club, the Joondalup Netball Association and the Joondalup Brothers Rugby Union Football Club in thanking this government for making the funding available to give them their necessary upgrades so they can continue to provide an outstanding service to the young people and adults of the northern suburbs. The new facilities that will be built for the West Perth Football Club will be second to none. We will have a new home for the Wanneroo Wolves basketball club, which is greatly needed. We will add another 10 netball courts to the existing courts and, quite importantly, the Joondalup Brothers Rugby Union Football Club is getting a second pitch, which will allow it to join the premier league next year. It will be a great outcome.

Furthermore, in the budget we see a full \$47 million of funding over the forward estimates for a multistorey car park at Edgewater train station. I thank the Treasurer for that. This will be an outstanding 1 000-bay facility. It will be the first multi-deck car park of its kind along the Perth metropolitan rail network. If it goes well, we will look at what opportunities exist elsewhere. A total of \$241 million has been allocated for the completion of the Butler train line, slightly north of Joondalup, but again an outstanding addition to the existing train line that will service the ever-growing population to the north, and \$244 million has been allocated for 66 new railcars.

The Mitchell Freeway widening and expansion project is underway. As many people in the northern suburbs have already seen, an additional lane is going in from Graham Farmer Freeway to Hutton Street; there will be an additional lane from Hepburn Avenue to Hodges Drive, which goes right through the centre of my electorate; and we have planning and environment approval works underway for the extension of the Mitchell Freeway from Burns Beach Road to Hester Avenue. That represents an investment of \$315 million. We also have \$36 million in funding for the rollout of the 40 kilometres-an-hour LED signs at all remaining eligible schools, which is a life-saving measure.

We have a new development program to assist more schools to transition to the very popular independent public schools program. As the new member for Joondalup, I have spent the past couple of months introducing myself to community groups, schools and various organisations in my electorate. I have been to every single school now. I have yet to go to a school that is critical of the independent public schools program. The closest I came to a criticism of the independent public schools program was from a school that was not on the independent public schools program and wanted to be. This new development program will be a huge boost for those remaining schools that are absolutely hanging out to join this program. The electorate and I are overjoyed that 600 government workers will move to Joondalup. Be it either a partial department or a full department, it matters not as 600 local jobs will take the pressure off the freeway and the trains, providing more local employment and, more importantly, providing a catalyst to see other private organisations take up the challenge as well to relocate to Joondalup, the capital city of the northern suburbs. It is my vision that, as a result of this, we will see more shops, restaurants and cafes, which will make the Joondalup CBD even more vibrant.

I will look at what this budget does for Western Australia more broadly. The member for Forrestfield certainly went into a little more detail, and I would like to think that my information will be even more complimentary. There is \$197 million invested in public transport with 8 860 extra bus service kilometres added. We will see existing buses replaced with new buses and the outright purchase of new buses to add to the fleet. This budget will also see 3 618 extra train service kilometres added. We have a \$282 million investment in law and order in the Boost Police initiative, which will add 550 police officers to the beat. Given that the Joondalup electorate is the proud home of the Western Australia Police Academy, I had the opportunity to speak with a trainer who works at that facility, who is very excited at the influx of new police officers joining the force. I dare say the academy will be quite busy over the years to come. From a business perspective, there is an increase in the payroll tax exemption threshold from \$750 000 to \$800 000 on 1 July 2014 and from \$800 000 to \$850 000 in

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2016–17. To put this into perspective, it will save businesses \$121.6 million in payroll tax payments over the forward estimates.

There has been a lot of discussion by the opposition about government expenditure and asset investment. What I have learnt, be it I am a new member, is that not much accountability is required of people in the opposition. So far, I have heard a lot of complaints that we are either spending too much, or not investing enough here and overinvesting there. I have not heard a single alternative budget position or policy, nor any other suggestions of what the opposition would do in the same fiscal circumstances in which we find ourselves. This budget addresses the immediate and future needs of this state in a responsible manner, given the financial constraints at hand. Government recurrent expenditure will increase by \$2.1 billion in the upcoming year. Interestingly enough, \$570 million—25 per cent—of that increased recurrent expenditure is going into health and education, which is a significant increase, yet I cannot help but hear from members opposite that apparently it is still not enough. We have not heard how the additional desired spending would be funded.

There is no doubt that this state's population is growing. We have immense demand for and pressure on government services. We heard from the Treasurer that over previous years up to 1 500 people a week move to this state. Even though that number has now come down slightly, approximately 1 000 people a week are coming to this state. That is a lot of people coming to WA, yet what I hear is that our spending is out of control, especially in our asset investment programs. Let me touch on that briefly. When I look at the investment in roads and public transport, I see that we are going to put \$5.7 billion into our roads and public transport system over the next four years.

**Mr T.R. Buswell:** It's a record!

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** It is a record indeed. The opposition's response is that we are borrowing too much; we are spending too much on assets that yield no return. If I can have members' indulgence, I would like to very briefly quote some of the facts from the congestion survey undertaken by the RAC and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia in 2012. They surveyed 400 businesses and found —

... 84% of respondents believe that traffic congestion is having a negative impact on business.

...

Nine out of ten businesses said that traffic congestion had increased the time their workers spent on the roads over the past 12 months, leading to a range of negative consequences including higher fuel costs, lower productivity and increased stress for employees.

Importantly, the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics tabled a report that estimated congestion in Perth has the possibility of costing this state economy \$2.1 billion a year by 2020 if we do not do anything about it. That is the key: if we do not do anything about it. Our government is doing something about it; it is putting \$5.7 billion on the line to invest in our road and rail infrastructure. I have not heard any such commitment or otherwise from members opposite. All I hear is that that investment will not yield a return.

Several members interjected.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** I can tell members now that I believe it will yield a return. When our businesses, our small and large business community, are able to increase their efficiency and productivity and go back on the negative impacts that they have from congestion, that will yield a return. We are addressing an issue that left unaddressed will cost \$2.1 billion a year. We are investing in the future of this state's prosperity and commercial competitiveness.

It is amazing, I have to say, what kinds of goodies can be found in the budget papers. I had great delight in going through the budget, almost page for page.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I can just imagine that was exciting for you!

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** It was! I do not know what that says about me; it may not be a very good indictment of me.

Several members interjected.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** I am an ideas man and I dare say perhaps the accountant in me found it quite exciting to go through 1 000 pages of the budget.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I reckon you've still got your first packet of coloured pencils, haven't you?

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** I do, but they are worn down a bit.

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I found a lot of interesting little things that the opposition would very much like all of us to overlook. I would like members' indulgence to bring some of these to light, if I may.

Several members interjected.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** I will indulge away, thank you; we have a majority!

I will give members a lesson in relativity. Page 60 of the *Economic and Fiscal Outlook* states that for every \$100 million increase we receive in iron ore royalties, we lose \$90 million in GST share.

Several members interjected.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** That is a disgrace!

Several members interjected.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** But wait—stay with me!

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney):** Members! Thank you, member for Mandurah.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** Member for Mandurah, this will be worth the wait. The member has to hang with me on this.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Where's the punchline?

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** It is coming! But this is like a really good drama movie; it takes time to build.

Our state population has grown significantly off the back of the mining sector expansion. Prior to joining this esteemed house, I worked in the mining sector. I saw firsthand the number of people who came to this state to help build the expansion in our mining sector. Those people who came here to help expand our mining industry have children. They send these children to our schools. They need hospital services and treatment by doctors. They want to use our roads and public transport. That is okay; that is to be expected. But just as there is a positive result from all these extra people coming over here in the form of royalty increases on the back of the hard work they have done to expand the mining industry, not forgetting that income tax, company tax and mining tax—what little there is of it—all go to the federal government, when we do make a little extra money from all that effort, we lose 90 per cent by a reduction in our GST share. The very money we would need —

**Mr P.B. Watson** interjected.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** I am not talking about just 457 visa holders; I am talking about the population in general. The money that we need to help meet the needs of this growing population is penalised elsewhere. In fact, I will go as far as to say this: it is actually a double insult. As our population grows, the GST share should grow with it; it should not even stay the same. Even if we got \$100 million and the GST share stayed the same, we would still be hard done by! Both these things should go up. Here is my punchline.

Several members interjected.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** I shall try!

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** You know, timing's everything!

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** Oh, gosh; I will try to get it right! I have not done many speeches; I am not as good as the member for Mandurah yet, but I am working my way up to it.

