

Mr Christian Porter; Mr Roger Cook; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr David Templeman; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Peter Tinley

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

Declaration as Urgent

On motion by **Mr C.C. Porter (Treasurer)**, resolved —

That in accordance with standing order 168(2), the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2012–13 Bill 2012 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2012–13 Bill 2012 be considered urgent bills.

Cognate Debate

Leave granted for the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2012–13 Bill 2012 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2012–13 Bill 2012 to be considered cognately, and for the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2012–13 Bill 2012 to be the principal bill.

Second Reading — Cognate Debate

Resumed from 17 May.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.19 pm]: I am very pleased to be the first member on this side to respond to the Treasurer's speech on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2012–13 Bill 2012 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2012–13 Bill 2012, but I note that I am not the lead speaker. That will in fact be the Leader of the Opposition, who will address the chamber tomorrow as he advised earlier. I would like to make some comments about the health component of the state government's budget and reflect, time allowing, on some of the deficiencies that I see in this budget with respect to my electorate of Kwinana.

This health budget can be characterised by disappointment, delays and deficiencies—disappointment in its capacity to respond to the demand on our health system to date and to properly allow for the cost increases; delays in the infrastructure and cancellation of much-needed health infrastructure; and deficiencies in the response to some of the key policy issues confronting our health system today. The minister might be able to stand and quote the Western Australian Council of Social Service regarding some of the broader issues of the budget brought down by the Treasurer, but he cannot quote any of his own health stakeholders in their commentary on the health budget. Indeed, I want to quote the Australian Medical Association from last week. It stated —

The Government has missed the opportunity to future proof WA by failing to provide adequate funding increases, it has missed the opportunity to prepare for a fast growing and ageing population and it has missed the opportunity to provide adequate research funding.

The AMA went on to state —

This is a treading water budget as the health system shows signs of drowning under increasing demand. The proposed overall spending increase of 7.3% will only barely cope with health inflation and will not come close to meeting the massive increases in demand.

These comments really summarise the difficulties that confront this health budget. It has not confronted the issues associated with demand. The 7.3 per cent increase in expenditure that the AMA identifies simply will not adequately provide for the health system into the future. In the out years the government has provided for a 4.1, 4.1, 4.1 increase and then a 4.7 per cent increase in the health budget. This is, quite frankly, inadequate. It is an inadequate response for what will be a tsunami of demand—a demand that the minister himself knows will be forthcoming in the future years.

Let us look at the nature of some of that demand. If we look at the health department's quarterly performance report from January to March this year, we get a snapshot of the sorts of issues impacting on the department. For instance, 10 296 patients were discharged and 133 841 separations took place from January to March this year. That is an 8.3 per cent increase over the same time last year, at a time when this government is providing a 7.3 per cent increase in funding to the health department. There were 17 123 emergency department attendances in the last quarter. That is a 7.5 per cent increase over the same time last year and an 11.6 per cent increase in the metropolitan hospitals alone. Admissions from emergency departments grew by 9.1 per cent, and 10.5 per cent in the metropolitan area alone. Those figures are, in particular, from those hospitals participating in the four-hour rule. We see the same trends happening in Western Australia as happened in the United Kingdom; that is, we are seeing a spike in admissions from EDs as hospitals move to accommodate the demands of the four-hour rule. There was a 9.1 per cent increase in ED presentations for those hospitals undertaking the four-hour rule.

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One would think that the minister, when confronted with these sorts of demand figures, would go to the Treasurer and say, “We cannot have a business-as-usual approach to health.” We cannot tread water, as the AMA has accused the minister of doing on this occasion. We need to bring extra resources to bear to make sure that our hospitals, and the doctors and nurses who work in those hospitals, have the resources they need to meet demand. But the government’s response has not been to meet that demand with extra resources. In fact, there will be cuts to current health programs right across the forward estimates. There will be cuts of over \$100 million in 2012–13, and \$716.4 million over the full budget cycle to 2015–16. That is through the efficiency dividend. However, there will be a further \$32.5 million in extra cuts over the budget cycle. We are seeing the continuation of staff working in a health system with fewer resources and being required to do more with those fewer resources.

The experience of Western Australian families who go to hospitals for services is very different. At the same time as we are seeing this increase in demand, we are seeing a corresponding decrease in the level of services. There has been an increase of only 0.7 per cent in admissions from the elective surgery waitlist. There has been a 3.2 per cent increase in waiting times on the waitlist in the metropolitan area, with a 1.7 per cent increase overall. There has been a corresponding decrease in the number of available active overnight beds—a 7.7 per cent decrease in that area—with a corresponding increase in occupancy rates of 0.8 per cent, taking the figure up to 86.2 per cent. In particular, one of the statistics that is most disturbing is that there has been a huge increase of five per cent in the number of visitations to dental clinics, and the number of people on the dental clinic waitlist has grown by a massive 24.4 per cent to 24 856.

The performance in relation to hospital services is very disturbing. I mentioned the elective surgery waitlist. It is interesting to note that under current performance levels across the first quarter of this calendar year, the government has failed to meet any of the national health partnership targets that it will be measured against at the end of this year for the reward payments for the health system. It is a long way short. If the health department cannot increase its elective surgery performance, we will again lose out with reward payments.

The other area of concern in the health budget is the delays in and the cancellations of health infrastructure. The most notable disappointment that must be felt by the electorate is that once again the government is watering down its commitment to the people in relation to Royal Perth Hospital. The minister has already said that there is a future for Royal Perth Hospital, despite his reluctance to progress the legislation through this place. In particular, we have seen a betrayal of the commitments that those opposite made during the last election campaign to redevelop Royal Perth Hospital as a 400-bed tertiary facility. In this budget we see a delay of the redevelopment in that the eventuation of the commitment of \$22 million towards Royal Perth Hospital will not be until 2014–15—well after the election. The minister often gloats that the commitment to the people regarding Royal Perth Hospital achieved a healthy return for the government at the last election. The sense of betrayal amongst the people in the community who put their faith in this minister that he would redevelop that hospital must be felt quite acutely.

There is a whole range of delays in health infrastructure right across the portfolio; \$229 million in health infrastructure has either been delayed or cancelled. Stage 1 of the reconfiguration of Osborne Park Hospital has been put off to 2014. I think it was first in the 2009 budget estimates hearing that the minister and I asked questions about the redevelopment of Osborne Park Hospital. The Armadale–Kelmscott Memorial Hospital upgrades have been delayed. Harvey Hospital, again, is one of the original hall-of-famers from that first year that the government took a red pen right across hospital infrastructure. We know that the government has already delayed the process as it goes about privatising Midland health campus, and again we see further delays. There are delays to the redevelopment of Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and to one of the great notable exceptions missing from the health debate today, which members will all remember. Remember how we used to talk about the redevelopment of King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women? Remember when the redevelopment of the women’s hospital on the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre site was discussed in relation to the redevelopment of health infrastructure in Western Australia? It was an important part of the Reid review and an important part of Con Michael’s review into maternity services—I think that was in the 1990s—and still that hospital languishes and has been all but forgotten in this budget.

Dr K.D. Hames: Not forgotten, but Jim McGinty put it off before we came to government; he put it back, but the funds were not there to do it.

Mr R.H. COOK: Once again, we hear the minister continually blaming previous governments for his own deficiencies. If it is a priority for the government, why has the minister completely neglected to even mention that hospital in any of his recent statements on the redevelopment of hospital infrastructure?

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 22 May 2012]

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I am completely perplexed about why the government has walked away from the redevelopment of the Karratha hospital. Nickol Bay Hospital services a community that is witnessing extraordinary demand and growth in population, and is a hospital that would surely be part of an important program for the delivery of health services to people in the north west, but, strangely, that hospital is one of the \$229 million worth of health infrastructure that this government has either delayed or cancelled in this budget.

Therefore, this is a budget of disappointments. It treads water at a time that the water level is rising—demand is rising. It is a budget of delays. It is a budget that puts off almost \$230 million worth of capital expenditure. Some of these hospitals have been crying out, or have been in the pipeline, for redevelopment for some time. Osborne Park Hospital must surely go down as a downgrade nowadays because it has been waiting for redevelopment for so long. Harvey Hospital is another one of these hospitals that for some reason just cannot get on the minister's radar. I cannot imagine what the member for Murray–Wellington did to the Minister for Health to deserve that treatment of his hospital. The Esperance Hospital redevelopment limps on as more money is put into planning, whatever that might mean, because that is another hospital redevelopment delayed in this minister's first budget and he has continued to plan it to death ever since. I can only imagine that the National Party must be sharpening its teeth at the political opportunity that that must provide in the lead-up to the next election! The member for Eyre will have the Minister for Health to thank for one of those great weaknesses in defending his seat. Although the National Party focuses its crosshairs on the member for Eyre, it is the Minister for Health who has been negligent in progressing that hospital redevelopment.

