

## ESTIMATES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

### *Consideration of Tabled Papers*

Resumed from 13 June on the following motion moved by Hon Stephen Dawson (Minister for Environment) —

That pursuant to standing order 69(1), the Legislative Council take note of tabled papers 1340A–D (budget papers 2018–19) laid upon the table of the house on Thursday, 10 May 2018.

**HON JIM CHOWN (Agricultural)** [10.28 am]: It is interesting to note that for the last week or so a theme on government accountability and transparency has been running from this side of the house. I can assure the house that, from my perspective, and certainly from a Liberal Party perspective going by some of the addresses that have taken place, there has been no collusion. We have all come to this conclusion ourselves. I am sure that the crossbenchers feel the same: that this government has let the public of Western Australia down considerably with regard to its integrity, its lack of transparency and certainly its accountability to not only the public but also the Parliament itself. I will say some more words about that shortly.

This probably commenced when now Premier McGowan—or “Metro Mark” as he is called in the regions because does not seem to know where they are or care much about them—went to an election with a number of commitments that people believed in and thought would make this Labor Party worthy of their vote, and that is what took place. Of course, the government of the day—the Liberal and National loose coalition—was wiped out and there are few of us left.

But government is actually about credibility. Credibility encapsulates integrity, accountability and transparency—those fine words that people expect from the democratic Westminster system. It is a high ideal. Credibility is hard to maintain in government. This side of the house—the Liberal and National Parties’ side—spent eight and a half years in government, and in the end we lost credibility in the eyes of the public of this state. I would have rated the McGowan government’s credibility on the day after the election as a nine out of 10; today I think it would struggle to make a three out of 10, quite frankly. It is getting to the point that people in the street who really do not engage in politics are starting to realise that they voted for a government of little substance or ability that seems to target its achievements on the back of the faults of the previous government. This government has not done anything in 13-odd months, other than lambast the previous government for its shortfalls—I agree—on state debt. In fact, the Premier has on more than one occasion—consistently—had his own figures wrong. He is using the Goebbels principle. For those who do not know, Joseph Goebbels was the public relations person for Adolf Hitler. The Goebbels principle was if a lie is told often enough, it becomes the truth in the eyes of the public. However, Hitler did not have an opposition. Our job now is to ensure that, as Don Chipp once said, we keep the bastards honest. That is what we are doing—it is starting to resonate to the detriment of the Labor Party—in regard to honesty and integrity.

It is interesting that a number of members have today talked about the government’s responses during question time. I have a couple here that I will pursue in my address today because they are quite interesting. On Tuesday, 27 March, I asked a question of the Leader of the House representing the Premier. I will repeat the question to refresh the memories of members. I asked —

I refer to an incident on Sunday, 18 March 2018, that occurred at the Scarborough beachfront when Premier McGowan was in attendance to open a new redevelopment ...

A redevelopment, of course, that was initiated and paid for by the previous government, but that is politics. My question continued —

A lone, peaceful protester stood holding a banner that read “Save Moora College” —

It is actually “Save Moora Residential College”. It is a massive issue in regional Western Australia that has now become an international campaign. The Minister for Education has not even visited it.

**Hon Donna Faragher:** She’s too busy.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** She is too busy. It is affecting a large regional area, but due to this government’s lack of responsibility, it has not been to speak to residents. Even the Premier has not been there, and I doubt he ever will. Regardless, I will continue.

This person was protesting quietly to save Moora college, as is her democratic right, at the opening of the Scarborough beachfront redevelopment. My question was —

- (1) Who instructed the Premier’s security to approach the protester in this manner?
- (2) Is it usual for the government’s security detail to be utilised in such a way to protect the government’s reputation?

Hon James Chown; Hon Martin Pritchard; Deputy President; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Nick Goiran; Acting President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Martin Aldridge; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Colin Holt

---

The Leader of the House, on behalf of the Premier, replied —

- (1)–(2) The WA Police Force dignitary protection unit was in attendance at the Scarborough foreshore on Sunday, 18 March 2018, to provide a security detail to Premier Mark McGowan, MLA. A lone-person protester was observed at the opening. It was the decision of the attending DPU personnel to approach and speak with this person. WA police will not comment on operational procedures surrounding the security of DPU clients.

We now know that the normal security people were not at the opening of the Scarborough beachfront revamp; they were the Premier’s personal DPU.

I followed up this question on Thursday, 29 March, with a very similar question. The answer was —

No comment will be provided on operational matters surrounding dignitary protection unit clients. I can advise that DPU procedures remain the same as they were for the previous government.

Interesting. It just so happens that in 2010 I was in Katanning with the then Premier of Western Australia, Hon Colin Barnett, as part of the annual trip that I took with the Premier through my electorate. These trips normally took one or two days, and we met as many people as possible. I note that the current Premier has not taken such a trip, but obviously the then Premier, Hon Colin Barnett, was Premier for all of Western Australia, not just the metro area, hence the current Premier’s name in regional Western Australia—“Metro Mark”. There were about 50 people at the Katanning Club. I was a reasonably new member. While Hon Colin Barnett was giving a speech, within the crowd of 50-odd people there was a loud protester who was constantly interjecting on the Premier. I was standing at the front, with people behind me, while Colin was talking, and I noticed that the protection unit moved through the crowd, towards the front. When one of them stood beside me, I asked why he could not move this loud, noisy person out of the room. He said it was not part of their process, unless directed by the Premier to do so. If DPU procedures remain as they were under the previous government, I can only assume that the current Premier instructed his unit to hassle this lone protester on the Moora Residential College matter. Members can draw their own conclusions, but that was my experience and I will swear on the Bible that that was said to me.

I have another matter about questions asked by me and others in the house. I put a question to Hon Sue Ellery on Thursday, 12 April. I will read it out because it is important that I do so. I asked —

I refer to informal discussions Hon Darren West had at the Western Australian Local Government Association conference on 5 April 2018, with two Moora Shire Councillors, regarding Moora Residential College.

- (1) Is the minister prepared to have an independent assessment take place into Moora Residential College, over the upcoming school holidays in April 2018, as stated by Hon Darren West to two Moora shire councillors?
- (2) During that that same conversation, Hon Darren West provided assurances that \$500 000 would be found, if the independent assessment indicated that the expenditure of this amount will allow the college to operate. Does the minister agree with this statement?

The response was given by Hon Samantha Rowe because the Leader of the House; Minister for Education and Training was away on urgent parliamentary business. The answer was —

- (1) Detailed reports on the condition of Moora Residential College have been tabled and are available for review. These reports provide comprehensive information prepared by independent consultants on the facility.
- (2) I do not agree with the premise of this question or that Hon Darren West gave such a commitment.

I do not care whether she agrees with the premise of the question or not. Having noted that the minister was away on urgent parliamentary business, I asked the question in another format on Wednesday, 9 May. The Minister for Education and Training; Leader of the House was present on that occasion. My question was —

I refer to the answer to my question without notice 284 asked on 12 April 2018 regarding comments made by Hon Darren West to two Moora shire councillors and his commitment to them that he would find \$500 000 if an independent assessment undertaken during the April 2018 school holidays indicated that that expenditure would enable the college to remain operational.

- (1) Has the minister asked Hon Darren West whether he provided such a commitment?
- (2) If yes, what was the honourable member’s reply?

Hon James Chown; Hon Martin Pritchard; Deputy President; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Nick Goiran; Acting President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Martin Aldridge; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Colin Holt

---

The minister, the Leader of the House, responded to my first question by saying yes, so she has spoken to the honourable member about this matter. She continued —

(2) That he did not say what they claimed he said.

Obviously, the member is now in the house. Are you happy that the response by the Leader of the House was a correct answer?

*Point of Order*

**Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD:** Mr Deputy President, I believe that all remarks should be directed to yourself rather than to the member.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** It is not uncommon for members to exchange information or respond to questions during another member's speech. However, there is no obligation on any member to attempt to interject a response and there are avenues for members to respond if they wish to do so. But in any case, Hon Jim Chown is making his speech now and I call on him to continue to do so.

*Debate Resumed*

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** My question to Hon Darren West remains. Is he happy to respond to my question about the response that was given to me by the Leader of the House?

**Hon Darren West:** Question time is at 4.30, honourable member.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** If we were in America, the member would be taking the Fifth Amendment on this matter. In this country, he is exercising his right to silence. Of course, as any good police officer would know when he gets a suspect and starts to grill them over what has taken place, usually that right to silence is taken by the guilty party.

**Hon Darren West:** Honourable member, I'm merely respecting the processes of the Parliament.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Now he has something to say.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order! Members are going to respect this process of the Parliament. I am calling them to order and directing their attention to Hon Jim Chown, who is going to address the Chair.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Thank you, Mr Deputy President. I will do my best to address the Chair on this occasion.

Prior to rising to my feet, we heard the Leader of the House talk about government standards. I did not quite hear the interjection made by Hon Darren West but I hope the Hansard reporter wrote it down. Hon Darren West also indicated that he would abide by the process of the house on this occasion.

I will read the question I asked of the Leader of the House and her response to the house again just so that everybody is clear about what is taking place. I asked —

(1) Has the minister asked Hon Darren West whether he provided such a commitment?

The answer was yes. I then asked —

(2) If yes, what was the honourable member's reply?

The honourable member is Hon Darren West. That reply was —

(2) That he did not say what they claimed he said.