The current federal Labor government —

Several members interjected.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** Hang in there!

The current federal Labor government had the power to address, at least partially, this imbalance. We have heard from the federal government that this is a state tax. It says, "We can't do anything about it; all the states have to agree if you want to have any change." But if members go to page 98 of the *Economic and Fiscal Outlook*, they will see a little footnote that states —

On 30 March 2011, the then Prime Minister announced a review of the arrangements for distributing GST revenue grants among the States.

This was called the GST distribution review. It recommended immediately discounting the mining revenue assessment by three per cent to compensate for mining-related needs for the resource states that are not fully recognised by the Commonwealth Grants Commission. But—don't you hate that word "but"?

Several members interjected.

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**Mr J. NORBERGER:** No, you would think that the commonwealth government would support the resource states that are bringing in the only bit of revenue it is getting. But, no, the commonwealth government did not accept this recommendation.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** What does this cost Western Australia?

**Mr P.B. Watson:** Tell us.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** I will tell the member. In 2013–14, it will cost \$123 million. That was the one decision in the commonwealth government's power to make.

**Mr N.W. Morton:** How much was that again?

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** It was \$123 million in 2013–14. It would have been \$161 million by 2015–16. It would have been up almost \$300 million —

Several members interjected.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** No, come back!

**Mr P.B. Watson:** You guys have to stay here to listen to this. Who is the winner?

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** I now come to the fiscal action plan. I speak to my colleagues only.

**Mr P. Abetz:** You have banished them.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney):** Members! Let us hear our colleague in peace.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** Oh, no! Opposition members are hiding! They are still in earshot. I am encouraged.

If a single member of the opposition were here, I would have asked any one of them the question—I am willing to have the question put on notice if it is in my power to do so: does the opposition support the fiscal action plan or not?

**Mr G.M. Castrilli:** They can't answer because there is no one here.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** Exactly. I take the opposition's silence as a resounding no. At page 74 of budget paper No 3, the long-term financial model states that the fiscal action plan that this government has put in place will prevent the accumulation of over \$40 billion of state debt by 2022–23. If the opposition is not willing to cross the floor and vote with the government when this bill is introduced —

**Mr P. Abetz:** Here he is!

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** The member for Mandurah is on this side. I knew it! We will make room for the member for Mandurah on this side.

The opposition will need to prove to this house where that extra \$40 billion will come from.

**Mr N.W. Morton:** They don't know.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** The opposition does not know where that money will come from.

At the heart of the fiscal action plan is public sector reform, and it is not a popular topic among opposition members. I am not one bit ashamed to put on the record that I support public sector reform with no questions asked. For the life of me I do not understand why public servants should have their jobs 100 per cent guaranteed. I speak with experience. I have been made redundant. I have worked in the private sector all my life. I was made redundant. It was not pleasant, but I moved on.

**Mr S.K. L'Estrange:** You have done all right.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** I have, just. I was replaced by an overseas worker. I even had the pleasure of training him, and he is working for a quarter of what it cost to employ me. My wife has also just recently had her salary arbitrarily reduced to suit economic times. That is not pleasant. It is impacting on us right now, but I understand why her employer did it. They did it to stay alive. I have made staff redundant and that is not pleasant either. No-one enjoys doing that, but I had to do it in my capacity as manager to save the company I was managing. Why would the state not have the same capability? It is not a pleasant capability, and not a capability to look forward to implementing, but when looking for the greater benefit of all Western Australians —

**Mr N.W. Morton:** Someone is here!

Several members interjected.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** Join us, please.

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I would like to know how the Community and Public Sector Union can justify to all the other unions in WA that it is okay for their members to be subject to economic realities but the members of the Community and Public Sector Union should be immune. I would love to be at a union conference to see how the Community and Public Sector Union explains to other unions that it is okay for those other unions' members to be made redundant, but that its members will not be made redundant because CPSU members are special.

This budget makes some tough and not always popular decisions. It also invests in the future of this state while meeting current demand pressures on government services. I therefore applaud the Treasurer, Premier and cabinet for the budget that they have produced. Thank you, members.

**MR M.H. TAYLOR (Bateman)** [8.35 pm]: I would like to acknowledge those members of the opposition who are not here. It reminds me of the inaugural speeches, when they did not listen to their own members' inaugural speeches. Government members, again, far outnumber them tonight.

I begin with the highlights of the budget bills—the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013–14 Bill 2013 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2013–14 Bill 2013. I commend the Premier, Treasurer and cabinet for this important and difficult budget. In the midst of global uncertainty, Western Australia has led the nation and the world in maintaining a strong economy and balance sheet. Despite the downturn in the mining sector, falling shares in GST revenue and uncertain global markets, the Liberal–National state government will produce a forecast surplus of \$386 million in 2013–14, which follows an estimated surplus of \$239 million in 2012–13. More impressive is that this surplus has not come at the expense of strong investment; in fact, far from it. Unprecedented investment in infrastructure, health care and police is the cornerstone of this budget. This investment in our state's future includes \$2.6 billion on electricity and water infrastructure in this budget to maintain strong investment in those basic services.

In this budget, an amount of \$582 million is being invested in school infrastructure, with an additional \$1.2 billion provided for educational services over the next four years. In 2013–14, this amounts to an extra expenditure of \$513 per student in WA, because this government recognises that investing in our children is investing in our future. A further \$36 million has been committed to ensure that every school in WA has signage clearly identifying the 40-kilometre-an-hour speed zones around schools. That funding helps to protect children and their guardians on the way to and from school.

I would like to also mention the Murdoch Specialised Activity Centre, a key service in the Bateman electorate. I am proud of a government that has the vision and foresight to invest in long-term infrastructure for our growing city. The WA Liberal–National government is investing \$29.6 billion in infrastructure over the next four years. This exceptional investment represents the government's commitment to building our future and to creating assets that will support our growing state in the long term. The Murdoch Specialised Activity Centre, at the heart of my electorate of Bateman, is set to become the largest employment node outside the Perth CBD, with 35 000 jobs predicted to be created. This budget has allocated \$92.5 million towards the government's metropolitan program. This money supports the development of key urban activity centres, such as the Murdoch Specialised Activity Centre. Murdoch and other activity centres will provide key integrated commercial, residential and entertainment precincts away from the CBD, ensuring that Perth continues to grow as a strong metropolitan city. The development of the Murdoch Specialised Activity Centre as a key regional hub will be an important step in supporting Perth's growing population, particularly by becoming a major service centre for residents in the southern suburbs.

Fiona Stanley Hospital is part of the Murdoch Specialised Activity Centre. That hospital is one the largest infrastructure projects in Western Australia's history. The state government has committed a further \$18.5 million for the continued construction of the hospital, which, upon its anticipated completion, will be the largest medical complex in the southern hemisphere. This is part of a total health investment of \$7.2 billion, which will provide treatment for an additional 86 000 patients across the state. As the state's flagship health facility, Fiona Stanley Hospital will provide the latest scientific, technological and medical advancements and developments. In doing so, it will bring unprecedented opportunities to improve the safety, quality and efficiency of patient care for Western Australians. Most importantly, it will provide important health services to our fast-growing population and better access to health care for residents who live in the south metropolitan area, including the constituents of Bateman. The Murdoch Drive–South Street interchange is also an important part of the Murdoch activity centre.

This unprecedented investment in health care has also been matched by an equally large investment in transport infrastructure to keep our state moving. The government has committed \$5.7 billion over the next four years, which is the equivalent investment of the Perth–Mandurah railway four times over. This is in keeping with the Liberal–National government's election commitment to deliver better transport services to the residents of WA. The total investment includes \$2.6 million for upgrades to the Murdoch Drive–South Street interchange. This

Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Jan Norberger; Acting Speaker; Mr Matt Taylor; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Ian Britza; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Shane Love; Dr Graham Jacobs; Mr John Day

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interchange links the major traffic nodes in the Murdoch activity centre. Traffic modelling predicts that more than 50 000 vehicles a day will use the Murdoch Drive–South Street interchange by 2021. One of the growing pains of Perth's population growth doubling by 2050 is the increase in traffic congestion this growth causes. The issue of traffic congestion was a primary concern of constituents I contacted in the election campaign earlier this year. It is a frustration I share, as I regularly drive along South Street, Leach Highway and the Kwinana Freeway. The \$2.6 million committed in this budget is part of the state government's \$15 million funding commitment for the Murdoch Drive–South Street project back in May 2011. Once completed, this important upgrade will better manage the traffic along South Street heading into and out of the Murdoch activity centre and will ease congestion around Fiona Stanley Hospital in time for its opening.