This is also a budget of deficiencies. There are deficiencies in a range of areas, but I will particularly talk about the response in relation to child health nurses. I want in the first instance to acknowledge that the minister at least recognised that he had a political problem on his hands and needed to respond to the crisis in relation to child health nurses. Indeed, when this was first announced in the budget, we thought that the government had at least in part done a not-too-bad effort to respond to the shortage of 150 child health nurses. But what we have since learnt is that this is also his response to school-based nurses and community child health nurses. I note, for instance, that the Education and Health Standing Committee report of 21 May 2009 identified that there was a need for —

... 126 full-time equivalent (FTE) in the Child Development Service, 105 FTE Community Child Health Nurses and 135 FTE for School Nurses.

Therefore, in fact, the minister has not responded with funding for 100 child health nurses; this is the government's response to the crisis right across these community health services. So it will be some time before we will see an improvement in these services, particularly given that the large part of this funding takes place in the out years.

Also of note in relation to the funding for child health nurses is that rather than being an opportunity to bolster the public sector and public health services, the minister has tagged a range of these positions to be moved into the not-for-profit sector, or the other aspect of this government's policy agenda—privatisation. We now have child health nurses being privatised on top of the government's efforts in relation to Midland health campus and on top of the \$202.5 million that will be tipped into Serco's coffers over the next couple of years as that facility's management contract starts to rev up.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr R.H. COOK: But if the government responded to child health nurses, because even the minister could see that that was a political crisis that he could not ignore, I am at a complete loss to work out why there are no explicit measures in this budget to respond to the workforce crisis that is impacting on our health system today and will be the single biggest challenge facing our health system into the coming years. The national report into our health workforce reported that by 2025, we will be 109 000 nurses and 2 007 doctors short right across our health system nationally. The difficulties we have in Western Australia are compounded by the fact that the minister will soon have to do a major fit-out of staff at Fiona Stanley Hospital. Therefore, why do we not have some statement from this government that demonstrates that it has a handle on what will be the single biggest challenge facing our health system? The Australian Medical Association has put up what many in the health sector regard as one of the single biggest instruments to address the workforce shortage—that is, to increase our state-funded medical research. I have spoken at length in this place about the important role that medical research plays in not only improving our clinical services and the range of research that goes on in this place and therefore puts Western Australian patients at the forefront of clinical excellence, but also attracting the best and brightest people that our health sector has to offer. A major effort in medical research will make sure that we attract and retain the best possible specialists in this state. As the Cancer Council has stated on a number of occasions, many of our young, best and brightest medical research graduates are voting with their feet and moving to other states, particularly Queensland, where the state medical research funding is higher and where

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the opportunities to access national research funding are greater and they are more hopeful of progressing their careers. We have a brain drain from Western Australia, and nothing in this budget actually suggests that the government has a handle on this issue of workforce attraction and retention or on how we boost our medical research effort. I note that the government has, in part, tried to respond to the crisis in our cancer services with, I think, six extra oncology staff, but there is no commitment to those particular staff or to expand the cancer services workforce into the future. The only thing we have from this government on the health workforce issues that confront it now and into the future is a statement by the Minister for Health back in November 2011 in which he said —

I would like to reassure the people of Western Australia that we have extensive, sophisticated and detailed workforce planning in place.

The minister is essentially asking us to accept his assurances that everything is in hand and under control, and that we need not worry ourselves about that single issue confronting the health system in Western Australia. We do not accept those assurances and I today call on the minister to table the workforce planning strategies that he and the department have drawn up and are pursuing to ensure that, first, we have the workforce we need to meet the demands of the health system today; second, that we have the workforce development strategies to ensure that we have the workforce to meet the demands of our health system tomorrow; and third, that we have the workforce strategy in place to ensure that we can equip Fiona Stanley Hospital with the staff it needs to take its place as our flagship premier tertiary hospital. We know that this minister has in part watered down his commitment to Fiona Stanley Hospital with his equivocation around the provision of trauma services and, indeed, the ambiguity around the cardiothoracic services at Fiona Stanley Hospital. But we call upon the minister to at least make a commitment to staffing at Fiona Stanley Hospital by tabling and making public the workforce strategy that he and the department have adopted to ensure that we have the staff to meet the demands of our health system into the future. That is the bare minimum that the minister should do to provide evidence that he is taking this debate seriously.

The government's health budget fails to respond with funding levels for the demands of the future. We have a health system that is struggling to provide the level of services that demand requires. That is why this budget is disappointing. We have more delays and cancellations in the redevelopment of vital health infrastructure. Essentially, we see this government stalling in its projection of infrastructure renewal to ensure that our health system has in place the sort of mechanisms and facilities it needs to meet demand into the future. We have deficiencies in this government's responses to the challenges of the future. It is good to see in this budget some extra child health nurses, but it is disappointing that they will be spread across a wider set of services than we were originally led to believe. It is disappointing that the government's privatisation agenda will continue to penalise the people of Midland, and the Midland health campus project continues to struggle along as it languishes and is delayed. It is particularly disappointing that the government has comprehensively failed to respond to the challenges set by health stakeholders and health commentators everywhere, one, to increase its state-based medical research effort and, two, to come forward with a workforce development plan that shows it is up to the job of equipping our health system with staff to meet the demand of the future.

I want to conclude by talking briefly about the issues confronting my electorate of Kwinana. My electorate is challenged by extraordinary growth, a lack of services and, in particular, a lack of employment opportunities, by virtue of the changes taking place in the mining industry. This budget indicates a lack of vision from this government for how the big industrial developments such as Latitude 32, Fremantle outer harbour and other crucial infrastructure will be developed so that we can see what will be the future for the development of the local economy in Kwinana. I am particularly interested in this because 60 per cent of the workforce on the Kwinana strip comes from Kwinana and Rockingham. That 60 per cent of people who work in that area depend on the government to have a vision for the Kwinana district and for the way that the industrial area is to be developed. Instead, we have seen the cancellation of land acquisition that was crucial for the development of the Fremantle outer harbour. I understand that there is a debate about when Fremantle inner harbour will reach capacity; however, the government must move today to ensure that Latitude 32 and the transport infrastructure it needs to develop properly is put in place.

In this budget, as with the health budget, we have seen a range of infrastructure facilities cancelled or delayed. The transport budget has no new orders for rolling stock for trains. As I have said in this place on a number of occasions, I am a frequent user of the train system. I get on the train at Wellard, which for those members who are not familiar with the Mandurah line, is the fourth station on that route. When I get on that train in the morning to commute to Parliament or to other commitments in Perth, it is already full. It is painfully obvious to anyone who uses that train that we have inadequate rolling stock. It is obvious to the people who live in the Baldivis area and other regions with growing populations, such as Secret Harbour and Port Kennedy, that the government has failed to provide adequate public transport to integrate with that train system. On a number of

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occasions I have been confronted by people in Baldvis who say that they want to be able to link up with the Warnbro train station but that there is inadequate parking at that train station; in particular, there are no integrated public transport bus routes between the growing areas of Baldvis and the Warnbro train station. The government continues to let down that community. It is the local governments that are paying the price for the population growth in that area, and the people in that area who are paying the price for the lack of social infrastructure, particularly that which a state government is obliged to provide.

In Kwinana in particular, we will continue to see high unemployment levels until a lot of the focused federal government employment programs are put in place, because I cannot see a growth in local content-based employment in that area. My concern is that, unfortunately, we will continue to see sticky high youth unemployment numbers sitting around the 27 per cent mark, as we do at the moment. We cannot sit on our hands and watch these figures continue. There is a growing social crisis in these areas around a lack of social infrastructure because of the growth in these suburban areas. There is a growing crisis in these areas from a lack of employment opportunities for young people. We will all pay the price for the neglect of those areas.

This health budget has been disappointing; it is writ with delays and a deficient response from this government to the challenges of the health system into the future. I would like to see the minister come into this place and provide a comprehensive workforce development plan to ensure that this government has in place the strategies needed to respond to the workforce development challenges that will confront the health system into the future.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [4.51 pm]: I want to make some brief comments on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2012–13 Bill 2012 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2012–13 Bill 2012, and the budget in two parts. First, I will look at the aggregates and the state budget strategy, and second, I will look at some issues in my electorate.