I just happen to have some statutory declarations signed by the people Hon Darren West spoke to. They relate to a public occasion. Let me inform members of the gravity of this situation. The making of a statutory declaration is a serious undertaking. The making of a false statutory declaration is a crime, potentially resulting in imprisonment or, at the very least, a hefty fine. Most members in this place would be aware that the governing legislation for statutory declarations is the Oaths, Affidavits and Statutory Declarations Act 2005. The act prescribes —

A person may make a statutory declaration about any matter at any time, for any purpose and without the need for any legal authority to do so other than this section.

One of the procedural requirements for a valid statutory declaration, as set out in sections 11 and 12 of that act, is that the declaration must be in the form of schedule 1. I will outline some of the fines imposed on those making a false statutory declaration. A summary conviction penalty is two years' imprisonment and a fine of \$24 000. Any person who knowingly makes a statement that is false in a material particular in a statutory declaration is guilty of a crime and is liable to imprisonment for five years.

Hon James Chown; Hon Martin Pritchard; Deputy President; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Nick Goiran; Acting President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Martin Aldridge; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Colin Holt

---

Government is a hard place; there is no doubt about that. Frontbenchers are the front line of any government and their actions in any public arena are absolutely critical in maintaining the credibility of a government. We have had the Barry Urban issue. We have seen a member of this government falsely declare on his curriculum vitae some of the things that he did not achieve. At the time, the Premier took the action of supporting him un-substantially until he became unsupportable. He was moved from the Labor Party to the crossbench and was subsequently removed from Parliament. I think this matter that I am about to outline has far more seriousness for this Parliament and this government. Hon Darren West may snicker but he needs to take this very seriously. This is about standards of government—a theme that has been running through this place consistently for the past two weeks. My money is on the two councillors who have signed statutory declarations relating to a matter of grave importance to their community. They asked questions of Hon Darren West at a public function; it was a dinner during a Western Australian Local Government Association conference. He denies making the responses. He denies making them to the point that he misled the Leader of the House and she misled the house through the response to her question. If the Premier has any standards at all or if Hon Darren West has any honour in being a member of this house —

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order! It might be helpful if the Chair were to give some advice at this point. It is fine that we engage in robust debate during consideration of the budget papers. I heard some mutterings from other members that a matter of privilege might be about to be raised. Members may wish to refer to standing order 93 to refresh their memories about the matter of privilege. I give further advice that if a member were contemplating raising a matter of privilege, they should do so by substantive motion rather than just incidentally during the debate. I am not suggesting that the member has raised a matter of privilege but he may be about to do so. If he were to do so, standing order 93(2) comes into play. That would mean that the consideration of the matter of privilege would be dealt with immediately, with any other business before the house being suspended. The member was no doubt contemplating standing order 93 as he made his remarks. If he is about to raise a matter of privilege, he needs to be aware of that. But I will let the member proceed with his current address, which, of course, is on the question that the budget papers be noted.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Thank you, Mr Deputy President, for that sound advice. At this stage, a matter of privilege is certainly under consideration, but I may have a bit more to say on this matter before we get there. It may be that a matter of privilege does not have to take place immediately; it can take place at any time in the future.

*Point of Order*

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I want to draw the attention of the house to standing order 45, which states —

All imputations of improper motives and all personal reflections on Members shall be considered highly disorderly.

Perhaps the member on his feet may wish to take that standing order into consideration when he makes his contribution.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** I can reassure the honourable minister and all members that I am particularly sensitive to these matters but am also keen not to restrain legitimate and, indeed, sometimes robust debate, and I do not think you would want me to. There is no point of order, but the minister has made the point.

*Debate Resumed*

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Thank you, Mr Deputy President. Once more, you give sound advice to the house, and I have taken that under consideration as well.

I will get back to standards—that long interruption has put me off my stride a bit, I might add, but I will try to get back into it—in regard to this very serious matter that is underway in the Legislative Council. Let me reiterate. A member here was asked a question by the Leader of the House, Hon Sue Ellery, and he has denied the accusation of making the statements, as stated in the parliamentary questions. If his answer was incorrect, he has caused the Leader of the House to mislead this house. I do not believe Barry Urban ever caused a minister to mislead the Parliament or a Premier, yet the Premier of the day removed him from the Labor Party and then, through the Procedure and Privileges Committee, removed him from the house. He was not a government frontbencher; he was a backbencher. He had no responsibilities other than to turn up and vote. Backbenchers are soldiers—that is all they are—and they represent their electorates. We have a frontbencher here in this house, in my belief, who has been incorrect in his statements to the Leader of the House. I will go further and read what I received from Mrs Tracy Lefroy, a councillor from the Moora shire. I received this email on Sunday, 8 April, and it reads —

Hi Ken and Jim

Ken is Ken Seymour, the president of the Moora shire —

**Extract from Hansard**

[COUNCIL — Thursday, 14 June 2018]

p3384b-3404a

Hon James Chown; Hon Martin Pritchard; Deputy President; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Nick Goiran; Acting President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Martin Aldridge; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Colin Holt

---

This is my recollection of a discussion with Darren West on Thursday evening at pre-dinner drinks before the WALGA Conference Dinner.

Involved in the conversation were Tracy Humphry, Darren West and myself. Off having a side conversation were Jan (cannot remember surname but she is from Gingin and is Chair of the Avon–Midland Zone) and Minister David Templeman.

The discussion moved to the fact that the Moora campaigners were suggesting it would cost \$500K to the Residential College open. Darren refuted this and said that if we were so confident we should get an independent assessor in. We said that we wanted to but were not allowed access to the College. Darren West then said he would get an independent assessor through during the school holidays. He then followed this up with “if the assessor comes back with a quote of \$500K, then I’ll give you the \$500K. I can do that”.

Let me know if you need any further information

Best wishes

Tracy

Tracy has followed this up with a statutory declaration. As I have declared, a statutory declaration is a very important legal document. It is not something people make lightly. When Tracy Lefroy gave me the statutory declaration, she made a very pertinent comment. She said, “I sought legal advice from my solicitor before I completed this statutory declaration.” The legal advice from her solicitor was, “As long as you’re telling the truth, Tracy, you have nothing to fear.” I have no doubt whatsoever, members, that this is the truth. There is not only one statutory declaration, but two. They are from two different people who were present and part of the conversation with Hon Darren West on the day.

**Hon Nick Goiran:** So, it’s not just a case of one person’s word against another?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** It is not a case of one person’s word against another—at all. Hon Nick Goiran raises a good point. These are responsible councillors. They are upstanding members of their community, people who are concerned about this government’s policy to close Moora Residential College, and they have gone to a frontbencher, a parliamentary secretary, and asked him a question at a public forum. He has made a commitment and given them a response. A response, I might add, that was way above his ability to actually make any of those comments, but he has made them. He has denied making them. He has denied making them to the Leader of the House, who, in turn, has misled the house.

Let me get on with the statutory declarations. I will read the statutory declaration by Tracy Lefroy of 631 Cranmore Road, Bindi Bindi, whose occupation is retailer. She sincerely declares —

This is my recollection of a discussion with Darren West on Thursday evening at pre-dinner drinks before the WALGA Conference Dinner.

Involved in the conversation were Tracy Humphry, Darren West and myself. Off having a side conversation were Jan (cannot remember surname but she is from Gingin and is Chair of the Avon–Midland Zone) and Minister David Templeman.

The discussion moved to the fact that the Moora campaigners were suggesting it would cost \$500K to the Residential College open. Darren refuted this and said that if we were so confident we should get an independent assessor in. We said that we wanted to but were not allowed access to the College. Darren West then said he would get an independent assessor through during the school holidays. He then followed this up with “if the assessor comes back with a quote of \$500K, then I’ll give you the \$500K. I can do that”.

That was sworn in at the Moora shire offices on Friday, 27 April, signed in the presence of Ken Seymour, shire councillor.

The second statutory declaration is from Tracy Georgina Humphry, whose occupation is farmer and her residential address is 14160 Great Northern Highway, Moora. She sincerely declares —

Darren West in conversation with Tracy Lefroy and myself in Jurien Bay at the WALGA Wheatbelt conference dinner on 5th April 2018 stated that he would arrange for an independent assessor to go through the Moora Residential College during the school holidays. He continued on to say if the assessor’s quote was \$500,000, he would get us the \$500,000.

He stated “I can do that”

Hon James Chown; Hon Martin Pritchard; Deputy President; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Nick Goiran; Acting President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Martin Aldridge; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Colin Holt

---

That also was signed at the Moora shire on 27 April 2018 and witnessed in the presence of the shire CEO, Mr Alan James Leeson.

I have no doubt, members, that this actually took place. I have no doubt at all that Hon Darren West made those statements. I have no doubt at all that he has once again misled this house and misled his leader. If we are talking about standards here, he has no other option but to resign as a member of this place and do the right thing. We are called honourable members, but there is no honour in misleading this house and especially his own leader. The standards have been set by this Premier. The standards have been set in the Barry Urban matter. Barry Urban was nothing more than a backbencher. He did not mislead the Leader of the House. He did not mislead Parliament. He just told lies about his CV.