The constituents of Bateman are also strongly in favour of the Roe Highway extension from the existing endpoint at Kwinana Freeway through to Stock Road, an extension commonly referred to as Roe 8. It is therefore disappointing that Roe 8 does not feature in this budget at all. The community desire for this project to go ahead stems from the congestion issues that I previously mentioned. The construction of Roe 8 would alleviate congestion and significantly improve freight and vehicle movements along the major transport nodes of South Street, Leach Highway and the associated Kwinana Freeway, in particular. Vehicular traffic along surrounding roads will dramatically increase with the completion of Fiona Stanley Hospital and the continued development of the Murdoch activity centre. The need for Roe 8 is therefore only going to increase and as long as the constituents of Bateman have this need, I will continue to advocate for this extension.

I would also like to discuss small business. In addition to investment in infrastructure this Liberal–National government is committed to supporting and encouraging small businesses in WA. The raising of the payroll tax exemption threshold to \$850 000 by 2015–16 will benefit more than 16 000 employers and will help to reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens on small business. There are many small businesses operating in the Bateman electorate, and I am sure that this will be much welcome news to them.

The last item I would like to draw attention to is certainly not the least important. In fact, this was the issue of most concern to the constituents of Bateman during the election campaign earlier this year. It became clear that law and order issues such as fighting back against crime and cracking down on hooning and other antisocial behaviour were of utmost importance to the people of Bateman. I am therefore proud to be part of a government that has increased WA's police budget to over \$1.2 billion. This includes \$282 million over four years to recruit an extra 550 police officers and auxiliary officers to protect the residents of our city. Fifty police officers recruited in 2013–14 will join a new rapid response unit south of the river. This boost to our police will help protect our community's most vulnerable.

In conclusion, once again I commend this Liberal–National government for its strong investment in infrastructure and frontline services such as health care, education, police and assistance to small business. I am proud to be a part of a team that is working towards building a strong future for our state of Western Australia.

**MR S.K. L'ESTRANGE (Churchlands)** [8.45 pm]: Members opposite often talk about fiscal responsibility. They worry about the public purse and the way that the government spends that public purse. Let us have a look at them tonight! They have vanished; they have gone!

[Quorum formed.]

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** I thank the member for Mandurah for trying to call his team back.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** No; I was calling yours back—they should have to endure this too!

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** That is very kind of the member!

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to commend the Treasurer, the Premier and our cabinet ministers, and indeed members on this side of the house for bringing down a budget that secures our economic future. Not only does it secure our economic future by achieving a general operating surplus, but it does this whilst also embarking on arguably the biggest infrastructure development phase of our state's history. That is an outstanding achievement and we really should take our hats off to our Treasurer and the Premier for being able to do that.

I also want to draw the attention of the house to the fact that members opposite, when they are in opposition—in fact, Labor Parties generally in opposition love espousing the virtues of sound fiscal management. I have said it before in this place: they almost want to cry out and grab hold of von Hayek's hand when they say they want to lower taxes and build infrastructure—they want to do all that liberal stuff! Do members know what? Whenever they get in power they spend like drunken sailors. That is what they do! They have sat on the opposition benches tonight and carried on.

**Mr P. Papalia** interjected.

Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Jan Norberger; Acting Speaker; Mr Matt Taylor; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Ian Britza; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Shane Love; Dr Graham Jacobs; Mr John Day

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**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** The member for Warnbro knows the truth! They carry on about sound fiscal management, but let us look at what happened in our relatively recent history. I will quote from an article in *The West Australian* of 28 December 2007 headed “\$370m blowout for Labor’s pet reform project”, which reads —

Spending on the State Government’s showcase public sector reform project, the Office of Shared Services, has blown out by an astonishing \$370 million from the original budget of \$83 million approved by the Gallop government in 2003

That, ladies and gentlemen, is a 446 per cent blowout. Shame, member for Mandurah!

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** What are you saying? Start again; I was doing something else!

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** It is interesting that when we end up with members opposite, who are generally pretty conservative people —

Several members interjected.

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** Outstanding. Welcome back!

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney):** I am having trouble hearing the member. Perhaps we could listen to him; thank you. Member, address your comments to the Chair.

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** Yes, Mr Acting Speaker. Thanks for reminding me; I appreciate the help.

There are members opposite who actually would like to be economic rationalists. I see them. Sometimes when I listen to the member for Cannington, I think: I can see him desperately trying to be an economic rationalist. But I see the struggle in his face when he knows he must try to convince the member for Bassendean, who wants these enchanted “Voice” love-ins where they sit around together and dream up ways to get that pot of gold at the end of the fairytale rainbow! Without any hard work, investment, forethought or serious planning for the next 50 years, they just think the money is there to give out. They do not want to work hard for it. But our Treasurer and members on this side of the house understand that to run a \$250 billion economy is serious economic business. It takes serious thought and it takes serious planning. We on this side of the house have acknowledged that effort through this budget.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** Is this the Perth Comedy Festival?

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** What I love about the member for West Swan is that she talks about comedy. I often look at a black comedy on the other side! There is this dark humour that exists in the economic rationalisation of their policies and philosophies, but none of it holds up. It is amazing!

I give another example. I quote from *The West Australian* of Friday, 30 November 2007 —

... while the Government —

This was a Labor government —

had budgeted for a 7.9 per cent rise in payroll tax this financial year, the September quarter figures revealed a rise of more than 20 per cent ...

Shame, members opposite! That is unbelievable.

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** She continues to interject; I just do not understand.

Let us look at what the Treasurer has tried to do. The member runs—off she goes. See you!

**Ms R. Saffioti:** I have three children, mate.

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** Fair enough. I understand your priorities; that is fine.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** There is nobody else left! Where are they?

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** Ladies and gents, our Treasurer —

**Ms R. Saffioti:** Do you want me to sacrifice my children?

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** No, do not sacrifice your children on my part, for goodness sake!

Ladies and gents, our Treasurer has not only provided us with a general operating surplus but he has done this in the face of some serious pressures facing our state. Let us think about some of these pressures. In 2012–13 alone,

Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Jan Norberger; Acting Speaker; Mr Matt Taylor; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Ian Britza; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Shane Love; Dr Graham Jacobs; Mr John Day

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75 000 people moved to WA. We know that 8 146 additional students have enrolled in our schools. We also know that there have been five million more public transport boardings. We have had an increase of 6.9 per cent in emergency hospital cases. These are significant pressures.

Several members interjected.

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** It is always good to have an audience. Thanks, fellas; I really appreciate that.

Let us get back to something a little more serious than the frivolity of our members opposite running away tonight. Let us focus on this budget because this budget is a serious document. It is a document that has sound fiscal management in it by virtue of the fact that we have achieved an operating surplus whilst facing these challenges and whilst delivering on the needs of the people of Western Australia. Let us not forget that. Members opposite clearly do not care, but we care—that is why we are here.

The member for Joondalup acknowledged that the share of GST has fallen to 45 per cent of our population share. That is a reduction of \$477 million in revenue. That is an absolute disgrace. I look forward to standing right there with my Treasurer and my Premier, as all members on this side of the house do, to face off against Canberra, that east coast-centric beast that it is today, and say, "No more!" If they want to negotiate any changes to the construct of how the GST is dished out, we will simply not sign up to it. That is what I want our Premier and our Treasurer to do, unless we start to get a better share. I tell members what: it is hard for our Treasurer to achieve this surplus with those types of pressures. It is hardly fair when Treasurers in other states get to do it with all the support in the world. It does not make sense to me.

Education is something really important to me, and certainly to the people of my Churchlands electorate. I am grateful that in this budget we have managed to find an estimated \$4 million for West Leederville Primary School to help construct a new classroom block. For Wembley Primary School, we have managed to find an estimated \$4.5 million for their extra classrooms. We have managed to find concessions to support "City Beach Residential College GATE payment" as it appears in the budget. This is outstanding. We know that education is such an important thing because we have allocated \$4.4 billion in the budget for the 2013–14 financial year—an increase of \$260 million. That is outstanding. That is investing in our future through our youth. Of course we support that. In fact, the average spend per student is now \$15 621—an increase of \$513 per student. What is that achieving in the face of right now? I will tell members what it is doing: it is achieving that in the face of saying "No" to the ridiculous Labor Party Gonski reform. We are achieving probably the best per student funding in Australia without signing up to that reform, yet we are still running an operating surplus. That is outstanding. It needs to be acknowledged by everybody in this place.