First of all, I re-emphasise what the member for Cannington said today in the debate on the matter of public interest. I refer to the accounting treatment that has a significant impact on the aggregates this year. I am talking about the new treatment being given to the Public Transport Authority. Accounting treatments might sound a bit innocuous, but this change in accounting treatment has made a \$26 million surplus into a \$196 million surplus. Without this one-off accounting treatment, this government would have delivered a \$26 million surplus in 2012–13. That is quite a staggering figure. I was not listening to the Treasurer's speech that closely, but I cannot remember him talking about this change. This massive change to the budget numbers has seen around \$800 million or \$900 million removed from the general government sector. That has allowed the government to come in and present a surplus of \$196 million. The Treasurer needs to explain fully why the government chose this year to do that. My feeling is that the budget has been poorly managed by this government. We have all seen it in individual circumstances, but more broadly the budget has been poorly managed. The government needed to do something to ensure that the numbers did not look too bad. Therefore, for the first time, in the last budget before the next election, the government has made a significant change to how it treats the PTA. Basically, the PTA is now treated as a government trading enterprise; an operating subsidy goes to the PTA for the services it runs. That subsidy is determined by the difference between the revenue the PTA receives and the cost of service. However, because of the different way of treating the Public Transport Authority, the government has removed \$170 million for accrued depreciation from the 2012–13 budget. That has a material and very significant impact on the finances. Again, it is not something we heard the Treasurer talk about. I do not think he mentioned it in his speech. As I said, I was not listening to every word, but I cannot remember anyone picking it up in his speech. This change has had a very, very significant impact on the numbers. If this had been any other government, we can imagine how embarrassed it would be to deliver a \$26 million surplus. Basically, the accounting treatment has delivered the \$196 million surplus.

I want to talk about a couple of other things; one is cost of living. This government does not get it. When it increases household charges, it does not give people relief. It does not make it easier. The government makes it harder. The idea that a 3.5 per cent increase in electricity charges has made things easier for families is absolutely ridiculous. It has made it harder once again. Since 2008, this government has increased electricity prices by 62 per cent. That has made it significantly harder for families to balance their budgets and pay their bills. On top of that, we have seen enormous increases in water charges, as has been described by the shadow Minister for Water, Hon Fran Logan.

One of the reasons we developed the household model a long, long time ago, back in 1995 or 1996, was to give the government an accurate reflection of its impact on normal households. That was the whole basis for it. I worked in Treasury when this model was developed. We wanted to make sure that the government had before it information on the total impact of its decisions; that is why it was developed. It gave the government the ability to adjust its price increases so that there would not be significant and severe impacts on pensioners and families. This government has basically ignored the outcome of this model and continues to increase these charges at an exponential rate. The price increases have had a significant impact on all Western Australians, particularly those

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on fixed incomes and working parents; they just cannot afford to pay those bills. This issue affects not only those on fixed incomes; even with both parents working, some families are finding it harder and harder to pay their bills. The government's taxes on families have been absolutely relentless.

This government plans to charge more. Its own budget papers show a 25 per cent increase in electricity charges beyond 2012–13, with increases of five per cent, 10 per cent and 10 per cent. This government is planning a 25 per cent increase. The government cannot hide from this figure. It is its figure; it is not ours. We did not write it. We did not produce the budget papers. This decision was taken by the government. It means that everything in the budget papers is predicated on this figure, because the numbers produced by the utilities are all based on the fact that their prices will increase by this amount. That impacts on the dividend flows, the income tax equivalents and the subsidies. The whole budget is predicated on these figures. The idea that this is not the government's plan is absolutely ridiculous. It is the government's plan. We heard nonsense from the Treasurer today when he said that the Labor Party would have charged more—honestly! He is meant to be the Treasurer and he cannot count. We proposed a price path of eight to 10 years, with no year having an increase of 10 per cent. The idea that somehow a Labor government would have charged more is absolutely ridiculous. We have seen it time and again. The Treasurer comes and recreates Labor's argument and has a debate with himself. He does not debate the facts.

Mr P. Papalia: It's the only way he can win.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Exactly. He does not ever debate the facts or the information in front of him. He reinterprets what we say and he says, "What you are saying, member, is this and this is why you're wrong." He does it time and again and never debates the facts. The Liberal–National government has increased electricity prices five times. This is possibly the sixth time. The cumulative impact has been 62 per cent. On top of that, the government has introduced massive increases in water charges. It has brought some people into different levels of the emergency services levy. Residents of Ellenbrook had the drainage levy applied to them for the first time last year. The impact has been absolutely relentless. The landfill levy was also introduced by this government. At no time did the government stop and say, "Families have had enough" or "Families cannot cope". The budget introduces a cynical 3.5 per cent increase not long before an election; everyone can see through it.

Now the government will come in and talk about the carbon tax. Honestly, for this government to talk about electricity prices, it is "Come in, spinner". It can talk about electricity prices every day, because what do people see? They see a government that has increased electricity prices by 62 per cent. Every time the government talks about electricity prices, we say, "Sixty-two per cent!" Every time the government talks about electricity prices, we say, "And there's another 25 per cent increase on its way under this government's plan."

As we said, if the government wants to change that plan, it has to account for it properly in the midyear review. It has to provide and change the numbers in the forward estimates. If it does not, then 25 per cent is the government's price plan; it is as simple as that.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It is like you said 23 per cent for the last year, and you were wrong, weren't you?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Premier, it is your budget.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You were wrong last year.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, you were wrong, because it is your budget papers; they are yours.

Every time the government talks about the carbon tax, we talk about the 62 per cent—and another 25 per cent. If this government wants to talk about electricity prices, let it. It can talk about electricity prices every day, because the people out there know which side of politics took the decisions to increase electricity prices. Of course, we will be reminding them, too. They know that it was this government that ignored ordinary families living out there in the towns and suburbs across Western Australia.

As I said, I found it incredible that the Treasurer was trying to recreate what Labor would have done. We have the situation in which the Premier time and again has said that Labor hid the truth on electricity prices from the public. How many times have we heard that? Probably at least a dozen times have we heard that we hid the truth. Now the Treasurer has come out and read our media statements and the coverage we got when we talked about electricity prices. The Premier misled this house when he said that we hid what we were going to do, because the Treasurer himself brought in newspaper articles and media statements. The Treasurer is trying to recreate the past. Last week I went to the new football stadium that Labor built, too. Honestly, if the Treasurer is trying to recreate the past, we will take everything that was in the forward estimates and we will claim it as ours. It is absolutely ridiculous.

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I cannot remember exactly what the Premier said today when he was asked about this issue, but it was something like, “Families are better off because there has only been a 3.5 per cent increase.” An increase is an increase. The idea that this huge payment is delivering a windfall to households is completely misleading.

I have read all the documentation. I read the budget papers, I read the speech and I read some of the fact sheets. It was very hard for anyone to interpret what the actual impact was for households. I think in only one place did I actually understand. Like I said, I do read budget papers. For 20 years I have been reading state and federal budget papers, and I found it very difficult to understand exactly what the net benefit to families, households and pensioners was. Finally we worked it out: the \$500 payment to families ended up as a net increase of \$63—that was it. For people on fixed income and eligible families with no dependants, it was \$53. So when we compare that with the actual one-year impact of this budget of \$163, we see that this government has not been generous at all. It has continued to be very mean in how it treats Western Australian families and pensioners.

I just want to touch upon the future fund. We talked about *The Hollowmen* episode. If ever I have seen an attempt at a cynical ploy to try to divert attention from the key fact, then it has been the future fund. The Treasurer was talking about future generations and about the kiddies. Honestly, the Treasurer on TV trying to show that he cared about families or kiddies was as unbelievable as anything I have ever seen.

This is an attempt to divert attention from the fact that this government is not providing infrastructure in the suburbs and has increased debt from \$3.6 billion as of 30 June 2008 to a predicted \$18 billion in this coming budget year. That is a massive increase. Everybody knows that with such big debt comes big interest bills. It is estimated, as shown in the government accounts, that over \$1 billion will be required in 2016 just to service the net debt—that is not gross debt; that is the net debt after interest earned from interest paid has been taken away. The government talks about generating \$55 million from the future fund in 2016. Compare and contrast that with over \$1 billion in interest that will be paid on the state net debt. Net debt is peaking at around \$23 billion. At that time, as I recall, the net interest will be over \$1 billion.

This government has not done anything without borrowing. It has borrowed for everything. As a result, what it is leaving Western Australians and future generations through this future fund is a very, very small savings account and a house that is mortgaged to the hilt. The kiddies will inherit a mortgage that they have to pay for, and then they might earn a buck or two a week on a savings account. That is the real impact of what it has done.

Ms J.M. Freeman: It is the classic baby boomers generation: spend the inheritance.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Exactly; this is akin to the ski trip overseas.

As I said, the future fund is an attempt to divert from the real issues—that is, the lack of infrastructure and the massive increase in debt that this government has made since 2008.