**Hon Stephen Dawson:** He did.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Okay; he misled Parliament—fine.

Several members interjected.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** It is not fine. He suffered the consequences. The Premier of the day removed him from the Labor Party. The correct procedures took place and he was removed from Parliament. Hon Darren West thinks this is a minor matter. It is not. I have been a member of this place longer than he has. Quite frankly, this is the most serious issue I have seen come before this place. It would never have happened under our government—ever. I was a parliamentary secretary for four years, so I know what the frontbench responsibilities are. If we are talking about process, accountability and transparency, now is the time for the Premier to step up and prove it on this member's behaviour. I do not know what the response will be to this matter. I may raise a matter of privilege at some stage in the future. I think it is worthy of raising a matter of privilege at some stage in the future.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order! Members, this allusion to misleading the house is starting to be expressed in the house, which is a very serious matter and would be a matter of privilege. The term "matter of privilege" is also creeping into the debate. This is not a debate on a matter of privilege. As I have indicated, under standing order 93, there is a process for a matter of privilege to be considered; and, if a matter of privilege is raised, it will be considered forthwith as the first item of business, putting aside anything else that is currently in process. It is that serious. Therefore, the context of a matter of privilege needs to be the subject of its own substantive motion. That does not mean that members cannot talk about things that might arise in the future, but if a member has determined that a matter of privilege has arisen, it needs to be raised forthwith. Any contemplation that a matter of privilege has come to notice and the member is thinking about raising it is not good enough. If a matter of privilege has come to notice, a member is obliged to raise that with the President. Before we go just a little bit further than we currently have, I need to advise members of that point. Unless anyone has a substantive matter to raise, we will return to the question that the budget papers be noted.

*Point of Order*

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** I am concerned by the matters that have been raised by Hon Jim Chown this morning. I note that under standing order 40, there is capacity for a personal explanation to be made when leave of the house is given and when there is no business before the Council. Plainly, there is business before the Council at the moment. I ask for your guidance, Mr Deputy President, because I am concerned about the matters that have been raised by Hon Jim Chown. I might be inclined to raise a matter of privilege, but I would like to afford Hon Darren West the opportunity first to clarify the record. He might choose to do so as a matter of a personal explanation at some later stage today. Pending that, I would like to reserve my right to raise a matter of privilege, as no doubt might Hon Jim Chown.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Members, there is no point of order. Hon Darren West, like every other member, is of course aware of the provisions of standing order 40, which provides for a personal explanation when there is no business before the Council. I reassure Hon Nick Goiran that I had already formed in my mind an inclination to see whether some member did wish to exercise standing order 40 after the current matter of business has finished. We will see about that in due course. Perhaps members might need to contemplate what they might do in due course. I am starting to hear enough references to matters of privilege that I am contemplating reporting to the President myself that she needs to be aware of some of this debate. As I say, we have not quite got to that stage yet. We are still considering the question that the budget papers be noted, which should be enough for everyone at the moment.

*Debate Resumed*

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I note that I do not think I have raised a matter of privilege, although other members have, including you, Mr Deputy President. As I have said previously, it is under contemplation. I think I will leave the matter there. If the government has any standards that it needs to maintain and uphold, we should look with interest at the actions that the Premier will take with Hon Darren West. As has already been stated, the honourable member

Hon James Chown; Hon Martin Pritchard; Deputy President; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Nick Goiran; Acting President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Martin Aldridge; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Colin Holt

---

has a right of reply. I gave him the opportunity as part of my address and he declined to accept that offer. At some stage today we may hear from him and we may get some clarity about his belief of what took place.

Of course, as I said at the start of my address, this all folds back into the credibility of this government. It is absolutely essential. Credibility is the currency of governments. At this stage, this government is running out of currency. The example I have put before the house today is worthy of lifting its credibility through actions taken by “Metro Mark” at some stage in the future, as he has already set the baseline for members of his government who have lied to the public.

I have a little bit of time left, so I will now bore members completely on matters that this government committed to pre-election and has undertaken post-election. I am sure that we are all aware of the Premier’s pre-election statement, “There will be no new taxes in Western Australia or increases in taxes on Western Australians if we are elected—full stop.”

**Hon Nick Goiran:** More lies.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Absolutely. Was it Arnold Schwarzenegger who said, “Read my lips: no new taxes”? I think the Premier must have used that pre-election statement when he made some of these commitments. What has happened? We have had an increase in payroll tax to the detriment of businesses throughout Western Australia. There will now be a foreign owner duty surcharge for foreign owners who buy real estate in Perth, which will push the value of real estate even further down as the government seeks to fill its coffers. Now we have a tax on Uber. Thirty million people use taxis every year in the metro area. Now the government wants to tax them 10 per cent to pay for 1 100 taxi owners —

**Hon Stephen Dawson** interjected.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT:** Order, members!

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I hear something, Mr Acting President, but I shall continue. Over-recovery of water charges to the detriment of struggling households will return this government \$1 billion a year. This is meant to be a government for the people but it is a government for itself.

**Hon Stephen Dawson:** It’s a government fixing your mess. You’re a hypocrite!

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I will get to that, minister for plastic.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT:** Order, members! Hon Jim Chown has the call. We will continue without the level of interjection that is currently being experienced.

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I understand that Mr Acting President knows what my title is. I have been referred to as the minister for plastic, which I find offensive. I do not support single-use plastic, so I would ask the member to withdraw the incorrect title. My correct title is Minister for Environment.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Dr Steve Thomas):** Order, members! It is in the standing orders that members will be referred to by their ministerial title or as the honourable, and then their name. I ask the member to withdraw the “minister for plastic” and to use the correct title.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I am more than happy to withdraw my statement in regard to naming the Minister for Environment the minister for plastic. I hope he is happy with that at this stage.

*Debate Resumed*

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Of course, in regard to new taxes and charges, it was this side of the house that stopped the increase in gold royalties. A disallowance took place and the government went berserk. What has been the outcome of that? We now have a gold industry in Kalgoorlie that has the confidence to invest in its industry to the point that there are a thousand job vacancies. The industry is starting to boom. All this government wanted to do was tax, tax and tax to ensure that it had some sort of war chest of money for the next election. It does not give a damn about regional Western Australia. That is more than evident. Talk about a lack of integrity! This government has consistently said that state debt is enormous, that it is all the fault of the Liberal and National Parties because they wasted money and kept wasting it, and that they were a terrible government. Yet we see our popinjay of a Premier opening a stadium that he had nothing to do with.

*Withdrawal of Remark*

Hon James Chown; Hon Martin Pritchard; Deputy President; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Nick Goiran; Acting President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Martin Aldridge; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Colin Holt

---

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Mr Acting President, I have been listening to the contribution by Hon Jim Chown and I would ask you to direct him to refer to the Premier in the appropriate way. We had a debate earlier today about paying people due respect and about parliamentary standards. This member, from what I have heard of his contribution today, has not conducted himself in a way that I think the motion that was moved earlier today sought to have members of this house conduct themselves. I ask you to get him to withdraw his reference to the Premier, and when he refers to the Premier, he should refer to him in the appropriate way.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** I refer, Mr Acting President, to a point of order that I made some weeks ago when a minister in this place referred inappropriately to a minister in another place. The President's ruling at that time was that the standing order applies only to members of this place.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Dr Steve Thomas):** My understanding of the word "popinjay" is that it refers to a bird, if I remember my veterinary days accurately. I made a ruling earlier this week that referring to any member in reference to an animal is unparliamentary and inappropriate. I would ask the member to withdraw that comment. I would also suggest to the member that he withdraw it without explanation or reservation and we will then proceed forward.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Thank you, Mr Acting President. I am happy to withdraw my comment in regard to the Premier.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT:** Thank you. Hon Jim Chown has the call.

*Debate Resumed*

**Hon Peter Collier:** You're obviously upsetting them.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Yes, obviously. In regard to standards, obviously the Leader of the House does not have a sense of humour on this occasion. If she wants to maintain standards, we expect those standards to be maintained in regard to the matter that I raised earlier, which, if she were listening, she would be fully aware of.

*Point of Order*

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I did listen, not to the whole of it, but to a significant part of the member's earlier comments. If the member believes he has a matter of —

**Hon Nick Goiran:** This is not a point of order. Sit down! It's ridiculous.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I have not even finished speaking!

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Dr Steve Thomas):** Honourable members! At this point, Leader of the House, I will give you a little leeway. At this stage I do not believe it is a point of order. If you are going to get to what is a point order, I ask you to do so fairly quickly. I will not have interruptions from any side of the house while I am attempting to listen to a point of order.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The standing orders are quite precise in how matters of privilege are to be dealt with. I ask the Acting President to draw the member's attention to the standing orders. If he believes there is a matter of privilege, he knows what he needs to do.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT:** I will be looking very carefully at the words used. As the Deputy President said previously, there is a specific way to deal with matters of privilege and accusations of misleading the house. I would expect it to be done under the standing orders. We will progress. Hon Jim Chown has the call.

*Debate Resumed*

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** On that matter, that is a decision that I need to make or any other member of the house can make. We do not need to be lectured by the Leader of the House about the requirements on this issue. I was not even going there. I was indicating to her and I was hoping that she would take some action herself. Obviously not, such are the standards of members of this government.