Because members opposite go on about how they are good economic managers and how much they care, I want to illustrate their schools planning when they were in government. I refer members to an article headed "Transportable classroom glut tied to poor planning" that appeared in *The West Australian* on Tuesday, 12 June 2007", which commenced —

Some WA public schools are so overcrowded they have more temporary classrooms than permanent rooms, prompting parents and teachers' groups to call for better planning.

This government and this Treasurer are doing exactly that. They recognise that members opposite were hopeless planners—they were useless—but on this side of the house our Treasurer, in his budget, is giving the right amount of funding to support excellent planning in our schools. I am proud of that; I think we all are.

We cannot overlook the fact that 255 independent public schools have been created through this government. That represents one-third of all public schools. The WA government is allocating a further \$18.2 million over four years to extend this initiative. Again, ladies and gentlemen, that is an outstanding investment in our education.

The second thing I want to look at is health. Members opposite like trying to give our Minister for Health a hard time but I can tell members that he is one of the hardest working health ministers that this place has seen. He has done an outstanding job in managing that portfolio. This budget goes an enormous way towards ensuring that not only is his portfolio supported, but also that all Western Australians for the next 50 years and beyond will be supported by the types of things that this budget tries to achieve. Let us have a think about what those things are. There is \$2.5 billion for our state's health care and a further \$2.7 billion in hospitals and health infrastructure. That cannot be ignored, surely, and yet members opposite will still whinge about what they think we are doing wrong with health. Let me remind them of their term of government. I refer to *The West Australian* of Thursday, 28 July 2005, which states —

**RPH patients suffer cold winter showers**

Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Jan Norberger; Acting Speaker; Mr Matt Taylor; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Ian Britza; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Shane Love; Dr Graham Jacobs; Mr John Day

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About 330 patients at Royal Perth Hospital have had to suffer cold showers or wash with water bags heated in microwaves after the hot water supply in the hospital's South Block failed two days ago.

That is their idea of effective management of a health system!

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney):** The member for Riverton, you are not in your seat!

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** Do not try to confuse me now, member for Riverton!

**Mr P.T. Miles:** Don't allow the opposition to attack you!

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** No, I thank the member for Wanneroo very much. Through this boost in government funding, our health services will be able to meet the needs of 16 000 additional inpatients and 25 000 more patients attending emergency departments. That is fantastic. All the while, what is happening? The government is maintaining an operating surplus. We should not forget that. We are doing the big infrastructure build; we are looking after the people of Western Australia; we are investing in the future and achieving budget surpluses. Let us not forget that.

Thirdly, I would like to draw members' attention to transport. Transport was a big issue that was debated at the last election campaign. A lot has been said about it, but I can say this: we are delivering. Members opposite will try to have people believe that we cannot be trusted. I will tell members a little bit more about trust and the members opposite in a moment, but I can tell the house that the government is investing \$543 million for public transport infrastructure. The government is investing \$2 billion in an airport rail link. An additional \$1.9 billion will be spent in constructing the MAX light rail to service the city. How can opposition members cry foul when this is in black and white? This is what we are doing. It is remarkable that they can stand there! Then they say that people are paying more for their public transport services. Let me remind opposition members of what the real cost of a standard fare on public transport is—it is \$13.37. However, it is thanks to this government's investment in and caring for the people who use the public transport system that Western Australians pay on average only \$4.20. When opposition members say that it is too expensive, the real cost is \$13.37 but the public are paying only \$4.20, how is that not a good thing and something that should not be supported?

The government is also extremely keen to look after people who want to do a lot of fitness activities, like the member for Mandurah who loves keeping himself fit. The government has allocated \$15 million for an improved bicycle network. Unlike the member for Armadale who likes to run to work, members can ride their bike to work. To get the bike network in place is a fantastic outcome for all Western Australians.

I want to talk about maintaining law and order and what this budget is doing to support that. Our police minister is doing an outstanding job of managing probably one of the hardest portfolios that a minister would have to manage; it is very difficult. Everybody wants the police service to be a highly effective, efficient service. That is what we want, that is what we expect and that is what is being delivered. However, we are going to do more. The state government has allocated \$1.26 billion in 2013–14 to police services, an increase of \$56.4 million.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** Some \$282 million will be spent on 550 extra police officers for 2016–17. Those additional police numbers will be assisted by a core staff of eight extra magistrates, which will be met by a \$4.5 million allocation in this budget. We are kicking goals on all fronts! Let me quickly turn to what Labor was doing with police when it was in government. *The West Australian* of Wednesday, 16 May 2007 states —

**Police need the extra 200 officers promised**

The WA Police Service is more than 200 officers under its authorised strength despite constant State Government promises to fix the problem, according to new figures.

This was under a Labor government. The article shows that every police district was below strength at the end of February. That is what Labor did when it was in government. The Labor Party let it run down. Shame! What do we do? We come in, fix it and invest in the future so that over the next 50 years we will continue to have an outstanding police service. By supporting our police we can ensure that the communities of Western Australia will continue to receive an outstanding police service.

Finally, I will talk about subsidies to households because sometimes this gets lost in translation and members opposite say that this government is too interested in making Western Australia the best place in the world. Of course we are! That is what we want. We want Western Australia to be the best place in the world.

**Mr A. Krstivic:** It is!

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** It is, and I say to the member for Carine that it can be better. We know that it can be the best place in the world to raise a family, to run a business, to work, to play and to retire, and that is what we

Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Jan Norberger; Acting Speaker; Mr Matt Taylor; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Ian Britza; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Shane Love; Dr Graham Jacobs; Mr John Day

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want. It is a pretty simple and clear vision, and this Treasurer's budget is going a long way to ensuring that that occurs. That is why I am very proud of this budget. As I said, we need to look at the things that matter to the people who are really struggling out there. We should think about them.

I turn to the subsidies to households; a total of \$2.4 billion has been allocated to meet the cost of government concessions and operating subsidies, representing \$2.4 billion to the needy in Western Australia. That is fantastic! This is not a Treasurer who is just focused on the big picture items and on the big portfolios that grab the media attention. This is a Treasurer and a government that says, "We care about the needy people in our communities to the tune of \$2.4 billion in this budget!" That means the government will subsidise the average household annual bills to the value of \$369. Some \$601 million will be allocated to meet the costs of subsidising the cost of water for households in need. People with seniors cards will be subsidised by up to \$1 412. All these payments go some way toward assisting those people in WA who need it, and our Treasurer and our government should be congratulated for that.

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to conclude by saying thank you to the Treasurer for his efforts to balance the books in a difficult national economic climate. I congratulate the Treasurer, the Premier, our cabinet ministers and colleagues for continuing their hard work to support investment in our state's future. This government, as proven by this budget, is serious about prudent fiscal management and is determined to simultaneously grow this great state of ours with these great projects that are occurring in our communities. It is committed to developing the city of Perth to be the best city in Australia and in the Indian Ocean region. Thank you.

**MR I.M. BRITZA (Morley)** [9.08 pm]: I rise to talk about the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013–14 Bill 2013 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2013–14 Bill 2013 and thank my honourable colleague, the member for Churchlands. Many of my colleagues have taken a lot of time and effort to give all the financial facts of this budget, and I concur with them. I will not go through everything in the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013–14 Bill 2013 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2013–14 Bill 2013 because it does not need to be repeated. However, this has been a responsible budget crafted in difficult and complex times. It is always easy to criticise another's decision, and nothing has changed that view in this chamber. There always appears to be a better way, especially after the event. There is no real accountability or responsibility in criticism, and the opposition has clearly shown, as is its right, to cry foul, shout out veiled threats and use this chamber to dishonourably declare that dishonesty, deceitfulness and corruption has been at the forefront of pretty well all of the budget decisions.

Of course, anyone with the capacity of a fifth of a brain can figure out that this response is almost entirely full of rhetoric and mean-spirited verbal abuse. One has had to navigate through the fog of verbal abuse and complete negativity to see whether there is any sense of truth in what the opposition is saying to rebut this budget. Personally, I try to listen for the criticism that is worthy of taking note of and possibly taking action on. Trying to hear something worthwhile in the roar of negativity is difficult to accomplish. I have never seen a perfect budget. If this was our starting point, the differences of opinion between us could be miraculously narrow. I had better have a drink.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I think you'd better have four!