As we all know, this Premier has form in relation to financial mismanagement. Under the Court government—I remember this very clearly—he was the minister who was trusted the least. The then Under Treasurer, John Langoulant, wrote a letter, unprecedentedly. As I recall, the letter was to the then Premier Richard Court and referred to how the then Minister for Education could not work within his budget. It is this idea that he can go around, say anything, make commitments and not worry about the details, such as how much it is going to cost and who is going to pay for it. He has done it time and again. Under his leadership it has happened. People are now questioning. They are asking, “Hang on. This waterfront project—how is that helping me in the suburbs? Does it improve my access to the city?”

[Member’s time extended.]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: People are asking the question, “Why does the Premier seem to spend all of his time funding his priorities? Why doesn’t he care about mine?” That is the key. This is the Premier who spends all of the taxpayers’ money on his priorities and forgets about the people living in the suburbs and towns across Western Australia.

I want to move to the issue of transport, because it is one that is very big in my electorate and the proposed electorate of Ellenbrook. Together with the issue of the police station at Ballajura, which I will talk about in a minute, transport is the number one issue in my electorate. The way that this government has misled and treated with contempt the people in my electorate and in the suburb of Ellenbrook is absolutely incredible.

I want to tell a story. It is a story that started with the Ellenbrook rail line. Many members might have heard it before, but the story has had a number of chapters since I spoke about it last. The government committed to building a rail line to Ellenbrook. We all know that the government broke its election commitment. It was its most significant election commitment of the campaign in dollar terms. It was a clear election commitment, and everyone in the then seat of Swan Hills received the postcard in their letterbox that the Liberals will build a train line to Ellenbrook.

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I recall the polling booths in Ellenbrook on election day—some were shared with the booths for my electorate—and the soft blue signs that read “Liberals will build the rail line to Ellenbrook”. I remember those signs and I remember thinking that they were very effective. I also remember the temporary fencing. I learnt a lot that day about not only temporary fencing, but also those huge signs that the Liberal Party put up at the polling booth. Everyone who went to that polling booth saw the signs that read, “The Liberals will build the rail line to Ellenbrook”. We all remember what happened after that.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Oh, yes!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Oh, yes!

The midyear review contained a reference to that election commitment and included some money to build the rail line to Ellenbrook. But over the next six months to early July 2009 we saw backflip after backflip on whether the Liberal Party had even made that commitment. The Premier has still not confirmed that the Liberal Party made an election commitment to build the rail line to Ellenbrook. He has never admitted to that. It is the most ridiculous situation. I have heard the response of the member for Swan Hills when I have raised the matter in this place. Of course, Ellenbrook has been a part of my electorate for a while; I picked the suburb up under the redistribution. I have talked to a lot of people in Ellenbrook. I assumed that I did not talk to as many people as perhaps the member for Swan Hills did. However, I would raise the matter, and the member for Swan Hills would tell me that no-one raised the matter with him. He said, “No-one raises it with me!” I have been out and met a lot of people in Ellenbrook. Do members know what they all talk about?

Mr J.E. McGrath: Buses—their preferred mode of transport.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No. Do members know what they talk about? I bet the member for South Perth’s constituents talk about a train station in South Perth. I bet he is still waiting for a train station in South Perth! But do members know what the constituents of Ellenbrook speak to me about all the time? A rail line! I heard the member for Swan Hills say that in three years no-one had ever raised the matter with him. I seriously thought that he was perhaps right that no-one ever talked about the issue. But I have been to Ellenbrook, and it is the number one issue raised by everybody; they all say that this government broke its election commitment to build a train line to Ellenbrook.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: It is the number one issue in Aveley too.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is a very important issue in Aveley, which I do not think the member for Swan Hills quite comprehends.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: I don’t think he knows where Aveley is yet.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member for Swan Hills said that he did not have Ellenbrook anymore, so he did not care.

I will move on to the next chapter of my story, which is the Perth–Darwin highway. The government could not deliver the rail line to Ellenbrook, so someone must have told the member for Swan Hills to talk about the Perth–Darwin highway; it is the number one issue. To let members know, the Perth–Darwin highway is an alternative to Great Northern Highway to bypass the Swan Valley. It is designed to get the trucks off Great Northern Highway so that cars—tourists and residents—do not have to compete with trucks on an otherwise very congested and unsafe Great Northern Highway. Whether we call it the Perth–Darwin highway or the Swan Valley bypass, it became the number one issue. After the last budget, government members had a great front page in the paper. Members will see in the photo in this article the Minister for Transport, the member for Swan Hills, upper house East Metropolitan Region members Hon Alyssa Hayden and Hon Donna Faragher and —

Mrs M.H. Roberts: She is the one who gave us the trucks through the valley.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes; Hon Alyssa Hayden is the one who helped lift the curfew. Also in the photo is Mayor Charlie Zannino, who I understand is not very happy with the Liberal Party at the moment, but who is a potential Liberal Party candidate to run against me for my seat.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: He would be pretty angry, to be passed over for—let us not go there!

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Basically, the Perth–Darwin highway became the number one priority, and in an effort to assist the member for Swan Hills, the Liberal Party announced, with a big front page, that the Perth–Darwin highway, which is about a \$700 million project—it is not a cheap project; it is a lot of money—was one step closer. It announced the installation of traffic lights at the intersection of Lord Street and Reid Highway; that project is worth a couple of million dollars. They called that \$2 million allocation for a set of traffic lights at the

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intersection of Lord Street and Reid Highway “Perth–Darwin highway stage 1”. The government told the member for Swan Hills that the Perth–Darwin highway is what he should be talking about and announced a \$2 million allocation for those traffic lights and called it Perth–Darwin highway stage 1.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I do not know.

Mr J.E. McGrath: But the people love traffic lights. It is very popular, I am told.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Member for South Perth, it is of course one of the biggest priorities, but the government did not sell the installation as traffic lights; it sold it as stage 1 of the Perth–Darwin highway. The article in the paper states —

The Perth to Darwin Highway is one step closer ... after WA Transport Minister Troy Buswell announced funding for the project.

Mr Buswell met with ... at the Reid Highway and Lord Street intersection to make the announcement.

Lord Street was to become the Perth–Darwin highway and this was to be stage 1. However, when I raised some issues about Lord Street, the minister stood in Parliament and said that, from the government’s point of view, the upgrade of Lord Street was part of the Perth–Darwin highway project and was a most significant piece of road infrastructure in the area.

The government broke its promise to build a train line to Ellenbrook and someone then told the member for Swan Hills to talk about the Perth–Darwin highway as the biggest project. And he did. He kept talking about it, so I asked, “Where is the money?” He said that the commonwealth had not given the money to the government. I asked him whether he had put forward a proposal and he admitted that the government had not. It is hard for the commonwealth to give money to the state when it has not put forward a detailed proposal.

Clearly, the Perth–Darwin highway had become the government’s number one priority and this intersection was to be stage 1. The realignment of Lord Street was to form the basis of the Perth–Darwin highway. Last week, colleagues, Main Roads Western Australia issued the proposed alignment for the Perth–Darwin highway. Two proposed alignments were put forward: one recommended by Main Roads and the other one—the Lord Street alignment. However, the department’s preferred alignment is Tonkin Highway north. The issue of stage 1 was, again, a little misleading. Of course the set of traffic lights at the intersection of Lord Street and Reid Highway is a very, very high priority. It was planned to be completed by the end of this year. I hope that the lights are completed as soon as possible. It is a very, very important project. However, the idea of selling the installation of traffic lights as Perth–Darwin highway stage 1 was absolutely ridiculous and everyone should know that, especially now that Main Roads’ preferred alignment is another road! Once again we see no strategy for the north east corridor; and no transport strategy, which we have asked for again and again. There are major infrastructure issues. For instance, Gnangara Road requires full duplication. We have heard some announcements about traffic lights and new roundabouts, but Gnangara Road is a major east–west corridor road and needs to be duplicated as soon as possible.

Of course there are issues with the Ellenbrook rail line. I forgot to tell members the other part of the story, which is that the government then committed to the Ellenbrook transit way at an estimated cost of \$61 million. This government broke its election commitment about a rail line and said that it would build a transit way. I think the member for South Perth was talking about this before—buses.

Mr J.E. McGrath: The way of the future.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The way of the future—buses.