Let me get back to what I was saying about integrity and standards and this government's commitments pre-election. Yes, I was part of a government that ran up a state debt of \$33 billion. Most of that was spent on infrastructure. That was at a time when this state was inundated with new people—thousands and thousands of families a week. We changed the landscape of this state. It cost money; there is no doubt about that. Hon Peter Collier was the instigator of the best education system in the nation. From a health perspective, we have the best health system in the nation. That cost money. We have Fiona Stanley Hospital and now we have probably one of the best hospitals in the world at Perth Children's Hospital. Yes, it had some problems, but it was the previous government's commitment, the previous government's money and the previous government's ability that built it. That has never been acknowledged by this government. What has it done? Nothing. The Premier was more than happy to go to Scarborough and instruct his security unit to stop a lone protester from protesting about Moora Residential College. He pretended that he was part of the process that did that development, as he has done

Hon James Chown; Hon Martin Pritchard; Deputy President; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Nick Goiran; Acting President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Martin Aldridge; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Colin Holt

---

at Perth Children's Hospital and Perth Stadium. I can remember members of this house denigrating Elizabeth Quay by calling it "Betty's Jetty". Now people cannot be stopped from going there. Hundreds of thousands of people attend these pieces of infrastructure that will benefit this state and this city for decades to come. That took money. What has this government done? It has made a big noise about state debt but it has increased state debt to where it is today—at about \$39 billion. What has it actually achieved? I can tell members what the government has achieved. This government has crippled households. Households are struggling in Western Australia. It has more than brought them to their knees. They are prostrate on the ground trying to make ends meet on a weekly basis. It has increased the cost of living for residences by \$730. That is 13 times more than the inflation rate. Why? These increases include an increase in electricity prices by 17.9 per cent. That is a broken election commitment. Remember, we were going to sell 51 per cent of Western Power. We made the commitment that we would not increase the cost of electricity over and above inflation. These blokes have done it. The McGowan Labor government has done it—13 times higher than inflation. Funding for the hardship utility grant scheme has been cut significantly. In the first six months of 2017 the budget for HUGS was \$25 million, but then it was suspended for the remaining six months of that year by this government. I do not know what people did if they could not pay their utility bills. Did they just sit at home, wondering how they were going to get water to flush the toilet or to wash? Did they go and borrow money from friends to pay their bills? It was suspended for six months—they could not actually apply for some form of assistance. This is a very mean-spirited government. In fact, it will probably go down in history as one of the most mean-spirited governments that residents in Western Australia have ever experienced.

I will not talk about the jobs plan! The Premier went out pre-election with the little book in front of him and said, "There will be 60 000 new jobs for Western Australia. Look at me! We will help you. We will solve the problem. I will say anything, I will do anything, I will tell you anything, as long as you vote for me, because once you vote for me, it's out the door—nothing. Power is everything!" What do we have today? We have the highest level of unemployment in this state for 14 years. This is at a time when the economy is actually showing green shoots, but there is such a lack of confidence out there due to the increases on small business and the ongoing increases this government is imposing on the residents of this state that nobody is prepared to employ somebody extra at this stage. This government has no credibility in the eyes of the commercial world. That is a very sad thing, because without credibility trickling down in regard to confidence in the economy, I suggest that unemployment will stay as it is for some time to come. When we look at the budget, well, there are a lot of questions to ask and answers needed. I note the Minister for Regional Development is in the house. If I can find the budget paper to refer to, I may be able to get some guidance from her. Here we go.

**Hon Martin Aldridge:** Don't raise your hopes.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I will not raise my hopes. In the royalties for regions expenditure section—I think it is in budget paper No 3—down the bottom at the end, if members want to look it up, is an underspend provision. It is quite large, actually. In the 2015–16 estimated actual it was \$161 million. I do not know what it was spent on or where it went. Does the government intend to continue the underspend provision into the future? Why is that not reflected in the budget? This year's budget has an underspend in royalties for regions of \$163.3 million. In the forward estimates, it is \$161.3 million and \$176.5 million in 2018–19. This amounts to an enormous amount of money, but at this stage we cannot find where it goes. There is certainly a lack of accountability or disclosure. The \$64 million that was not spent in the 2017–18 estimated actual could have been well spent on things such as the \$8.5 million to \$9 million needed for Moora Residential College. That would have got an issue out of the way.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** At least he is acknowledging it is \$8 million to \$9 million; that is progress!

**The ACTING PRESIDENT:** Order, members! Hon Jim Chown has the call.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Thank you, Mr Acting President.

That would have got an issue off the back of this government and set up Moora Residential College for many, many years to come. Why did I state that figure? Because that was the commitment we made as a government. If we had still been in government, that money would have been allocated and spent on restoration, rectification or whatever is required to ensure that Moora Residential College had many years of service in front of it.

An amount of \$64 million is unspent. This government has for some reason decided to cut 40 per cent from the budget of the community resource centres. Community resource centres have grown exponentially over the years in terms of the services they provide to their communities, but this mean-spirited government, this government that does not really care about regional Western Australia—in fact, I do not think it gives a damn about anything that happens out there—has decided to pull the rug out from under the CRCs to the tune of \$5 million per annum. That will be to the detriment of the communities the CRCs serve in an exceptionally professional manner. In fact, I have yet to go to a CRC and speak to its principal and not come away completely impressed with the ability of those people to understand their remit with regard to servicing their communities and honouring their contractual

Hon James Chown; Hon Martin Pritchard; Deputy President; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Nick Goiran; Acting President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Martin Aldridge; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Colin Holt

---

arrangements with government. I find CRCs to be a highly professional institution spread right throughout regional Western Australia, yet, for \$5 million per annum, the government is going to cut their ability to service their communities. When asked a question about this issue in the other place, the Premier stated in *Hansard* that nobody needs computers nowadays. He said that we do not need PCs because it is all on our phones! I am happy to find the quote for members. That was Hon Mark McGowan's response to this issue. Let me inform the Premier that there are three million Australians who do not have internet connections today, and most of them reside in regional Australia. They use these CRCs as a very important source of information, including to access government services, which is their role. I think the quote is worth repeating. During Parliament in September 2017, Mark McGowan's comments regarding the CRC budget cuts were —

The community resource centres ... were prominent back in the 1980s and 1990s ... there was a computer there that people could use to access the internet ... These days, people have mobile phones ...

What? This bloke needs to get out more. He needs to go out and actually meet people. He needs to meet people in Moora. He needs to meet people who access community resource centres. He actually needs to speak to people, who probably voted for him but will never vote for him again, such is the disdain and arrogance that has been shown to them in regard to matters such as this.

Then there is the agricultural education farms provision trust that was raided by this government. It is taking out \$330 000 a year—god, what is happening here? These agricultural colleges are some of the best agricultural institutions in the country. They have a waiting list, they do outstanding work and they have a trust fund that is operated through a board and accumulates money from produce sold by the agricultural colleges. Sixty per cent of that money goes back into the college that generates the funds and 40 per cent goes into a trust, which is then redistributed throughout the whole agricultural college system for the purpose of buying machinery—it is incredibly expensive today and it changes almost annually—to ensure that students who attend have the ability to operate these machines. There are also maintenance requirements and shed requirements. What has this government done? It wants 20 per cent of the 40 per cent that is distributed throughout the system, which amounts to about \$350 000 a year. It is an enormous amount of money to these trust funds, but it is nothing to a government that has an income of around \$27 billion a year and is caning households daily of hundreds of dollars. This government has done nothing to restrain its use of government funds, as already indicated by the Leader of the Opposition on this side of the house. How many people went to China, Hon Peter Collier?

**Hon Peter Collier:** Fifty went to China.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Fifty went at a cost of —

**Hon Peter Collier:** Around \$250 000 that we know of.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** This government has spent \$250 000 on a junket for 50 people at a time when people in the community would be happy to have a portion of that returned to their community resource centre.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan** interjected.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT:** Order, member!

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** This is ridiculous.

Let me talk about camp schools. Thousands of public school students attend the camp school system throughout regional Western Australia. It is a very important and critical part of their education. The people who run the camp schools are astounded that some children from large areas like the metropolitan area of Geraldton, do not understand where a chop comes from—it is very basic stuff—or where milk comes from, how it is generated and why. I know that it seems bizarre. These are fundamental requirements that are being lost in our education system. These camp schools address all this along with other things such as team building for those children who need encouragement and are deprived of confidence. What is this government going to do? It is going to privatise those camp schools and it is going to cost even more to attend them—it is crazy! However, last year's underspend of \$64 million could have paid for all this, which comes to about \$21 million. The government would still have had \$40 million left over, but it decided that it was not going to do that. It was going to make the public of Western Australia pay and pay, and then, at the next election, it would be able to say, "No, sorry. State debt has increased under our regime. We can't pay it down like a household mortgage. However, we have this little war chest of money, which we will shower you with. We will make all these commitments and promises because now we have the money, which we have taken off you." But people do forget that. Do government members think that they will be believed? No, they will not be. They have zero credibility, and that lack of credibility is expanding throughout the community of Western Australia. This government will be a one-term wonder. All the backbenchers in this house should stand up in their caucus room and represent the communities that they are meant to represent in regional Western Australia. They need to be heard because their silence will cost them their seats

Hon James Chown; Hon Martin Pritchard; Deputy President; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Nick Goiran; Acting President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Martin Aldridge; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Colin Holt

---

in this place. I do not have to guarantee that because I know it! It is exemplified by a sign that people see as they drive into Moora. I have never seen it happen before. Each regional town has a sign that states the name of the town, and underneath Moora's sign is another handwritten sign that states, "Do not vote for D. West". I have never seen it—never.

**Hon Darren West:** Did you put it there?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** No, I would not do that. That would be the most dishonourable thing to do, Hon Darren West. Nobody has taken down that sign. That is an indication to me of the sentiment in regional Western Australia, especially in the Agricultural Region, about this government's behaviour. This government has two years to improve. Its backbenchers have two years to make a difference in their caucus room to the Agricultural Region and regional Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT:** Order! Honourable members, there is far too much interaction going on around the chamber. I suggest that we get through this process with a minimum of fuss. I am listening to Hon Jim Chown. I suggest that other members do so, too.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** At this stage, you have failed, and by goodness, when you fail to the depths that you are going, it will be a hard, hard climb to get out of the bottom of the sink.

*Point of Order*

**Hon PIERRE YANG:** According to standing order 35(1)(c), Hon Jim Chown shall address you, Mr Acting President, rather than the rest of Parliament.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Dr Steve Thomas):** The honourable member is correct; that is what standing order 35(1)(c) states. My understanding is that Hon Jim Chown was addressing me. In fact, I had cleared the air to make sure that he was free to do so, and he will continue to do so for another five minutes and 55 seconds.