**Mr I.M. BRITZA:** No, I will just have a drink.

I did not ask for the world in my electorate; I simply asked for what my electorate needed, not wanted. This reminded me of last week when I was taking my young boy to school. He will be here tomorrow to celebrate his birthday; we are pulling him out of school to have lunch at Parliament House. As we were driving to school last week, he declared to me from the back seat, "Dad, life has not turned out like it was supposed to." I was stunned at that. I was at the steering wheel and I thought that I had better be serious. I said, "Samuel, what do you mean by that?" He said, "Dad, mum will not give me what I want." I thought they were wise words indeed. It takes a very wise man to tell the difference between needs and wants when presenting a budget. I am very delighted to know that there is an absolute difference between needs and wants and our budget recognises that. I am very proud of it. We have done a marvellous job, because it is not easy.

I will begin to close and give everyone some hope. I asked for the extension of the clubrooms of two sporting clubs in my electorate. I received commitments for both, but I am receiving one now and the other will come in the forward estimates. The Noranda Hawks club has received our commitment to extend its clubrooms, which will assist all the sporting clubs and associations that use the facilities there. I commend the City of Bayswater because it maintains these grounds and does an outstanding job. The grounds are the envy of all those who come and use them. I personally fired the new siren that can be heard within five kilometres of the oval, much to the detriment of all those living around there. The countdown clock and new siren now diffuse many a possible physical scrap when the final siren was not heard by the umpires. Even last week, the timekeeper fell asleep and

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missed out on 15 seconds. About 30 people ran to the timekeeper and he had to be protected from the opposing spectators. The Morley–Noranda club will not get its extensions until next year and it will have to plan around this hurdle. It is only because of this club's increased patronage that it has had to plan accordingly.

Mr Acting Speaker, please allow me to briefly share with members some comments about an organisation in my electorate that I feel is worthy of honourable mention here today. I commend the work of the Pregnancy Problem House in Nollamara. This service gives assistance to women who have found themselves pregnant and do not want an abortion or who have felt threatened, vulnerable or intimidated by abortion operators. This service specialises in crisis pregnancy solutions and does all it can to take the stress and confusing situations away from those who sometimes feel trapped as a result of being pregnant. There is no judgement, there are no politics and no money is made from the girls' choices. There are free medical-quality pregnancy tests. Above all, each person is given an explanation of every option available to them. This house provides a place for women to process everything, think through the alternatives, feel safe and share what is on their mind. The organisation needs to be commended. I am honoured to have this service in my electorate.

Lastly, there are three primary schools in my electorate—Mirrabooka Primary School, Camboon Primary School and Dianella Heights Primary School—all of which have invited me to serve on their boards. No doubt when we serve on these boards at such a high level, we get to understand a greater deal of all the plans that are necessary to make a primary school function. I am delighted to conclude by saying that I certainly and confidently support the budget that the government has presented to the house.

**MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton)** [9.15 pm]: I was going to use that old line, "I feel a little like Zsa Zsa Gabor's eighth husband"! I know exactly what to do, but I do not know how to make it any different.

I rise tonight to talk about the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013–14 Bill 2013 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2013–14 Bill 2013. Others have mentioned that 1 000 people a week come into Western Australia. Last year, 75 000 people came in and it is predicted that in the future there will be 50 000 and 55 000 per annum coming in. Our state growth rate last year was 3.25 per cent, which is the highest growth rate of any state in the commonwealth. Our employment rate went up by 1.25 per cent. Construction is starting to wind down, which will have the benefit of reducing wage pressures.

Others have spoken about the problems with the goods and services tax. We get 45 per cent of what we would get if we were to get our population proportion. Our GST revenue is likely to decline to \$500 million by 2015–16. I am starting to worry that instead of sending us any money, the federal government will send us a bill. Our GST losses are working towards \$21 billion. Ten years ago, GST revenue was 25 per cent of state income. In four years it will probably approach 1.5 per cent. Members have spoken about the incoming federal government doing a serious review of the taxation system; this time it has to do a proper review and look at both the rate and distribution of the GST revenue. Of course, in Western Australia the state royalty income is highly variable. State royalty income is 22 per cent of revenue. A one cent movement in the Australian dollar is worth \$76 million to the state budget and US\$1 a tonne for iron ore is worth \$45 million.

I would like to speak a bit about transport. This budget really does some big things in transport, with a total of \$5.7 billion allocated. The Metro Area Express transport system will receive \$432 million this year out of a projected total of \$1.9 billion for completion in 2019. The airport–Forrestfield rail is a \$2 billion undertaking, also to be opened in 2019.

Of interest to people in northern parts of the state, \$512 million is allocated to the upgrade of Great Northern Highway from Muchea to Wubin. Also, \$190 million is being spent on North West Coastal Highway from Minilya to Barradale, which is another notoriously dangerous piece of country road.

It is worth pointing out again just how much is being spent on state subsidies in this budget: transport, \$740 million; water, \$601 million; energy, \$554 million; and other rebates, \$502 million. That totals nearly \$2.4 billion in straight subsidies.

Policing has always been a high priority for our government. We have introduced reforms such as single-punch legislation, hoon laws, more severe penalties for assaulting police officers, new advanced traffic vehicles, improved communications, out-of-control party laws and many more. This year the budget includes \$282 million over four years for more police. I am pleased to see a further \$10.3 million for the police and community youth centre network. People have commented on land tax, which lifts in this budget. It is worth pointing out that the owner of a \$3 million property in Western Australia will pay \$18 000; in Queensland, \$37 000; in New South Wales, \$43 000; and in South Australia, \$82 000. On top of receiving less land tax as a result of this, our GST share is also impacted because we get a lower rate, penalising us for the lower rate we charge.

Turning to housing, our government is successfully addressing housing in a number of ways. There are 1 000 extra national rental affordability scheme properties. The government is targeting the first home owner grant to

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new houses, giving new home owners \$10 000 to purchase a new house, but only \$3 000 to purchase an established house. This is a good change because it supports the house building sector and adds to stock. There will be 500 houses built over two years to add to public housing stock. In my electorate of Geraldton, Community Housing Limited is building a new block of units. The other day I was working with the Sun City Christian Centre on providing a number of emergency accommodation units. However, I think we could work a lot harder on the community housing model and get a lot more out of it.

The budget contains many things for the regions of Geraldton and the midwest. There will be an extra \$300 million of funding for agriculture over five years. Agriculture is a key industry in Western Australia that employed some 42 500 people in 2012, although, admittedly, that compares with 109 000 people in mining. Research that relates to farming systems will greatly benefit the northern wheatbelt, and I remind members that Geraldton is the second biggest grain export port in Australia. It is worth pointing out that economic growth leads to changes in food demands. Our region is growing strongly, and China in particular is asking for clean, green produce. This represents a fantastic opportunity for WA. I also point out that agriculture will be a sunset industry only when people stop eating.

The budget includes a further \$264 million to complete the midwest energy project's 330-kilovolt line to Three Springs. Another \$13 million has been allocated for the Murchison Radio-astronomy Observatory telescope.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** How is Three Springs? Do you represent Three Springs?

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** No, the member for Moore represents Three Springs, so the member for Mandurah can ask him his questions about Three Springs in a short time.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Are you speaking tonight, member for Moore?

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** He is, yes.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Abetz):** Member for Mandurah!

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** I also point out that the new CSIRO headquarters in Geraldton recently opened.

The budget also includes a further \$11 million for the new Greenough River bridge, which fulfils another election commitment. This is a critical piece of infrastructure for transport in the midwest and is the first project I started working on when elected, so it is particularly pleasing to see it happen. There will be flashing speed signs for primary schools. We installed the first two at Bluff Point and Waggrakine, and I have received very positive feedback from the community. We have two sets of wigwags installed on North West Coastal Highway—one at Mt Tarcoola and the other at Bluff Point—following a request from one of the lollipop people. I particularly thank the Minister for Transport for his speedy adoption of my request for wigwags. There will be new jetties at East Wallabi and Beacon Islands in the Abrolhos Islands. There will be \$12 million allocated to the Geraldton Port Authority, including some more funds for the Oakajee development. There will also be further funding for KidSport, a program really making a difference in Geraldton.