The government talked about an Ellenbrook transit way and last year I asked the minister about the money for it. He said that we would have to wait until the first part of next year, which is this year, to see the details of the transit way. The first part of this year has come and gone. The budget has come and gone. There is no funding for the transit way. That is another broken commitment to the people of Ellenbrook. There is no strategy, and no plan. Government members travel around trying to get as much media as they can for their ad hoc piecemeal decisions, while people are calling for a plan for the region. Given these little decisions, made here and there, and given that urbanisation is happening at a rapid rate, many of the rural roads are now being used as rat runs and there are significant safety issues on some of these local roads. We need a plan. We need to sit down and develop a strategy for the area that will make the roads safer for everybody—not only those who use the roads to travel from point A to point B, but also those who live in the area. Honestly, if it were not so serious, it would be funny to see how this government has treated this matter. It has made announcement after announcement and tried to get media coverage after media coverage without sitting down to do the work. As I have said, this changes all the time. I want to see how this budget is being sold. I cannot wait to see the papers next week to

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read what the government is now talking about. Basically, the government has failed in the delivery of transport to the suburbs.

I will quickly raise two other things. The Ballajura Police Station continues to be an ongoing issue for my community. Frankly, we have seen the incompetence of the Minister for Police time and again. People are sick of having a government with no direction on community policing. They want to see policing in the community; it is as simple as that.

I will talk also about the Ballajura auditorium at Ballajura Community College. This issue was raised at state cabinet when it visited Ballajura a few months ago and the government committed to establish a working group —

Mr B.S. Wyatt: I hope that group is working.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I do not think it has been established.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: So it is a non-working group.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, it is a non-working group!

Mr F.M. Logan: Is Frankie on it?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I do not think so—it is a working group!

We need an auditorium for the college. Again, I know it was raised at cabinet when it visited Ballajura recently, and it has to be a priority.

I want to talk about a number of other infrastructure issues in my electorate. We have seen this government focus on city-centric projects while ignoring the suburbs and towns. The budget is mean to Western Australian families and pensioners.

MR J.C. KOBELKE (Balcatta) [5.22 pm]: I will use this opportunity available to me on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2012–13 Bill 2012 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2012–13 Bill 2012 to talk about a couple of things in my electorate, but I will start by talking about what a poor budget the Treasurer has delivered. It is clearly an uncaring budget. It is hard to work out whether it is due to incompetence or the Treasurer's incapability of forming a budget, but the budget has very wrong objectives and is made up of very bad decisions. Clearly, it is an uncaring budget. This government has had a huge amount of money to spend. Of course, when spending such large amounts of money, good things come from it. However, the point of forming a budget is to set priorities and deliver good outcomes for the people of Western Australia. Since 30 June 2008, which was the last full year when Labor was in government, through to what this budget predicts for the financial year ending 30 June 2013, we have seen expenditure growth of recurrent revenue at 50.2 per cent. I have not seen that occur anywhere else in Australia in my political history. Recurrent expenditure has been increased across those five years by 50 per cent at nearly 10 per cent a year on average. That is a more than 50 per cent increase in expenditure growth since the Barnett government was elected. During that period revenue growth has been quite healthy. It is not as good as it was during the last government—clearly that was fortunate for the last government—but revenue growth over the five years during this government's term has been 33.7 per cent. That is something like six per cent-plus growth in revenue each year averaged across the period. The problem is that although there is revenue growth of nearly 34 per cent, the government is increasing its expenditure by more than 50 per cent. Over that period, this government will now spend an additional \$8.5 billion. The government cries crocodile tears about not having enough money, but it is simply a matter of mismanagement. There are issues with the commonwealth. We took up that fight when we were in government and we have backed this government in that fight when it has done it properly, but the state government's expenditure growth is totally out of control. I seek permission to incorporate a table and chart into *Hansard*, as the standing orders allow. I will give that to you to look at, Mr Acting Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.M. Francis): I am happy to look at that. You can continue before I give you a ruling.

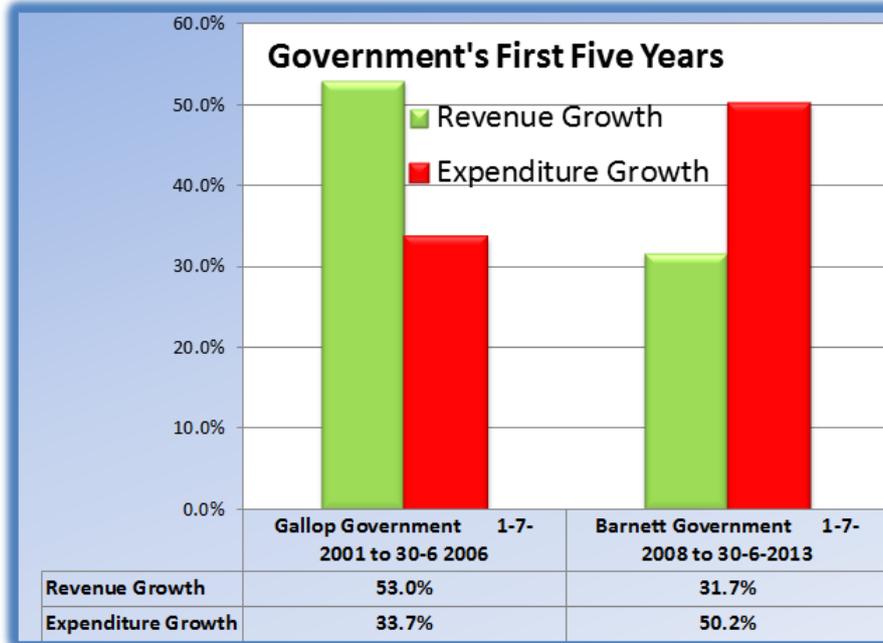
[See page 2955.]

The following material was incorporated —

Mr Christian Porter; Mr Roger Cook; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr David Templeman; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Peter Tinley

FIRST FIVE YEARS IN GOVERNMENT	Revenue Growth	Expenditure Growth
Gallop Government 1-7-2001 to 30-6 2006	53.0%	33.7%
Barnett Government 1-7-2008 to 30-6-2013	31.7%	50.2%

Based on 2012 Budget Papers



Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The consequence of mismanaging the government's finances is that debt is spiralling out of control. The government has no real plan to control that level of debt and certainly no plan to pay it off. I will talk about debt later. When there is a huge increase in expenditure—over 50 per cent in five years—the money has to come from somewhere. We have found that a large amount of it is debt, but also a lot of it has come from ordinary families, pensioners and retirees, who have been hit from pillar to post by this government with increases in a range of costs, charges and taxes. I will go through only some of those increases on my list. It is incredible how many times the Barnett government has put its hand in the pockets of ordinary families and into the purses of people looking after their families and taken their money because the government's expenditure is right out of control. Water services are up by nearly 50 per cent and electricity by 62 per cent, on one measure; I will talk about that later. The landfill levy is up by 400 per cent. Everyone who puts out their bin, as I did last night, knows that they are paying an extra tax to the government through the landfill levy.

The emergency services levy is another example. The emergency services levy was brought in by the last government as an equitable way of meeting part of the cost of our fire and emergency services. That was a tough battle to get through Parliament because the Liberals were opposed to it, perhaps not in principle, but they did everything they could to try to stop it and pull it down. That was a very good measure and it was a much fairer and more efficient way to meet part of that cost. During the debate on the ESL, the then Liberal opposition made it absolutely clear that it would be watching us to make sure there was no cost shifting so that ordinary householders would not bear more of the costs through the emergency services levy. When Labor was in government, we did not do that, but lo and behold, as soon as the Barnett government was elected, the ESL became another cash cow. It became another way to get money out of mums and dads to try to get some money back because of the government's out-of-control spending.

I have looked at the cost increase in the ESL in the budget papers. Using the standard representative household, which is an index that measures that increase, in 2008–09 the standard representative household was expected to have an emergency services levy of \$144. In the budget now before us, in 2012–13 the standard representative household will have an ESL of \$207. That is a 44 per cent increase in four years. I also looked at the revenue the government is getting from the ESL. In the 2008–09 budget, the total revenue was \$157 million and in this budget it will be \$231 million. That is a more than 47 per cent increase in what the government is taking from

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mums and dads and small businesses for the emergency services levy. That is a huge increase and there is no justification for it. It is another way of whacking people so that this government can take money because its spending is out of control. In the forward estimates, we can see that this pattern continues through to 2015–16. By that stage, it is estimated that the emergency services levy will bring in \$266 million. That is an increase of just under 70 per cent. We are talking about an increase in the ESL every year of almost 10 per cent to get the Barnett government more money because it cannot control its spending. The ESL, of course, is based on property values. What has happened with land tax, which is also based on property values? From 2008–09 to 2012–13, the government’s tax take on land tax has fallen by nearly five per cent. The land tax take is down but not the emergency services levy. This is a tax rip off of ordinary people because this government cannot balance its budget and control its expenditure.

I turn now to the residential electricity increases.