*Debate Resumed*

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** As I was saying, once a person gets down into the grease trap of life, and this government is almost there, it is almost impossible and takes a supreme effort —

**Hon Stephen Dawson** interjected.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT:** Order, members! Honourable members, it is not my intention to let the standard that had improved deteriorate in the last five minutes and now 38 seconds. Given the discussions held earlier, I suggest that members on my right would be wise to not interject and I urge Hon Jim Chown to make sure that he does not encourage that to happen. He will address his remarks to the Chair.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I am getting tired from hopping up and down!

As I said, when a government has to crawl its way out of that grease trap, those pipes get pretty damn slippery and it is a real struggle. This government has two years to win back the confidence of all Western Australians, especially regional Western Australians. Government standards have been a theme here for at least a week, and I imagine that discussion will carry on. My advice to government members is to adopt some standards, to hold themselves to those standards and to ensure that those standards are maintained.

**HON COLIN HOLT (South West) [11.39 am]:** I was listening very intently to Hon Jim Chown's contribution.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** Does the member reckon he is pretty much home and hosed for the next election?

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** No, I was reflecting on the fact the he used the term "grease trap". I am not sure that many members would understand what an old grease trap was all about. When I was a naughty boy, I used to get banished from home and told to sit on the grease trap: "Get around the back and sit on the grease trap until you're allowed to come back." It was a nice little concrete box at 55 James Street, Goomalling, if I remember correctly—anyway, that is very interesting.

I will focus on this budget of choices and priorities. I have no problem with parties coming into government and implementing their choices and priorities. When a party wins government, that is what it does, but it also needs to live by its choices and priorities. I do not agree with all the choices and priorities of this government, and it is my job to point out my position on those. Without a doubt, the choices and priorities of this government are around metropolitan Perth. There has been by far and away a bigger contribution and focus on its unfunded election promises on public transport, Metronet and services in metropolitan Perth; there has been much, much less of a focus on support for regional Western Australia. We have heard lots of arguments in this place about regional education cuts—I will not repeat them—but they are a great example of if governments are focused on regional development, they will choose to support things like Moora college. Although the Schools of the Air cuts were

Hon James Chown; Hon Martin Pritchard; Deputy President; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Nick Goiran; Acting President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Martin Aldridge; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Colin Holt

---

reversed, they showed that this government thinks it can take services away from regional Western Australia to implement its choices and priorities in metropolitan Perth.

I was really interested in an article in the *Bunbury Herald* on 15 May that quoted Hon Mick Murray, member for Collie–Preston, which read —

... the funding announced for the South West was an improvement for the region compared to previous budgets.

“The \$406 million, that is almost half a billion dollars for the South West, that makes up for four years when previously under Royalties for Regions we missed out badly,” he said.

I asked the Minister for Environment, representing the Treasurer, whether he could provide a breakdown of the \$406 million that the member for Collie–Preston had talked about. He obliged, but the breakdown did not include a lot of detail. It was broken down into things such as \$13 million for the Bunbury Water Corporation and \$12.3 million for Busselton Water, which I am sure are community service obligations. Almost \$118 million will go to the Commissioner of Main Roads; that is obviously a replacement for consolidated funding into the regional road network. The Water Corporation will get \$116.7 million; again, I guess that is a community service obligation. I was also provided some extra information, which was —

(1) The Department of Health has advised of an additional \$22.2 million of asset investment in the South West region ... following the publication of the ... Budget.

(2) The Water Corporation has advised of an additional \$129.8 million of asset investment in the South West region over the period 2018–19 to 2021–22 following the publication of the 2018–19 Budget.

That is another \$130 million for the south west as per the sum announced by Hon Mick Murray.

My argument is that the Bunbury and Busselton water corporations’ service obligations are as they existed before this budget and under previous governments, as are those of the Water Corporation. Given this list, I am not sure where the extra funding over and above normal consolidated expenditure is. If members are interested, that was question on notice 1316. Other funding is listed in that answer, including for the Southern Ports Authority, \$3 million; and the WA Police Force, \$8 million—that is for Capel police station. Members have before raised in this place whether Capel police station is needed. I have asked questions of the minister representing the Minister for Police about that. I asked whether the Minister for Police had received any advice from the police department on whether this was a good use of money to deliver police services to the people of Capel and the south west. The minister did not receive any advice from the police department. I would have thought that if the government was going build a police station, it might ask the police service whether it wanted a police station in Capel.

**Hon Tjorn Sibma:** You don’t do that!

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** But the government did not. Do members know why? Because it was an election commitment, and they are never questioned by departments.

My personal view on a police station in Capel is that I would much rather see for \$8 million an increased police presence around the streets of Capel and Dalyellup than people sitting behind a desk at Capel police station. I asked a question about the extra resources that will be required by the south west policing district to man that police station. The answer was that none had been allocated at that point in time. Okay; it is for future budgets after it has been built. I also have to question whether it will just be a building—keep the lights on, show them we kept the election commitment, but no-one will be in there. If people knock on the door, there will probably be no-one home, because guess what? The police servicing it will probably be in their car, driving around the streets providing a policing presence—a community policing approach to fighting crime where it occurs, which is not in a police station. Anyway, that is on the list of the \$406 million funding.

Others include the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, which will get \$11.5 million. Maybe that is to finally get Lake Kepwari open, which we have heard about. I have great sympathy for the member for Collie–Preston on this. When he came out during the election and promised to have it open within six months, we all thought it was a big call. I remember trying to work with the South West Development Commission to get it open, and every time I rang the CEO, he would say, “Oh, two weeks, mate. It will be open in two weeks.” That went on for four years! In the end it formed another committee to try to get it open. Guess what? It still is not open. We are still struggling along and it is not open. Maybe this \$11.5 million will go towards some of that.

The Department of Education will get \$78.7 million. There will be some school upgrades in the south west that are absolutely needed. That is a good outcome. I would say it is also probably paying for some of those education assistants who were formerly paid for through the consolidated education fund; royalties for regions has probably been considered in that mix, too.

Hon James Chown; Hon Martin Pritchard; Deputy President; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Nick Goiran; Acting President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Martin Aldridge; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Colin Holt

---

It is all about choice and priorities. Although the government says royalties for regions still exists—we know it exists as a fund because it is in legislation—we also know that it is all about how it is spent. The government of the day has control of that spend and we know where it is being spent: on community service obligations. Over \$1 billion has now been transferred out of the royalties for regions account to cover community service obligations.

Hon Darren West is very proud of the fact that Labor has many more MPs representing Western Australia.

**Hon Darren West:** We do, yes.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** I know the member is very proud of it. Unfortunately, that group of MPs are letting down their constituents by allowing this to occur without standing up and saying that it is not fair. That shift of service obligations really means that the regional development part of royalties for regions has been greatly diminished. Although it was formerly a \$4 billion program, it is now a \$3 billion program that has to deliver the regional development outcomes it was started for. It has been greatly diminished.

I will move on to a couple of specific issues that I think are worth talking about. One is around the shift in the tourism focus from the last government to this government. We are well aware that taking a selfie with a quokka is all the rage; I note that the Save Moora College campaign has adopted the quokka selfie. That is probably a good strategy. Again, the tourism focus has absolutely shifted. Although this government is investing more in tourism, it is definitely focused on tourism in the metropolitan areas. I want to give a black and white example of that in the form of a welcome message from the Minister for Tourism and the Minister for Regional Development when they gave out funding under the regional events scheme. That is a great initiative. I am a strong believer that if we can provide events for tourism to wrap around, it gives people a reason to visit towns not only for their natural beauty and the enjoyment factor, but also to be involved in an event. I have been involved in Blues at Bridgetown for a long time and I am aware of the benefit it brings to that town. We have seen the same benefits from the Nannup Music Festival, the Boyup Brook Country Music Festival, the folk festival in Nannup and the Manjimup Cherry Harmony Festival. These are great events that attract people to the towns and give those towns a boost. In the welcome message, the Minister for Tourism said that in 2016, the tourism industry in Western Australia was worth about \$10 billion and that the state government had made a great contribution, with \$5.3 billion of that amount spent in the Perth metropolitan area and \$4.7 billion spent in regional Western Australia. That is roughly a 50–50 split. He also referred to the “State Government Strategy for Tourism in Western Australia 2020”. This strategy aims to lift tourism numbers and the tourism spend in Western Australia. We often talk about tourism as being the saviour of all communities when something goes wrong. It is not; we know that. It requires hard work and sometimes a lot of money is spent for very little gain. We have to be in the marketplace and hope that it pays off in the long term.

The aim of strategy 2020 is to lift the \$10 billion tourism benefit to \$12 billion, which is a 20 per cent increase. That is a great idea. We should invest in tourism. We need to get more people to WA. We have suffered at the hands of other states doing it better than we have when it comes to the international market. We have not paid enough attention to the interstate market. We need to do that. Of that \$2 billion increase, \$7.25 million will go to metropolitan Perth and \$4.75 million will go to regional Western Australia. That \$2 billion, or 20 per cent, increase comprises a 36 per cent lift in benefit for the Perth metropolitan area. Guess how much the benefit will be for regional Western Australia? The budget has increased from \$4.7 billion to \$4.75 billion. That is an increase of one per cent. Clearly, even in its own words, the focus on the government’s tourism strategy is getting people to Perth, with no flow-over into regional Western Australia. The government wants to lift the tourism benefit to \$12 billion. The benefit to the Perth metropolitan region will climb by nearly \$2 billion while the regional Western Australia slice of that will rise by \$500 000. Maybe I got my maths wrong; it is \$0.05 billion, or whatever that is.