A lot is happening in the field of education. A new preschool facility is about to open at Beachlands and the first \$500 000 for that is in this year's budget. That is another election commitment. Work continues on the new library at Allendale Primary School. The Minister for Education is due in Geraldton in early September for discussions about Geraldton Secondary College. Work is continuing on the new primary school at Wandina, the first stage of which will open next year. This is the first new government primary school in Geraldton since 1979. Work is also continuing on new teaching facilities at Geraldton Universities Centre, which is a \$3 million project. Negotiations are going well for the redevelopment of the Geraldton Residential College to accommodate students from Nagle Catholic College, Geraldton Grammar School and Geraldton Secondary College. This will be a fantastic facility that will serve all students from the midwest and further afield wanting a secondary education in Geraldton. It will also serve the Gascoyne, the Pilbara and occasionally the Kimberley. It is another piece towards making Geraldton an education centre for regional WA north of Perth. Work is also starting on two new facilities at Durack Institute of Technology—a new training centre for resource industries and a new health training facility—worth a total of \$25 million. I have concerns about the imposition of fees on children of 457 visa workers. It concerns me as I suspect children may be held back from school. In 60 per cent of cases, 457 visa workers become citizens, which would mean that students who have missed a couple of years of education would then be placed into schools. This is a short-term decision; however, I acknowledge the scale of the problem, with some 8 500 or so such students now in the state.

I turn to health. Geraldton Hospital is now due for extension. It is a relatively new hospital, but only half the size of the one it replaced. It would be better if it had been co-located with the 20-year-old St John of God facility. Despite the size of the hospital, the care is of a very high standard. I am committed to working to expand the hospital. The minister and I are working on this and have briefed federal members on the issue. We have been

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unsuccessful up to now with applications to federal programs, but it is understood by both federal and state governments that this hospital is a priority.

I would like to briefly mark a couple of milestones for the midwest Karara Mining magnetite project. At the end of July this year, Karara announced that it had produced its first batch of premium magnetite of 68 per cent iron from the project. Karara exported WA's first magnetite in January this year. Karara's final polishing circuit is being commissioned. Production is working towards its nameplate production of eight million tonnes per annum for stage 1. The project has now shipped in excess of 3.5 million tonnes of hematite and 1.3 million tonnes of magnetite. It is likely that the project will be cash flow positive in the December quarter. I acknowledge Steve Murdoch, the CEO of Karara Mining during the project's construction and commissioning phase, who recently finished with the company. Steve brought strong leadership and drive to the project and was very helpful to me in understanding it. I wish him all the best for the future and I thank him for his contribution to Geraldton and the midwest.

On another matter, I am very pleased to see a clear majority of General Motors Holden's workers accept a three-year wage freeze and shift changes. Their alternative was no job. I would also like to say that management and employees have to learn to work together and give up their confrontationist ways if their industry is to have a future. While I am at it, I would like to congratulate the employees of General Motors Holden for the new Holden Cruze SRI that I bought month last month, which is very good.

Several members interjected.

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** I buy Australian, mate; I am doing my best! If General Motors Holden fails, it will not be because I did not support it.

The overall picture is that Western Australia is still Australia's growth state. We are Australia's export powerhouse. Our iron ore income may be staying steady, but the projections for gas are for Western Australia to become the second-largest gas exporter after Qatar, and that is only offshore; there may be twice as much of it, or even more, onshore. This brings many growing pains. We need new schools, hospitals, housing, roads, power et cetera. It is good to see the value of the Australian dollar finally declining. As an example of the problems the higher Australian dollar has caused us, I read in the paper today that Australia is now the most expensive country for overseas students to study in. That is, frankly, appalling and we will not keep that industry for very long. Our state government is very successfully finding a balance between growth, taxation, government charges, level of debt and services. I think we are doing better than anywhere else in Australia. I think this budget hits the sweet spot. Across Western Australia it does good things, and I congratulate the Treasurer and the Premier for the job they have done.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Abetz):** The member for Moore.

**MR R.S. LOVE (Moore) [9.28 pm]:** Congratulations, Mr Acting Speaker, for remembering that the member for Moore sits in this chair!

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** After 10 times I remember!

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I will not keep everybody long. I note that the hour is late and we have had a number of speeches. I think I am the last speaker for the evening, so I am sure members will want to see the back of me.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** There are two more yet.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Two more?

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** If they wish to.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I am mistaken. The Whip has misinformed me.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Tell us how Three Springs is first.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Three Springs is looking really fine this year.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** How is it going, honestly, with the crops?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** The crops are looking good around Three Springs. Areas of the electorate have suffered from a lack of rain, but I would not think Three Springs was amongst those.

I rise tonight to talk about the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013–14 Bill 2013 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2013–14 Bill 2013. With the announcement of the state budget last week, there has been a very fine outcome for the electorate of Moore and, I think, a great outcome for the National Party. In contrast with what was alleged by the other side earlier in the evening, there are no broken

Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Jan Norberger; Acting Speaker; Mr Matt Taylor; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Ian Britza; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr Shane Love; Dr Graham Jacobs; Mr John Day

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promises by the National Party. I think we have delivered on all of the key commitments that we made prior to the election. Fundamental to those commitments is the \$297 million “seizing the opportunity” agricultural policy, which will have tremendous importance for the electorate of Moore, a very large agricultural community in a large agricultural electorate. Certain elements of that program include funding for biosecurity, with a large amount of money going towards the development of water and land. Substantial water resources have been developed in the centre of the electorate of Moore to an extent but evidence shows that that water is increasing in volume at ground level and it will be of great value to agriculture in the future. The town of Moora has been identified as a potential food centre in that program and it will receive funding towards helping it reach its full potential. Having said that and bearing in mind that I was asked earlier about the condition of farms in the Three Springs area, a number of farmers in the electorate of Moore are in immediate need. The state government has assisted them to some extent with the current package but I look forward to the time when the money allocated from the federal government will be available to those farmers as low interest loans.

The budget also has a very large allocation towards road infrastructure in the electorate of Moore. In the coming years we will see \$384 million allocated to the section of the Great Northern Highway from Muchea through to Wubin. At present there is an allocation of \$34 million for the Bindi Bindi bends, a notoriously poor section of road in that area. The next section of the Great Northern Highway to be tackled under the \$384 million allocation will be at Walebing, which is on a very narrow and dangerous section of that road. The Great Northern Highway will link up to the Perth–Darwin highway at Muchea in my electorate when that section of the road from Perth is completed in the coming years.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Is there any money for the New Norcia realignment?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** For the New Norcia bypass?

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Yes.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Not specifically, no.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Is that still on the books? Is that something you support?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Yes, it is something I support but it is not part of this allocation of money. I understand that the excess funds from the redevelopment of the Walebing section can be applied to other sections of need on the road. I am not sure where that particular bypass sits as a priority for Main Roads.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** You can ask in estimates. I think it is an important one.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Yes, I think it is important. A design has been carried out and Main Roads has designated bypasses for both Bindoon and New Norcia as the preferred option. New Norcia has some particular significance because of the historic and unique nature of the town as a monastery settlement.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I understand they are getting damaged by the road trains.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** There is the possibility of that occurring.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** The heritage minister needs to take notice of some of this.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Abetz):** Member for Mandurah!

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** The member for Mandurah has made his speech.

Fortunately for the electorate of Moore, this government sees the health of country people as a priority. There will be continued expenditure under the Southern Inland Health Initiative for my electorate. The Southern Inland Health Initiative will look at providing both services and facilities in the electorate in the coming period but in the immediate period—in the coming year—\$72.3 million has been allocated towards that initiative. It will cover such things as renal dialysis; the district medical workforce investment program; the district hospital investment program; primary health centre demonstration programs, which are not in my electorate but are of interest as they show the way for the future development of health services in the regional centres; the small hospital and nursing post refurbishment program, which is already underway; and the telehealth investment program. Telehealth has been one of the great success stories of the Southern Inland Health Initiative as it greatly aids the staff at isolated country hospitals and nursing posts to access emergency services in the major hospitals in Perth. It is also particularly helpful when people need to access the ongoing help of specialists. I was talking to a burns victim not very long ago who told me how much more convenient it is now that they can attend a lot of their appointments at the local health centre instead of going to the major hospitals in Perth. I think they are under the guidance of burns specialist Fiona Wood at the moment, getting advice and help through the telehealth system. It is a great benefit.

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One of the other major programs identified in the budget for future expenditure is a capital component that will go towards assisting in the development of residential, aged and dementia care. There is a great need for aged care in the wheatbelt and midwest generally, especially in my electorate, which is a coastal electorate and tends to be a destination for retirees who face a lack of care as they grow older.