Mr D.T. Redman: On the budget aggregates, when you were in government, growth in expenditure reached 13 per cent, I think.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: No, that again was the spin of the Treasurer. That figure was in this government’s first year. It was the budget that we brought down, but this government brought in a whole lot of new policies and spending on top of that. The 13.5 or 13.6 per cent increase in expenditure occurred during this government’s first year. The Treasurer likes to deceive people by saying that it was Labor’s increase. We brought down the budget but this government came in, opened the Treasury and started shovelling out the money. That is how the figure came to be so high.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I have answered the member’s interjection and I know the numbers. That is the truth. I have given the member figures over a longer period so that he can see across all the years when he has been in government. This government has increased expenditure by over 50 per cent. That is this government’s doing, no-one else’s.

The increase in electricity prices has really hurt people. This government knows that but it does not want to acknowledge it because it is very uncaring. It does not want to acknowledge how much it is hurting people so it looks for people to blame. It blames the federal government, the carbon tax and the last state Labor government. The fact is that we put a subsidy of \$780 million in the budget so that if Labor was re-elected, the price increases would be eased in more gradually. This government wanted to spend that \$780 million so it took it out of the budget and ramped up electricity prices in a way that really hurt people. As has already been said today, the Treasurer read from documents put out during Labor’s period in office confirming that Labor acknowledged before the election that prices would go up, but that government was going to subsidise them so that prices would go up gradually—yet the Premier and, I think, the Leader of the National Party said today that Labor tried to hide this and it never told anyone. The point I would make is not that there is dishonesty—there might be—but we have a government that does not have a single message; it contradicts itself all the time. When a minister makes a decision, the Premier overturns it. It is not a government with members who work as a cohesive team. It does not have a clear agenda, which is about helping the people of this state. It is all about spin, egos and arrogance. That is important because managing a budget well requires everyone to work together, and we do not have that in this government.

As I said, the increase in electricity prices is nominally 62 per cent but the representative household model, which is in the budget and is used to measure the increase, looks at the average consumption each year. Consumption has been going up. If we take what the representative household was paying for its average electricity bill in 2008–09 and then look at what the average was in 2011–12—this year, not the budget year, which I will come to—household electricity has gone up by 70.8 per cent, not 62 per cent. The figure of 62 per cent is arrived at just by taking the increases in fixed consumption, but in the actual Treasury documents—it has been there for 10 years—consumption is measured, and that has gone up roughly just under two per cent a year over the past seven or eight years. It does not go up the same every year. It fell slightly for a couple of years and then jumped more the next year. What do we find when we come to the 2012–13 budget? The government has increased electricity prices yet again, but it says that it has increased them by only 3.5 per cent. The Premier said he thinks those increases have been “well received”. That shows how arrogant and out of touch this Premier is. If we talk to anyone walking down the street, they will tell us they are hurting. If they are not hurting because they are on a good income, their pensioner parents and their friends are hurting. They do not think it is something that should be well received at all but today this arrogant and out of touch Premier said it is “well received”.

Returning to the figures in the budget for 2012–13, we find that the government is estimating that the average household’s consumption of electricity in the Synergy area will drop by 7.3 per cent. Last year the consumption was 6 259 units, and the government is predicting that it will go down to 5 801 units for 2012–13. Is there any

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precedent for that? I cannot find it. The government has made up that figure. I have checked through all the budgets for nearly 10 years. The level of consumption is normally taken for the last fully completed year, which is two years before the budget year. It is a bit out of date but it is a consistent process. For 2012–13, we find that the government is using the consumption figure for 2011–12—the year we are in but which is not completed. The government made up a number in order to get consumption down by seven per cent. The increase in electricity bills for an average house has been 70.8 per cent when we take rising consumption into account. If we take the government's reduction, we find it would be only 65 per cent. I do not think those figures are believable. There would be some reduction in consumption because people simply cannot afford the increase in electricity bills; they have really been hurt. A small amount of money would have been saved from the solar panels, which would reduce overall consumption, but they have been installed in only a small percentage of total households. The government has been caught out fiddling the books to try to make the numbers look better than they are.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I turn now to say a few things about state debt. The net state debt in 2008–09, the last year during which Labor had full control of the budget, was \$3.6 billion. This budget predicts that it will be \$18.6 billion by 30 June 2013. That is over 400 per cent higher than this government inherited. The budget is out of control and debt is spiralling. The government predicts that by the last out year in the budget—30 June 2016—net state debt will rise to nearly \$23 billion. That debt just continues to grow. The government estimates that in the very last year net state debt will go down by about \$300 million, but this is another example of being tricky and simply trying to deceive people by massaging the numbers. Looking through the budget—there are many examples—we see projects that this government says are a priority and should happen. Of themselves they are very important but they are simply being taken out of the budget. Of course we got that \$300 million drop in net debt in the last year when it was simply fudging the numbers. That is what happened. The government has taken out \$339 million for Oakajee, which we all know will cost a lot more than that if it goes ahead. The money is not quarantined; it has disappeared. It has been taken out of the budget.

Mr I.C. Blayney: It's in a different account. It's been moved to a different account.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: It is in an account that is not in the forward estimates. I am talking about why net debt has eased a bit in the last year. It is because the government is manipulating the numbers. A total of \$157 million for the Fremantle outer harbour was taken out of the budget for land acquisition. Fremantle harbour is approaching capacity. If we want this state to develop, we have to move on the Fremantle outer harbour. The government cannot stop; it has to get on with it. A lot of very tough decisions have to be made but this government cannot make the really tough decisions. It tries to sound like it is talking tough but it is taking money out of the budget for the Fremantle outer harbour. How will that promote economic growth if we have Fremantle in a logjam because it cannot carry the amount of cargo coming in or going out? The WA Land Authority and the Housing Authority were allocated over \$250 million, which they were going to use for land acquisition. It is a very good time for the state to buy broadacre land, which it will need in the future, when the economy is flat but, no, the government has taken the money out for that. The redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital was a key election promise. There is enough money in the budget to paint it but no money to redevelop it. It might get a paint job with the money in the budget but there is no money there so it was put in beyond the forward estimates.

The government is trying to make it look like it has control of debt when it certainly does not. Then there are those bulk cuts across the capital area, and the government is simply saying that there will be some slippage and not everything will get built. It is absolute nonsense for the government to try to say that debt is under control and that net debt has dropped \$300 million in the last year when it has simply hidden away or taken out of the books a whole lot of vital projects that are either necessary for state development or which it has said are a high priority but it will not fund them. It comes back to a government that is not working as a team, a government that does not have a clear vision and a government that is in panic mode, trying to cover the fact that it cannot control the state's expenditure.

The problem is that the ordinary mums and dads, the working men and women, of this state will cop that in the neck. They are already coping it with higher costs and charges, but they will be called upon to repay that debt. As the debt grows, the interest payments grow. We are fortunate at the moment that interest rates are trending downwards, but if that turns around—it will eventually—the hit on the state budget, which our taxpayers, our mums and dads, will have to pay, is going to get even worse. The whole issue then becomes: what does the government do if it cannot control its expenditure, if its debt is out of control and it has no plan of how it will manage it?

Mr D.T. Redman: Rubbish!

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: How is the government going to control that?

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Mr D.T. Redman: For starters, we've got a control on the general government expenditure, and that's what I tried to explain to you a second ago. For the period that we've been in government, the growth of general government expenditure has dropped compared to your time in government.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: That is an utter nonsense!

Mr D.T. Redman: No, it's a fact.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: It is a total absolute nonsense, minister! I will talk to the minister later and go through the figures with him. I have them all in a spreadsheet. Under this government, expenditure has been totally out of control. This is exactly the point I made about bad government, bad decisions and mismanagement, because we have a minister who believes the spin of the Treasurer, which is totally wrong! The Treasurer is so good, or his fellow ministers are so dull, that they swallow it hook, line and sinker. It is an absolute untruth! Recurrent expenditure under this government has grown out of control. I can even go to the figures and show the minister what was predicted in the budget and how much by the end of the financial year it had got out of control from there. The government could not even stick to its figure for expenditure growth that it brought down in the budget. Expenditure growth under this government has been 50.2 per cent—totally out of control! The minister somehow seems to think that he can just make up the numbers because the Treasurer spun him a line.