**Hon Darren West:** It’s an increase.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** Does Hon Darren West agree that the tourism strategy for the metropolitan area equates to a one per cent increase in the regions or would he rather see a higher increase?

**Hon Darren West:** We’re spending more on regional tourism than the last government did.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** That is not the spend; they are the benefits. There is nothing about spending here. We do not know what the spend is. It will rise by one per cent.

One of the challenges in the south west is the Busselton–Margaret River airport, a project that was well supported by the previous government, almost to the point that we got there but not quite. To my mind, that is a key project that will help boost tourism numbers and tourism figures in the south west region, which is absolutely screaming out for it. That project has been on the list for a long time. The previous government committed to it and it is almost there.

Hon James Chown; Hon Martin Pritchard; Deputy President; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Nick Goiran; Acting President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Martin Aldridge; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Colin Holt

---

We have seen things such as the unfortunate shark presence in the south west, which caused the cancellation of the Margaret River Pro. We have also heard this government talk about expanding, which is an interesting word, the Margaret River Gourmet Escape, which is perfectly focused around Margaret River and Busselton in the south west. However, that is not good enough and now the government is going to make sure that it takes some of that funding and plugs it into the Swan Valley. Again, that is an indication of the priorities and choices of this government. This was raised in the region. I have an article from the *Augusta Margaret River Times* dated 11 May and headed “‘Gateway to regions’ plan”. It was written by Warren Hatley and states —

The State Government says the most useful way to help Margaret River’s tourism woes is to promote Perth as the gateway to the regions.

Tourism Minister Paul Papalia told the *Times* Tourism WA’s recently adopted two-year action plan and a pending interstate campaign highlighting the Margaret River region were the Government’s response to a worrying decline in visitation numbers—not helped by the recent furore over shark numbers and last month’s cancellation of the Margaret River Pro. Mr Papalia also shot down snipers, claiming an overdue rejig of the Margaret River Gourmet Escape would dilute focus on the region—by extending events to Perth and the Swan Valley—was “baseless”.

I do not agree with that; I am pretty sure it has plenty of base. It continues —

“Despite recent false claims and commentary, Margaret River is a world-class food and wine destination that will remain the central location for the bigger and broader culinary event being developed,” Mr Papalia said.

“The claims are baseless and serve no purpose other than undermining the event.”

That is his opinion but I would proffer that the gateway to the region, especially around Augusta–Margaret River, might well be the Busselton–Margaret River airport. That is why we built it—to get people to come in there directly. I know there are some challenges attracting an airline there, which is why we have to work hard with the region and service providers to land that outcome. I have asked a number of questions in this house about what has been done to assist Busselton shire, which is at the forefront of the project, the tourism operators down there and the South West Development Commission and what support will be given towards landing a service provider into Margaret River. I asked a question of the Minister for Regional Development on 14 March along those lines. She stated in her answer —

I thank the member for the question. This project includes over \$56 million of state government funding that we committed to in the last budget, so we are absolutely committed to ensuring that the money is spent wisely and delivers benefit for taxpayers. Over the last 12 months, we have been working closely with the City of Busselton to ensure that this project can be delivered within the allocated budget. In August last year, I appointed Mr Nick Belyea as chair of the South West Development Commission. Mr Belyea has significant airline industry experience and tourism experience and has been liaising directly with airlines and providing direct support and advice to me and the City of Busselton. The state government, through the South West Development Commission, has been working in partnership with the City of Busselton’s airline attraction working group to attract and secure an airline to deliver services between Busselton and the east coast. We understand that only one major airline group is considering the route in the short term, and we expect a response from it by the end of the month.

That answer was given in March 2018. It continues —

The South West Development Commission has also been working with the city to undertake a preliminary assessment of future opportunities for freight from Busselton into Asian markets.

Since that time we have heard no announcement. We have not had an update from the working group or the South West Development Commission on where the project is at. Mr Belyea, with his significant industry experience in airlines and tourism, is a great asset and I hope he is bringing it to the table to ensure that that project, which was slated to include interstate visitors, gets to that point.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** You need to get an airline to agree. We can’t make an airline agree. We are trying. The problem is that we need to get an airline to agree.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** Hon Alannah MacTiernan’s point is that the government is trying; my point is that it is not trying hard enough.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** No.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** I can make that assumption.

Hon James Chown; Hon Martin Pritchard; Deputy President; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Nick Goiran; Acting President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Martin Aldridge; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Colin Holt

---

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** The problem was your business plan; it was a cut and paste of everything good that had ever been written about Busselton.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** Here we are now with a pause on the project, as requested by this state government, until it lands that outcome. The government needs to get on with the job. It needs to stop pressing pause, to finish the project and to land an outcome. The Busselton–Margaret River airport is the gateway to that region. It is not Perth and that is the whole purpose of it.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** We want it to work, member, but we have to be responsible. We would want nothing more than an airline agreeing that they would want to fly into Busselton. We absolutely want that to happen. It's not the Soviet Union; we can't make it happen.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** Thank you for that.

Just recently, an article in the *Busselton–Dunsborough Mail* of Wednesday, 13 June, “State asks for city’s interests back”, states —

THE state government have asked the city to return interest accrued from Royalties for Regions funding allocated to the Busselton foreshore redevelopment.

The city received \$4.5 million in June 2016, and as of May this year had accrued \$102,808 in interest.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** I hope you can ask me this question in estimates because I am very, very happy and keen to give a full answer to that.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** The member can do that without me asking a question in estimates.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** I don't want to be disorderly, but the practice of chucking money out before business —

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** The minister does not have to do it now; she can make a ministerial statement whenever she likes. I might ask the minister another question in estimates. How much in penalty rates is the Busselton shire paying because of a pause to the Augusta–Margaret River—what am I trying to say?

**Hon Colin Tincknell:** Busselton airport expansion.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** Thanks. It is the Busselton–Margaret River airport expansion. I got there. I was confused.

Members might be interested to know whether the government is paying penalties because that project has been paused. That also might be a good question for estimates.

Interestingly, we know the tourism minister recently announced a good deal for Broome with subsidised airlines. It is a good deal for Broome; good on it. Broome struggles for tourism numbers just like the rest of regional Western Australia. It is a good outcome for Broome. When will the government put the same effort into other regions such as Albany, Esperance, Busselton, Port Hedland and Kalgoorlie? We need the same sort of effort put into other regions of the state.

I want to talk now about a couple of election commitments that I have not seen come to fruition. I cannot quite understand when they will occur. They are about the train services to Bunbury in the south west. In the election campaign the Labor Party specifically released a plan for train services to Bunbury as part of its election platform. I will read a little from it —

Western Australians love the Australind. It's a South West icon.

However the Australind service in 2016 is only 45 minutes faster than it was 70 years ago.

It just hasn't kept up with other 21st century transport nor delivered the economic benefits to the South West that it could.

We can do better.

That's why we need a real plan to will revitalise Bunbury to Perth travel. We will modernise the passenger experience and provide a more direct service.

It is signed by Mark McGowan, WA Labor leader. I think it is a great idea; we need an upgraded passenger service. I have no complaint about the policy. I will break it down a bit. I am kind of curious about when it will be delivered and where it is at. In a bit more detail in the executive summary it states —

**A McGowan Labor Government will:**

- Invest in new rail cars to revitalise the Australind train service.

I have asked questions in this place about that. That is on track, so that gets a tick —

Hon James Chown; Hon Martin Pritchard; Deputy President; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Nick Goiran; Acting President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Martin Aldridge; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Colin Holt

---

- Upgrade smaller regional stations between Bunbury and Perth where necessary, especially in terms of disability access.

I absolutely agree with that. Three stations have never been upgraded—Cookernup, Yarloop and North Dandalup. I have been campaigning on that for a while. The last government committed to it and we are completing the build for the Yarloop station right now. I will come back to those stations in a minute. It continues —

- Develop specific tourism packages for Bunbury, Collie and the surrounding communities linked to a revitalised Australind Service.

Maybe that is where the increased benefit will come from for regional tourism. It will be from the specific tourism packages for Bunbury and Collie based on the revitalised *Australind* service. But I doubt it because we do not have the revitalised *Australind* service just yet. It continues —

- Provide an additional no stop Australind service between Bunbury and Perth and vice-versa.

There is a massive challenge in this. Given the amount of freight traffic on that rail line and that the *Australind* runs four times a day, how an additional non-stop service can be delivered is yet to be explained and defined. How the government is working on it is yet to be revealed. It continues —

- Work with the private leaseholders to improve signalling and increase passing loops between Mundijong and Perth.
- Plan and determine route definition to develop a long-term plan for a fast train to Bunbury.

I absolutely agree. We had a similar policy that we thought was aspirational and should be delivered in the future. It continues —

- Consult with the City of Bunbury and local community to confirm a site for a train station closer to the City centre.

There is a heap of controversy about exactly where that would go. At one stage, the government suggested that it could be on the abandoned Parks and Wildlife site, which is further away from town than the existing train, but it might be a close call. It continues —

- Allocate an initial \$30 million to a Rail Futures Fund, to start the program of revamping the service.

I am sure that is where the new railcars and the upgrade to the stations will come from. Lastly —

- Include the Mundijong–Perth section of the Australind Service as part of METRONET, WA Labor’s long-term, integrated transport plan.

That is for metropolitan Perth.