One of the other great community support services that will be funded by royalties for regions this year is the \$2 000 fuel card for use by emergency volunteer services. This is not for each individual to access but for each organisation to access. It will assist members who need to travel to meetings or attend training. It is a great recognition of the importance of volunteers in the communities. Without volunteer effort for fire brigades, marine rescue services, ambulance et cetera, country communities could not exist.

Other great incentives that we will see in the coming period will be help for local aquatic centres. Swimming pools in towns such as Three Springs are vital to the wellbeing of the community. When people are a long way from the coast and they may not have regular public transport, it is a great relief to participate in aquatic activities near their home. Local government in the main has carriage of looking after those facilities. It is a considerable burden on country local governments, and this will be a big boost for them.

A number of educational facilities are being upgraded in the electorate of Geraldton at the moment, as the member for Geraldton highlighted. Royalties for regions is assisting with the upgrade of the Geraldton Residential College. That is of great importance to the people of Moore as the northern section of Moore generally gets its secondary education through the Geraldton facilities and uses that residential college in the main.

The other great project in the midwest that started last year and continues now is the midwest energy project that will eventually link the south west grid to the Karara mine and later to the town of Geraldton, though not in this particular allocation of money or program. As the needs of the midwest grow, this power infrastructure will not only aid in the development of the mining sector, because magnetite is a very large user of electricity, but it will also help to establish renewable sources of energy in the midwest, which is the favoured position for wind power and solar power with many different projects either completed or being developed and in the planning stages in that area.

We heard recently about the allocation of money, again assisted by royalties for regions, for the improvement of camping and visitor facilities in the state's national parks. One of the major recipients of that funding will be Kalbarri National Park, with an allocation of nearly \$6 million for further road and facility improvements within the park. That comes on top of a very large allocation towards road improvements for the financial year just passed and for the Loop and Z Bend road.

Like the member for Geraldton, I have some concerns about the announcements on 457 visa holders. I recently held a welcoming ceremony in the town of Dalwallinu for approximately 50 to 60 newcomers, which is something of an achievement for a small regional town. They are Filipino people and 457 visa holders who have families at school. They are not particularly well paid; they are at the local fabricators and they are not mineworkers or particularly highly skilled workers. They are in demand in that area; the local employers obviously have met the criteria necessary to have 457 visa holders work for them. There is a demand and a shortage, but these people are not wealthy. They often have a number of children in their family and this will be something of an impost on that community.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Because it is \$4 000 per child, isn't it?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** It is \$4 000 a child, although I think that it does not kick in until the next school year, so it is not an immediate impost at this time.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** It's pretty significant.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** It is a significant impost on a family with a couple of children.

The other matter of some concern, as highlighted to me recently by some correspondence from residents of the town of Toodyay, which is in my electorate, is that the AvonLink, the train service running between Northam and Midland, is to cease. That train services Toodyay, and residents up and down the road from Gidgegannup to Toodyay are greatly concerned about road safety on Toodyay Road. I recently went to Gidgegannup, which is in the member for Swan Hills' electorate but is on the boundary of mine, and attended the public meeting to discuss safety on Toodyay Road following a couple of very sad and tragic accidents, one of which claimed the life of a mother and her two young children only a couple of weeks ago at Gidgegannup. There is considerable concern about road safety in the communities up and down that road and I do not think the thought of having road buses take the place of the train will fill these people with a great deal of pleasure at this stage. They are greatly concerned.

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**Mr D.A. Templeman:** The *AvonLink* is going to cease?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** That is what I am led to understand, yes.

**Ms M.J. Davies:** The *Prospector's* still running.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** *Prospector* services will still run. There will still be passenger services out there, but the specific *AvonLink* service is set to be replaced by road buses.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** That's terrible.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** It is something of a concern for that town.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Why? What's the reasoning? Is it lack of patronage?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Lack of patronage is probably the reason.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** That's terrible.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** However, on the whole, the budget is a great outcome for the residents of the electorate of Moore and for regional Western Australians. The budget delivers on the promises that the National Party went into the last election campaign with. Contrary to reports from the other side and some media sources, the National Party with the support of the Liberal Party in government has been able to deliver on our promises. Royalties for regions will this year deliver \$1.3 billion in regional development in the state, as well as contribute a substantial amount of money to the future fund. All those things are happening with the support of both the Liberal and National Parties. I think it is a great feat for the government to be at the forefront of regional development in Australia as a whole.

**DR G.G. JACOBS (Eyre)** [9.43 pm]: I believe that the member for North West Central was next; however, there is nothing wrong with having a member from the regional south to split up Geraldton and Moore. In my contribution to the debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013–14 Bill 2013 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2013–14 Bill 2013, I will start with some local issues and move on perhaps to the wider issues that also affect my electorate.

We have moderate growth and we have really moderate needs; however, I think they are important. This budget includes the ongoing hospital upgrade in Esperance, incentives for the retention and attraction of police and the at least continued status in funding small business development corporations. I thank the new Minister for Small Business for his efforts in rather difficult financial times to maintain that budget, particularly for my small business development office. For development of the Esperance port access corridor, an important gateway of Esperance to the Yilgarn and the goldfields, it is important that money is spent to separate the grades of rail, road and general vehicular traffic in order to improve the inputs, particularly of iron ore. In the future, 20 million tonnes will go through the port of Esperance. Work totalling \$7.7 million inside the port gate is being done to improve, obviously, the access to cargo vessels loading our product.

Further north in my electorate, because I actually take in parts of Boulder street by street, is the country local government fund. Some angst has been expressed about this by Labor members, of which I must say there is only one listening, so I am only talking to my side. I thank my side for being here at this late time.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I'm here!

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** That is what I said; there is only one of you.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I make up for a lot!

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** The member certainly does; he is quite vocal!

The budget includes the Great Eastern Highway development, which affects the member for Kalgoorlie's and my area, and the \$45 million commitment by this government to improve passing lanes. There will be 15 passing lanes to improve safety, particularly on that very busy road. Another project is the Ravensthorpe heavy haulage deviation. For many years an issue was that large trucks could get stuck on the hill and potentially reverse down to the bottom of the hill where there is the service station and Ravensthorpe District High School. This is in fact a commitment to create a deviation and not a bypass, which hopefully then will not affect the commercial centre of Ravensthorpe, as bypasses often do. As the member for Moore mentioned, there is a commitment of \$8 million for the telehealth program, particularly in our goldfields region. I can tell members as a person who has been in an emergency centre and a resuscitation room that having a specialist in real time in a telehealth facility to conduct a resuscitation is of great assistance to staff in local country hospitals.

I want to just touch on a few issues impacting on agriculture today and to recognise the agricultural policy, which has a \$300 million price tag. I believe, and I am sure that we all would agree, that this needs a very good

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spend to make an impact on an industry that has some significant pressures. Although I was introduced to these pressures a lot earlier than 15 April, the impact was significant when I attended the Merredin meeting of 1 000 farmers on 15 April. I know that there have been debates in the other place about the looming crisis in agriculture. I believe the crisis in agriculture is not looming; it is here and it is ever present. I was interested in trying to get a handle on that crisis and the nature of the pressures and issues facing farmers. I have said in this place before that it is difficult to get a handle on some of the statistics and understand what they mean in agriculture, particularly in the wheatbelt and grain-growing areas. Today there are 4 500 grain growers yet 20 years ago there were probably 12 500 grain growers in WA. The pressures they have been experiencing include, obviously, dry seasons, but also include high input costs, exchange rate pressures, red tape and—I hope the minister will forgive me for mentioning this—some clearing legislation impediments and frustrations. Wild dogs are also a big problem in not only pastoral areas but also the northern Mallee area, and then there are the issues raised by the Northern Mallee Declared Species Group. Another issue facing agriculture is the lack of a system to try to mitigate risks and instigate research into drought-resistant cereals, frost-resistant wheats and, without seeming kooky, look at some of the rain-making research.

I, the member for Central Wheatbelt and other members have had an introduction to the pressures on agriculture and how best the government can help. I do not mean help by hand-outs; I mean help by a hand up. I came from a farming background before I went to medical school, and I returned as a GP to my home town. I was the son of a farmer. He was essentially a wool grower but also involved in mixed farming. Over the years it has been interesting to see that every time there were pressures on farming, it was considered that either the farmer was not efficient and should get out of farming or that the farmer had to get bigger or get out of farming. That has been a failed experiment and the same cost pressures still apply today. Those systemic issues still have an impact on farmers' livelihoods and their ability to not only make a profit but be sustainable. I have said before, that in order to get a handle on this, it is important to get statistics. At the Merredin meeting 200 farmers filled out a questionnaire. Of those 200 farmers, 70 farmers said that they did not have sufficient finances to put in their normal cropping program. If there were 1 000 farmers in Merredin—which was a representative sample—it is reasonable to extrapolate that there were 280 or 300 farmers in the same boat.