But I come back to this debt and the fact that the government has no control of it. The government has no policy and no program for how it will control debt. It has no policy or program for how it will reduce that debt and repay it, which the people of this state eventually will have to do. What is the government's bright idea? We will have a future fund. This is just a brilliant idea. I wish I had thought of it, because what we do is open a credit card account, borrow money on the credit card and put it into a bank account and earn more interest on the bank account than we pay on the credit card, so we make all this money. I do not know why I did not think of such a brilliant idea; that is, that the state of Western Australia could borrow money on a credit card, put it in a bank account, earn more interest on the bank account than it will have to pay on the credit card and just make money. So how come we will get the future fund up to only \$4.5 billion? We should be going for \$20 billion or \$100 billion. We could borrow \$100 billion on the international market, reinvest it at a higher interest rate and simply sit back and take the money. That is what the Treasurer tells us will happen. Everyone wants a government that looks to the future; everyone wants to know that if a government has excess money, it will put it aside for a rainy day. But when a government has debt spiralling out of control—heading to \$23 billion and making no move to limit it, other than fancy shuffling of the books to try to hide the debt—how does it make money by putting it into a special account? It cannot, because the government has to borrow to put money into the fund and it has to pay interest on the money it borrows. There might be a way that the government can do it, but it says that it will not go to high return, high-risk investments; it will put the money into bonds or savings accounts, but that is roughly the same interest rate that it will borrow the money at. I noticed that the Treasurer today, because he is very good at just making up numbers, said that the government looked back at some Treasury figures and found that it could borrow at the same interest rate as what it invests at. I think that would be playing with numbers, because we could find that in a year or two when the figures moved, and it might happen, but my understanding is that generally we cannot borrow money at six per cent, say, and then invest it at 6.25 per cent and just collect the money. Over a long term, we are talking about 20 or 30 years, it does not work. We really want an explanation —

Ms J.M. Freeman: It's a Ponzi scheme!

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: It might be a Ponzi scheme depending on who the mates are who get to manage it, but the Treasurer said that Treasury will manage it, so it will not be a Ponzi scheme to that extent.

We need some understanding of how the government has found this incredible money market where it can invest its money in secure bonds and savings accounts and get a higher interest rate than it pays on its borrowings. That is how the whole scheme will work and I need an explanation from the Treasurer of how he is going to make that work. That is an example of ministers simply being tricky when they use numbers, but I want to make a few comments about the Minister for Transport who is very tricky and is being party political in my electorate. I have three examples that I will cover very quickly.

I was made aware that the Minister for Transport was coming to Balcatta Senior High School and West Balcatta Primary School for an announcement about the flashing school speed zone lights, which are great and I am really glad we have them. However, the minister did not turn up. The minister made sure that the Liberal Party candidate was there, so the local paper turned up and got a picture of the Liberal candidate with the principal. It was all contrived by the Minister for Transport so that he could promote the Liberal candidate in my electorate. I expect the minister to give the candidate support, but using the public purse and the resources of his office to trick the media into thinking that the minister will be there, so that the media will turn up, then not showing up but putting the Liberal candidate in his place is something that I think goes beyond what is acceptable behaviour

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for a minister. I asked the minister about some of the criteria that were established to put the lights at the school. I am very thankful the lights are there; they are great, but I know a lot of other schools also need them. I asked the minister question on notice 5998, which covered a whole lot of schools, about the road description, the speed limit and the daily vehicle count. The minister's answer for Balcatta Senior High School–West Balcatta Primary School was that the daily vehicle count was 12 398 vehicles. Immediately I thought, "This is strange." Those vehicle counts are normally done by the local council, and the City of Stirling told me that its last count was 5 260 vehicles. So I asked the minister question on notice 6412 whether it was correct that there was a daily traffic count of 12 398 vehicles. The minister's answer stated —

The traffic count referred to in question on notice 5998 was undertaken by the City of Stirling in 2007/08 using a pneumatic tube device on Amelia Street approximately 1 km east of Balcatta High School.

Therefore, the minister admitted that he gave me the wrong number. However, he also tried to mislead in that answer because from that corner to the corner near Wanneroo Road where the council had the count is two kilometres, and the traffic that goes onto Amelia Street between Wanneroo Road and Main Street goes nowhere near the schools. It is a totally different traffic environment. Therefore, this smart minister, looking to turn everything into a political trick, gives me an answer on notice in this place that is clearly false and misleading. This minister gets the material from the department and changes it for his own tricky party political purposes. That is what he does all the time when he is targeting electorates such as Balcatta, which I am very privileged to represent. We caught him out first of all saying that there are 12 000 vehicles, when there are not—it is much less—and then he tried to deceive me by saying the corner where the count was undertaken was about one kilometre from the school, although it is 1.9 kilometres or two kilometres away.

Another example is that Hon Ed Dermer and I have been working for many years on the safety of the roads near Northlands shopping centre—namely, Amelia Street, Wanneroo Road and Main Street. We had some success getting lights put in, but we had complaints that the walk light was not giving people long enough to cross the street and that drivers could not see the sign instructing them to give way to pedestrians. I wrote to the Minister for Transport on 15 November 2011 to ask whether someone could look at improving the signage and give more time for the walk signal, because some people had some very near misses. That was on 15 November. The *Stirling Times* on 17 January, two months later, had a photo of Hon Liz Behjat and two people standing at that intersection saying that the government had fixed the matters that I raised. I did not have a reply from the minister.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: She worked hard on that!

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Yes; she worked very hard on it, even to the extent of having Mr and Mrs Helm with her in the photo. When I said to Hon Liz Behjat that I did not know those Helms in my electorate, she said that they were visitors from England. She had visitors from England in a photo at the intersection saying that she has fixed a problem that Hon Ed Dermer and I had been working on for years and that I had asked the minister to look at. And, the photo was taken on the wrong corner; that was not the corner where the problem was. They did not even know where the right part of the intersection was. But that is what this minister does, and when we go to Main Roads to complain about a sign not being correct, we are told we have to go to the minister's office and that they cannot talk to us. I was told I was a Labor member and that in my electorate I had to go through the minister's office.

The last issue is with the residents on Karrinyup Road between Cedric Street and Jones Street and a little beyond that. It is a busy road with a large median strip and they cannot access the other side of the median strip easily. I wrote to Main Roads asking whether there could be a meeting. I had no reply. I wrote the City of Stirling and received a reply from it. The Minister for Transport is sitting on this issue to see whether he can play a political trick with it. People along that road know what is happening and they are quite aggrieved that Main Roads will not listen to their complaints, because road changes are taking place and the residents want their interests taken into account in the design of those road changes. Their problems may not all be able to be solved, but they want to be listened to. This Minister for Transport does not want to look after safety on our roads, he just wants to play mean, tricky politics with everything in my area. The people of Balcatta will know that and it will rebound on this government. We want a government that looks after road safety and that does not seek to play political tricks on people, which is what this Minister for Transport is doing.

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn) [5.52 pm]: I have 10 minutes before we rise for something to eat. I will start my speech on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2012–13 Bill 2012 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2012–13 Bill 2012 by dealing with local content. I will move onto water later on after we have all had something to eat and then hopefully I will give Minister for Water indigestion! We will

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kick off with local content. I suppose that many members in the house have seen the advertisement from Chevron that has been going around. It reads —

GLOBAL COMPANIES
SHOULD SUPPORT
LOCAL COMPANIES.

That is in many of the newspapers around the country and I am sure all members have received emails from Chevron's public relations department telling them what a wonderful job it is doing up north. Many members have heard the Leader of the Opposition, Mark McGowan, and the member for Willagee, Peter Tinley, and I talk at length about the amount of work going overseas, especially from that particular company Chevron's two major projects. Remember, the Gorgon project is the single biggest project ever constructed in the whole of Australia. Wheatstone, which is another liquefied natural gas facility being built in Onslow, is not far behind in the scale of its construction. As Chevron promotes itself by saying that global companies should support local companies, one of the things that I, along with the Australian Steel Institute, the unions in Western Australia and many other members in this house, have been arguing for is that these companies put their money where their mouths are. They should invest in engineering, they should invest in fabrication and they should invest in the future of jobs and skills here in Western Australia—not overseas, but here in the local companies they talk about. I received an email the other day telling me that a company very close to your own electorate, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr J.M. Francis), has closed its doors simply because of a lack of work in these times. Steelwise Fabrications at Bibra Lake has closed; it has gone into administration simply because it has not been able to get work through the door. That is another 12 jobs lost in the engineering sector here in Western Australia. That comes on top of the 2 000 jobs that have disappeared from the engineering sector in Kwinana and Welshpool area over the last couple of years. Why have those jobs disappeared? They have disappeared because the companies that go out promoting themselves in their PR as giving work to local companies are not really doing what they say.