I have no issues with the election commitments, but I would like to know how we will get there. On 30 November last year, I asked the minister representing the Minister for Transport to give us an update on how it was going. I asked —

I refer to the government’s election commitment of \$32 million to deliver a revitalised *Australind* rail service.

- (1) Has Transwa commenced its review into how to deliver a faster *Australind* service to Bunbury, as promised?
- (2) If so, when will the review be completed and will the review be made public?
- (3) When will be the upgrades for the Yarloop, Cookernup and North Dandalup stations be completed to ensure they are compliant with modern Disability Discrimination Act standards?
- (4) Will the minister commit that all stations serviced by the *Australind* service will remain open?

That reflects the policy I have just read out. I asked the fourth question because I could not understand how a faster service could be delivered without some of the railway stations being closed. The commitment is in black and white. I asked the question and the answer provided by Hon Stephen Dawson states —

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) As part of the Transwa service review project that commenced in mid-October 2017, the *Australind* timetable is under review in order to provide a faster service between Perth and Bunbury.

It is part of the Transwa service review that started mid-October 2017. It continues —

- (2) The Transwa service review is due for completion in February 2018. —

I repeat: February 2018 —

The infrastructure review will commence pending federal support.

According to the answer to my question, there now seem to be two reviews. One is a Transwa service review, which was completed in February 2018, and the other is the infrastructure review, which will commence pending federal support. That was the first time we heard about federal support being required for the infrastructure review of that service line. It was never referred to in the promises, but that is pending federal support. I will be interested to see what business plan or submission went to the federal government to support that project. The answer continues —

- (3) Yarloop station is planned for upgrade by August 2018, North Dandalup station by August 2019 and Cookernup station by August 2020.
- (4) There are no plans to close stations.

The government has a real challenge here: how is it going to make the service faster without closing stations when it upgrades some of the smaller stations so that they have universal access? There are two reviews. One is the service review and the other is the infrastructure review. I asked a question on 12 June of the minister representing the Minister for Transport. It states —

I refer to the answers provided by the minister representing the Minister for Transport in response to my question without notice 907 about the Transwa *Australind* service asked on Thursday, 30 November 2017.

- (1) Will the minister please now table the Transwa *Australind* service review that was due for completion in February 2018?

It was defined in the question in November 2017 —

- (2) If not, why not?

The answer states —

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(2) The submission for commonwealth support to investigate infrastructure requirements to improve the Perth–Bunbury rail corridor was unsuccessful. The Public Transport Authority is currently examining alternative options. When the review is complete, the finding will be announced.

The government declared that two reviews were going on. One was a service review and the other was an infrastructure review. I specifically asked about the service review, but the answer I got was —

The submission for commonwealth support to investigate infrastructure requirements to improve the Perth–Bunbury rail corridor was unsuccessful.

Either I am getting confused with my language or the minister who is answering questions on behalf of the Minister for Transport is receiving some mixed information, because I cannot figure out what we are waiting for. The service review commenced in mid-October, yet it did not go ahead because there was no funding from the commonwealth to investigate the infrastructure requirements. It does not make any sense to me. I think the minister responsible probably should ask the minister he represents to explain how that situation came about. Where do the people who live along the rail line in those communities and the people of Bunbury who were promised an upgraded system sit? When will the people of Collie and Bunbury get a specific tourism-focused plan based on a revamped *Australind* service? We are no closer to finding out what it will look like, except that there will be new railcars, which I applaud because they are needed, and three new universal access platforms. We are absolutely no closer to delivering on that promise of a revamp or knowing how it will be used to create tourism opportunities.

I implore the minister to get an explanation about that from the minister he represents, because it is really confusing. I cannot make head or tail of it, and neither can anyone in the south west. I get questions in my office all the time about what is happening with the new *Australind* line, and all I can tell them is that the government has committed to some new railcars, which is part of the big tender—that is good—and it will change some of the platforms, but that is all I know. The answers to the questions I ask in this place continue to confuse the matter.

I want to talk about the platforms for a bit longer because I think it is a pertinent point. I lobbied the previous Minister for Transport for an upgraded platform at Yarloop, just as I have lobbied the current Minister for Transport. The first quote to build a universal access platform with a little ramp to get onto the train at Yarloop was \$700 000. The Public Transport Authority quoted \$700 000 to provide that service. I could not believe it.

Hon James Chown; Hon Martin Pritchard; Deputy President; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Nick Goiran; Acting President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Martin Aldridge; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Colin Holt

---

Someone said to me, “Why don’t you get the community to build one and put it up overnight, because it would probably cost about 70 000 bucks?” Of course, we cannot do that and we cannot encourage that. But a prefabricated ramp could have been trucked in and bolted to the ground—I know it is a bit more complicated than that. It is going to cost \$700 000 for the PTA to deliver a platform, and guess how big the platform will be? It will have a little shelter for three people to stand under. This should be a question for the Minister for Transport. I wrote to the previous Minister for Transport and said, “Do not build a \$700 000 platform. You will be laughed out of town.” I wrote the same letter to the current Minister for Transport and said, “You do not need to build a \$700 000 platform at Yarloop. It is a ridiculous waste of money. Build something that is practical. Surely you can do it for less than that.” I wanted to confirm it, so I asked a question on 16 May of the minister representing the Minister for Transport. It states —

I refer to upgrades to passenger platforms on the *Australind* line.

- (1) Which company is undertaking the work on the platforms?
- (2) Please provide the tender documentation for the building of the platforms.
- (3) Please provide a breakdown of project costings for the new platform at Yarloop on the *Australind* line.
- (4) When will the Cookernup and North Dandalup platforms be upgraded to universal access?

The answer I got was —

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) Work is being carried out using a number of existing Public Transport Authority subcontractors and suppliers under the supervision of the PTA’s network and infrastructure facilities coordinator.

So, there was no tender to build this platform and there are no parameters about how much it will cost. It continues —

- (2) The fabrication work for the Yarloop platform was subject only to a request-for-quote process. A tender process was not required due to the cost of fabrication being under procurement tender thresholds.

I do not know what that is. I have investigated it. It is a good question for the Minister for Transport. The answer continues —

- (3) The breakdown of project costings is: Yarloop design consultancy, \$80 000; —

So, \$80 000 was spent on design consultancy for a platform for three people. This has nothing to do necessarily with the government or the minister. How do we hold departments to account over government funding? We often talk about it in this place. We also talk about the due diligence that is required on spending taxpayers’ money, and it often comes from the government, usually in the form of criticism of the previous government. How is the government checking on these things? The answer continues —

Arc Infrastructure cost allowance, \$50 000; —

That is 50 000 bucks for Arc to manage the rail corridor —

and construction, \$445 000.

That is to construct the platform. That adds up to a total of \$575 000 to build a platform in Yarloop. We need a universal access platform at Yarloop; there is no doubt about that. But surely we could deliver one for less than \$575 000. I followed that up with a question the next day because I was interested to see whether the costs for Cookernup or North Dandalup might be different. I referred to the upgrades to passenger platforms on the *Australind* line and asked for a breakdown of project costings at Cookernup and North Dandalup along the same lines as the question I asked about Yarloop. The answer was —

Costings for these two projects are to be finalised; however, it is estimated that project costs will be similar to the costs indicated for the Yarloop station upgrade.

The government is going to spend another \$80 000 on design work for Cookernup and \$80 000 potentially for design work at North Dandalup. Seriously!

The Public Transport Authority has to be questioned about how it came up with that figure. I can understand the management around the trains—trying to do the work—but I do not understand the cost of \$80 000 for design consultancy for three platforms. That is potentially \$240 000 for design consultancy work on three universal access platforms. The PTA does this every day—you are kidding me! Something is seriously wrong and this has to be

Hon James Chown; Hon Martin Pritchard; Deputy President; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Nick Goiran; Acting President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Martin Aldridge; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Colin Holt

---

taken up with the PTA. Someone has to say, “Please explain how it gets to the point that we are spending \$240 000 on design for three platforms.” I would have expected very similar platforms at three small stations on the *Australind* line. It is astounding.

I want to finish on the Yarloop line because it links back to community resource centres. The government is going to spend \$575 000 on a platform in Yarloop, which will be directly opposite—probably 50 metres, or maybe 100 metres—from the brand-new community resource centre that will be built there. I do not know the exact cost, but it is probably close to half a million to a million dollars. The Yarloop CRC burnt down and the government made a commitment to rebuild the community, as it should. A brand-new community resource centre, using the facade of the old burnt-out town hall, is a great idea and a great project. The Yarloop CRC has played a pivotal role in that community.

**Hon Colin Tincknell** interjected.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** It is particularly unique in the sense that people have gone there because it is a nice place to live. It also attracted people from lower socioeconomic areas because of the cheaper housing. The CRC provided a really great service to meet their needs. They had things in there like a laundromat. People would come and use the laundromat to wash their clothes because they may not have been able to afford a washing machine. I do not think even Harvey has a laundromat. People probably have to go to Pinjarra or Mandurah for the closest laundromat. It is building a brand-new universal access platform. The government is rebuilding the CRC, as it should, but of course the government has cut CRC funding by 50 per cent. Now they will be open only 18 hours a week. While we have put all this effort into developing the community, we are almost taking out a critical part of the social infrastructure of that town by not supporting the CRC.