I have also mentioned in this place before some of the other pressures of loaned money, interest rates and the pressures that banks and their customers find themselves under. In my experience a lot of farmers face significant interest rates on their debts. It is difficult to identify the average scenario, but of the many farmers who have contacted my office, their actual core debt on a farm of around 1 600 to 2 000 hectares is in the vicinity of \$2 million to \$3 million. They are paying something like \$200 000 dollars in interest rates. They probably have equity in their farms below 50 per cent, around about 42 per cent to 45 per cent, and they are faced with climbing interest rates, particularly when they were forced to default on payments; so interest rates will go from seven per cent to 12 per cent to 13 per cent and, in some situations, to 17 per cent or higher.

Lending facilities need to lend money at commercial rates without two factors present in the banking industry today. There are two factors in the banking industry today that are driving interest rates higher for farmers trying to run a commercial venture, not a speculative one. A significant component in the Australian and world banking system today is speculative lending. Speculative lending increases risk. The second part of the banking industry in Australia today, particularly since deregulation of the banking system, is the need to pay a shareholder dividend. Shareholder dividend requirements of banks and the speculative nature of some of their investments have a direct impact on commercial venture lending. The experience of farmers who have gone into receivership—it is generally bigger farmers who go through the receivership process because smaller farmers are simply wound up, and the bigger farmers are in my electorate in Ravensthorpe, Yilgarn and Salmon Gums—is that the receivership process moves in and chews up a significant part of the equity. Without sounding “citizen electoral council-esque”, I would suggest that the Australian banking system today does not provide a commercial lending institution for commercial ventures such as farming. A lot of farmers need \$200 000 to \$300 000 to complete their cropping program in this planting year. At four per cent, or 4.5 per cent, that is sustainable. With most of the agricultural area facing a good season—there are some dry spots, but most of the Western Australian wheatbelt has above average soil moisture and the prospect of a pretty good season. It was in that light that it has come to me that there was—especially since the federal government announced that it would come in with a low interest loan program of \$60 million—\$30 million this year and \$30 million next year. Unfortunately, the federal election process has prorogued all of this and none of that money looks like hitting the ground anytime soon.

The plan was to provide low-interest money for viable farmers, not basket-case farmers. I have heard the member for Central Wheatbelt talk about throwing good money after bad, but this is not good money after bad. These are viable farmers. I will say again that these world's best practice wheat and cereal growers in Western Australia need support, but not all of them need support at the one time. It is about greasing the wheels where we

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need to. It is about food security, and, as great as the resource is for us, we cannot eat iron ore! It is really important that we look at programs. I was disappointed. If a dysfunctional federal Labor Party government in Canberra could see that we needed some money to grease the wheels, if you like—not all farmers at any one time but farmers in particular areas—with low-interest loans, we should have been in a position to match that support.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms M.J. Davies** interjected.

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** We might disappear—I mean disagree. If we do not stand up for our constituents, we will disappear! It is important.

**Ms M.J. Davies** interjected.

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** It is not populist at all. There are very good areas that are doing well and different areas do well at different times. I do not see a reason to abandon these producers when there are things that we can do. It is not about supporting unviable farmers, but it is greasing the wheels when they need it. The member for Central Wheatbelt can go out there and put some thought into how we can implement support for our very important industry. For instance, the farm assistance program provided grants of \$25 000, which was of some assistance. But I have to tell the member that of the many farmers in the Yilgarn, probably only seven in that whole area have been able to access the farm assistance package of \$25 000. The reason is the equity ban of between 55 and 65 per cent. I have farmers in my electorate who are asset rich but cash poor, with no prospect of a crop but who have difficulty watering and feeding their stock and transporting their stock for agistment, and that \$25 000 would have been beneficial to them. It will target assistance to those who need it, and they do not all need it. They are not all basket cases, and it is not all about climate change and being told that we must forget the eastern wheatbelt because it is dry and it is never going to rain again! We need an assistance program that targets those people who need it for a particular seasonal pressure.

I want to talk a little about risk mitigation; a lot of people call it multi-peril insurance, but I call it risk mitigation. It is an insurance program that is well established in the United States and that mitigates some loss—not necessarily 100 per cent of loss but some loss. I have farmers in my area who have had years in which they have been completely wiped out. I call them belly floppers, and when they belly flop they can lose a lot of money; they can lose \$1 million. If there was a program by which we could mitigate some of that loss, we would prevent some of those belly flops. I have farmers in my electorate who have had bad years and who have lost a lot of money and they are still recovering from that significant loss. Risk mitigation insurance needs information, if you like, in order to assess the risk, principally around soil moisture. That is because soil moisture is the best predictor of crop growth and yields. It is important that we look at environmental systems and services programs that provide real-time radar information about soil moisture. For instance, Hon Nigel Hallett in the upper house talked about this information in the other place the other day in order to structure a sample risk mitigation grain or wheat policy. He talked about a premium per hectare to mitigate loss by which farmers can tailor, via a formula, how much they want to mitigate against as a loss. That is really important, because otherwise as the old story goes, if we put garbage in, we get garbage out! We must input good information, and the best information is on soil moisture. Some of the predictors on weather are very important too, including the predictors of rain and frost. It is those factors that need to be analysed and assessed in structuring a climate corporation, like risk mitigation insurance. It is important that into the future we look at some of those programs. It is very important we do research, and it is good to see that the government has committed \$40 million into research. There must be rapid and timely development of drought and frost-resistant wheats and other plant varieties that provide us with some mitigation against a drying climate and the advent of frost. As the agricultural members in this place would know, there have been many good crops on the cusp of being harvested that have been wiped out just at the last moment.

This is my last point and maybe the Minister for Water, in his current role and in his previous role as a Minister for Agriculture and Food, may be aware of this. When I was Minister for Water, this technology was presented to me, and I think it is probably worth another look. It is a rain-making technique; a technology called ionisation. It has been around a while. Five sites in Australia have been trialled by a company called Australian Rain Technologies. It has trialled it at three sites in the South Australian Lofty Ranges and also in Queensland. It constitutes an ionisation tower above ground that basically emits negative particles into the atmosphere to provide nuclei for moisture in the air. I recently read that there is 10 times the amount of fresh water in the atmosphere than there is in all our rivers and lakes.

Another important issue is that a lot of our rain falls over the ocean and not over the land. We often say we cannot make it rain. This is not necessarily a dramatic panacea. Studies done in Australia to date show moderate increases in rainfall in the downwind areas of ionisation towers produces a moderate five to 10 per cent increase

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in rain events. Studies are difficult to do because rain is a variable thing. Put a tower in and do a study for 12 months, and there is an increase in rainfall and one thinks, "Would that variable have happened in any case?" Generally, most of the studies show a five to nine per cent increase in rainfall. It is very important that we put these towers on top of the Darling scarp, not on the coastal plain because that will not actually help us get a potential increase in rainfall into the wheatbelt areas, particularly into the eastern wheatbelt areas.

In finishing, it is really important that we encourage young inventors. In Southern Cross recently, a 19-year-old young man, who is a son of a farmer, presented to me a measure by which he could increase the amount of rain and its effectiveness in growing wheat. His invention was a roller that was under significant spring pressure at the back of a seeder to impact the land each side of the crop furrow. The compaction each side of the crop furrow where the seed was placed by the seeder was impacted a little so that it improved whatever rain there was and whatever drainage into the furrow where the seed was planted. The Southern Cross region to date has had 149.3 millimetres, around six inches in total, but it is known that crops can generally be grown on very low rainfall; it is a matter of timing. It is a matter of using rainfall to improve soil moisture where it is needed; that is, where the seed furrow is. I hope that the research budget in this agricultural policy will encourage young inventors such as this young man to develop these inventions. It will encourage institutions such as the Grains Research and Development Corporation to improve the prospects of growing grain and yielding for farmers who are under pressure. There are significant systemic challenges. This government is not giving up on these people. It will help them in every way it can to improve their prospects and of course improve the prospects of every person in WA.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr J.H.D. Day (Leader of the House)**.

*House adjourned at 10.14 pm*

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