I will talk about the commitment to sell the TAB. The previous government was heavily criticised for not bringing it to a head and for not removing the uncertainty around the industry. Another year later, this is the government’s second budget and it is still kicking the can down the road. There is no certainty about where this is going. In the meantime, Racing and Wagering Western Australia, through the profits of the TAB and other means—through race field fees and things; it is complicated—continues to spend the industry’s money on maintaining its betting platforms. This budget shows that RWWA’s asset investment program in 2018–19 will invest \$13.5 million in asset upgrades. It is spending \$13.5 million of the industry’s money on its asset investment program. The items include business systems and products, \$3 million; other works, \$1.6 million—I asked about that during estimates—and racing systems, infrastructure and minor capital, \$1 million. Again, we will see what they are. There is also \$700 000 for its retail outlet upgrade program. That is upgrades to its TAB network. Who knows—the government might be selling them but we are spending \$700 000 on upgrades. It will spend \$7.1 million on wagering systems and products. RWWA is spending the industry’s money to remain competitive in the market. It has to do that to remain competitive. If it is out-competed in the digital platforms by the big wagering operators, it will lose market share. It has to do something to maintain it to make sure the TAB is of value. But let us get some certainty. Let us start moving on this thing. We had a debate in this house 12 months ago calling for it. This house supported the government to investigate an immediate sale so that we could end the uncertainty, so that we could deliver certainty of funding back into the racing industry and we could stop RWWA spending money like this when in actual fact these systems upgrades will be defunct if a new operator ever comes in. Let us move to that policy position. The former government was heavily criticised for taking too much time. This government has done nothing else. It probably reflects the minister’s interest in the racing industry because he is not pushing it and he is not doing anything else. He is not standing up for the industry to make sure it gets a better outcome.

I want to talk about the point-of-consumption wagering tax, which has now been in two budgets. It is slated to be introduced by 1 January 2019. In roughly six months’ time, the government is going to introduce a point-of-consumption wagering tax as flagged in two consecutive budgets. That is going to take legislation, yet we have not seen any. I do not even know whether it is being drafted. We have not actually seen the details of what the point-of-consumption wagering tax is. It will be a real challenge for the government. I asked the minister representing the Minister for Racing and Gaming a question without notice about this on 11 April this year. I think it was answered by Hon Stephen Dawson at the time because the representative minister was away on urgent parliamentary business. I asked —

I refer to the point-of-consumption wagering tax.

- (1) How much does Treasury expect the tax to raise in its first full year after implementation?
- (2) What does Treasury expect to be the direct financial impact of the tax on the racing industry in its first full year after implementation?

Hon Stephen Dawson replied —

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

Hon James Chown; Hon Martin Pritchard; Deputy President; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Nick Goiran; Acting President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Martin Aldridge; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Colin Holt

---

- (1) As noted in budget paper No 3 of Western Australia's state budget 2017–18, Treasury expects the point-of-consumption tax will have a net impact —

I assume net increase —

on general government operating revenue of \$39.7 million following the abolition of existing betting taxes and \$20.7 million on the net operating balance, taking into account an additional \$19 million in funding to the racing industry.

- (2) Once industry is provided the additional \$19 million in funding, Treasury expects that there will be no direct financial impact on the racing industry from the point-of-consumption tax. This is consistent with the undertaking on page 80 of budget paper No 3 of Western Australia's state budget 2017–18, which committed to provide funding to the racing industry to offset any direct material financial impacts that the point-of-consumption tax may have on the industry.

For the lay people: I asked what does the government expect to raise out of the point-of-consumption tax and what will it give back to the industry. The government is going to abolish some taxes, but it said it will raise \$39.7 million. I am sure that that is based—it has been set out in the budget papers—on a 15 per cent point-of-consumption tax rate. The government knows exactly what it is because it has been in two budgets now. The government has committed to 15 per cent. It has done all its modelling and predictions on it. It knows how much it will give back to the racing industry and how much it will keep. I have a different view on how much the government should keep, but that is an argument for another day.

There has been some pressure on that rate in the last few months. That was probably started, unfortunately, by our racing industry friends in Victoria. I will go back a step. Every state made a commitment to look at implementing a 15 per cent tax, as the South Australians did about a year ago. Unfortunately, the South Australian government decided to implement a 15 per cent tax but never gave anything back to the racing industry. The South Australian racing industry is suffering from that decision. If we are going to collect the tax from the industry, we have to give it back to the racing industry. That is one point. There was general agreement around this. I know that the minister responsible met with his counterparts to discuss it because I asked questions about that as well. Unfortunately, the Victorians have come out with an eight per cent point-of-consumption tax. If members really want to look into it, there is a group called Responsible Wagering Australia, which is headed up by a couple of former federal members of Parliament who are lobbying state governments to make sure that the tax is not at 15 per cent but at eight per cent. The Victorians fell for it and reduced the tax from 15 per cent to eight per cent because they are so entwined with the bookmakers—Ladbrokes is one of the major sponsors for one of the tracks, bet365 is another, and CrownBet is also greatly involved. That is a great kick for the corporate bookmakers that are stationed in the Northern Territory. This tax came about because those Northern Territory wagering operators were not contributing to the industry as they should. The point-of-consumption tax is a great strategy—I absolutely agree with its implementation. It is a great way to make sure that those corporate bookmakers, which were not doing enough for the industry that they use extensively, give back to the industry. I absolutely agree with the point-of-consumption tax. Then, unfortunately, New South Wales came out just last week or early this week and said that it would have a 10 per cent point-of-consumption tax. The rug is starting to be pulled out. We have a budget statement that states that WA is committed to a 15 per cent point-of-consumption tax. I urge the government to maintain that stance. We want this imposed on the corporate bookmakers, which can afford it and which use their profits to undermine the Western Australian TAB. They use the profits they make from this state to undermine our own betting operator, which presents as much as it can back to the industry. The other states are giving them a free kick. We should not give them a free kick; we should stick to 15 per cent. It worries me, because on 24 May there was an article in *The West Australian* by Daniel Mercer headed “WA backtracks on betting tax”. It states —

WA's shaky finances are facing a hit after Racing Minister Paul Papalia conceded that a planned new tax on punters may have to be watered down to compete with other States.

Budget papers do not mean much, or not enough! The minister is going to water it down because of pressure from other states.

**Hon Stephen Dawson:** You are getting cynical.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** I am getting cynical.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** Things change and events change.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** I know that. I am just urging the government to back itself.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** These things are outside the control of the minister.

Hon James Chown; Hon Martin Pritchard; Deputy President; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Nick Goiran; Acting President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Martin Aldridge; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Colin Holt

---

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** I am just urging the government to back its stance in the budget papers.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** You can understand what happens if you do that.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** The government should get some advice from someone other than Responsible Wagering Australia on the impact. It should consult properly, because up to this point there has been no consultation with the industry except through Racing and Wagering Western Australia's designated board. We do not hear anything out of them. There is no consultation. I know that there is some stuff beginning now, but up to this point we have not got any further down the track. This was announced two budgets ago. We have some legislation to pass to bring this into effect from 1 January 2019. It is about time the government started to reveal what is going on.

I want to finish with a couple of observations. I thank the government for continuing to budget for a couple of very important projects in the south west. The Myalup–Wellington project was a commitment of the government, for which I thank it. We finally got there in the end in terms of some welcome federal funding. Also in the budget is the southern forests irrigation project. Again, we need to put pressure back on the federal government to come to the party to help fund that. I was really interested in a contribution by Hon Dr Steve Thomas in a debate around support for irrigation, which I think was brought on by Hon Rick Mazza. Hon Dr Steve Thomas basically said that the funding was delivered by the member for Forrest and that it was only her good work that delivered the outcome. I am pretty sure that is in *Hansard* if members want to look at it. I am not sure that everyone agrees with him. Harvey Water, which is the custodian of a great deal of that project, has written to members of the National Party for a start. It has probably written to the minister herself to thank her. Harvey Water wrote to Hon Mia Davies, saying —

On behalf of the Members, Board and Management of Harvey Water, we would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for your part in securing the funding necessary to deliver the Myalup–Wellington project.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** I love these blue on green wars; keep it going! It is hand-to-hand combat.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** I would like to table that letter.

Leave granted. [See paper 1429.]

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** Was that a representation she made to Barnaby Joyce?

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** And others; we met with them all. All lobbying and advocacy in Canberra for Western Australian projects is welcome as far as I am concerned. I recognise the member for Forrest's contribution to that outcome. She was integrally involved in that advocacy. I would like to remind members of this house that that project was able to get funding from the federal government because the previous state government actually developed the project.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** But it did actually reject the submission that had been put in by your government. We had to rewrite it and resubmit it.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** The project was instigated by the previous government. The only reason the federal government could fund a project of that scale was because we started the process. The member for Forrest, as a local federal member, absolutely saw the benefits of that project for her local area and advocated strongly for it, but it existed because the previous state government, and this government, had created a project for the federal government to invest in. We should not forget that. The challenge now, of course, is for the member for O'Connor to advocate strongly for the southern forests irrigation scheme.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** Correct.

**Hon COLIN HOLT:** We finally agree! Again, where was his advocacy in this space in terms of landing that project, which is actually just as good as the Myalup–Wellington project? It is probably more defined and easier to deliver; the Myalup–Wellington one is very difficult. Where is his advocacy for that project so that he can stand up and say, "Everything that has been done now is because I stood up and advocated for it"? I would love him to stand up and say that it was because of him, as the member for O'Connor, that this funding was given to the southern forests irrigation scheme. I would like nothing better than for him to do that.

There are a couple of bouquets at the end of my contribution for the government. I know there is plenty of dirt happening. I could talk for a bit longer to highlight some of the good stuff, as well as the challenges. I thank the government for its ongoing support for those projects. The government's challenge is to convince regional Western Australians that it cares. I do not think it has gotten to that point yet.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Hon Ken Baston**.