For examples of projects for which companies have sent work overseas, in particular Chevron, we can look at the Wheatstone LNG project, which is its latest project. I will run through some examples for the house of what is happening with the work being done on the Wheatstone project. The LNG train refrigeration compressors and gas turbines are being sourced from Ohio in the United States and from Florence in Italy. The nitrogen generators are being sourced from Norway. The offshore platform is 57 000 tons of steel. It is a platform of the type that we have built here in Western Australia before with the Rankin platform for Woodside. We have done those platforms before here in Western Australia, but Chevron has decided to source its platform from Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering in South Korea. Smaller pieces of equipment like utility vessels, positive displacement pumps, tanks, drums and light wall pressure vessels will all be imported from South Korea. The air compressors and the driers of the LNG trains are being sourced from Malaysia. The seawater filters are being sourced from the United States. The process electrical heaters are being sourced from Singapore. The positive displacement pumps are being sourced from Italy and the fire water pumps are being sourced from Norway. If we think of the countries I have just referred to and we look at the skills we have here in Western Australia, they are easily equivalent to those in any of the countries I have referred to, particularly countries like Italy, Norway, Singapore and Malaysia. We have more people with more skills than those countries do. There are only four million people in Norway, just a few more people than live in Sydney. We have more people with more skills in engineering here in Western Australia, yet these global companies that promote themselves as giving work to local companies are giving work to offshore companies, and that is the type of work I have been referring to with the Wheatstone project. It is exactly the same with the Gorgon project. Nearly 400 000 tonnes of steel is being sourced from overseas-fabricated-type steel, whether it is pipe racks, girders and all the sort of stuff that can be pumped out easily from workshops in Kwinana, Welshpool, Jandakot and Bibra Lake. All the companies there have the skills and the capacity, and they have invested in the technology, the same technology they have in South Korea—all the robotics, all the CAD-linked plasma cutters. All that state-of-the-art leading equipment in engineering has been invested in by Western Australian companies on the basis that they are going to pick up work from global companies like Chevron and others. But that work is all going overseas. The Premier continues to come into this place and say that manufacturing is growing in Western Australia. It is not growing; if it was, Steelwise Fabrications in Bibra Lake would not have closed. At some of the other jobs, like the Devil Creek gas plant that has just been opened by Apache Energy, both the offshore and the onshore components of that small gas project were built overseas. The previous offshore platforms that were built for Apache and exported to New Zealand were built here in Western Australia. They were fully assembled at the Australian Marine Complex and exported to New Zealand. They were virtually the same-sized platforms that are being used at the Devil Creek job. This time, because that company knows it can get away with it—the government will not pull it up, federal law or state, by the way—it decided to just get a little bit of a cheaper cost and to get the work done overseas.

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 22 May 2012]

p2940a-2989a

Mr Christian Porter; Mr Roger Cook; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr David Templeman; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Peter Tinley

Mr V.A. Catania: Member, I think you will find that Apache's Devil Creek project was signed off on and commenced in 2007.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The project was commenced in 2007 and, if the member for North West checks, he will find that the engineering was sourced overseas during the current government's term.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: It was not signed off by us.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.M. Francis): Thank you, member Cockburn. It is six o'clock. I just point out that the member for Balcatta asked for a table to be incorporated into *Hansard*. I have had a look at it and I am happy for it to be incorporated into *Hansard*.

[See page 2949.]

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I will continue on with my —

Mr P.B. Watson: Ranting!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: — ranting, as the member for Albany has just put it. It is a bit of a rant about the way in which Western Australian companies in the engineering and fabrication sector are being treated by multinational organisations in the oil and gas sector, such as Chevron Corporation, Apache Energy, Woodside and others, and also now, unfortunately, by companies in the mining sector. I was talking earlier about the latest victim of the way in which local companies are being treated. Steelwise Fabrications in Bibra Lake closed its doors with the loss of 12 jobs. I talked about the 2 000 jobs that have been lost in the Kwinana strip over the past two years because of the lack of work awarded to engineering and fabrication companies along the strip as a result of the behaviour of oil, gas and mining companies. I talked about how Chevron promotes itself with the spin that global companies should support local companies, but how, for its new Wheatstone LNG project, 150 000 tonnes of steel pipe will be manufactured offshore. That means that 300 000 tonnes of steel for that project is going to be fabricated offshore—not one contract has been awarded to a local engineering company or fabricator. That comes on top of a whole list of pieces that will go into that LNG facility that are being made all over the world—in Malaysia, Norway, Singapore, the United States and Thailand. All that work is going overseas; none of it will be done in Western Australia. It is not that it cannot be done here; it could be done here easily. We have the skills, the capacity and the companies ready and willing to do the work, there is just no backbone in, and no willingness by, the current government to take these companies on and force them to do that work, or even part of the entire contract for those major oil, gas and mining companies, in Western Australia.

I have had a go at Chevron, but Woodside is just as bad. It started with LNG train 5 and then went on to the Pluto project. LNG train 5 was the first modular construction of an LNG facility that was done offshore. Woodside followed that up with its Pluto project, which was done offshore. What did Woodside get out of that? By doing it overseas, it got a project \$15 billion over budget and three years late. How much of those costs and time delays could have been reduced if a significant component of that work had been done in Western Australia? That work had been done before in Western Australia and Australia for Woodside's LNG trains 1 to 4. As I said, now the mining companies are up to it. It is not just mining companies; all sorts of companies are deciding that it is now acceptable to send work overseas. The Roy Hill mine is planning to do 90 000 tonnes of steel in Thailand; Tropicana Gold Ltd is going to do 3 500 tonnes of steel overseas; even the Perth Airport expansion will involve 1 200 tonnes of steel fabricated overseas. That is a relatively straightforward job that any company, even small companies like Steelwise Fabrications in Bibra Lake, could have done, but it is going overseas as well. It is an absolute disgrace that any government, federal or state—I point the finger as much at the federal government as I do at the state government in this matter—is allowing this loss of work and loss of jobs to overseas companies. It is being done with the cognisance and involvement of the global multinational corporations, which want these jobs done overseas for very, very short-term gain. That is the issue on local content that I wanted to raise.

I now want to move on to water. I want to talk about the income from the Water Corporation, which I briefly touched on during question time, and the accounts of the Water Corporation with respect to payments from it, as a government trading enterprise, to consolidated revenue and how that money is then distributed by the government to other entities and places around Western Australia. The income from the Water Corporation is drawn primarily from households and industrial users of water in Western Australia. I draw attention to appendix 7 of budget paper No 3, "Public Corporations—Impact on General Government Revenue and Expenses". The dividends and tax equivalents that have been raised by the Water Corporation over the last year and the budget estimate for the forthcoming financial year are detailed in table 7.1 on page 308. The 2011–12 estimated actual

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figure for the Water Corporation is a dividend and tax equivalent of \$610 million. I referred to that at question time. The Water Corporation is one of the richest, most profitable government trading enterprises in not just Australia but also, probably, the Southern Hemisphere—\$610 million in profit and tax equivalents has been accumulated by the Water Corporation. The budget estimate for next financial year is still significant—\$590 million in profit and tax equivalents. I will now look at the way in which this income is accounted for. Table 7.1, “Government Trading Enterprises—Transactions with the Consolidated Account”, shows for the current financial year, 2011–12, a figure of \$610 million in dividends and tax equivalents. The table then shows that \$481 million is taken out of that income from dividends and tax equivalents, leaving a net contribution to the government from the Water Corporation of \$129 million; that is, \$610 million minus \$481 million, leaving a net contribution of \$129 million. All the other operating subsidies are estimated. If we were to ask the question of the Minister for Water, he would say, “All those are CSOs to country sewerage; that’s the sort of money we have to pay out of the income we get from Water Corp so that we have a uniform tariff policy between metropolitan and country water prices”.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Page 308 states that \$291 million is paid to the Water Corporation for the provision of household water and waste water services in country areas, at prices set by the government, to match metropolitan water prices. That is, the cost to the government of the uniform tariff equivalent policy is \$291 million. If we subtract that \$291 million from the \$610 million, it leaves \$319 million. The Minister for Water is trying to claim that the whole \$481 million in operating subsidies is taken from Water Corporation’s income and is used to pay for country water under the tariff equalisation policy. The reality is that the cost of achieving tariff equalisation is \$291 million. That should leave the net Water Corporation contribution to the state government at \$319 million; that is, a \$319 million profit that is made up of the dividends and tax equivalents from Water Corporation to the government, not \$129 million, as appears on table 7.1.

The operating subsidies and how they are broken down appear on table 7.9, on page 321 of budget paper No 3. Water Corporation’s operating subsidies are made up of country water, sewerage and drainage operations; the infill sewerage program; pensioner and senior concessions; and rural irrigation schemes. These are all decisions made by government to subsidise those programs out of government revenue. The fact that that government revenue comes from Water Corporation is neither here nor there; the government has just decided that those programs will come from government revenue, and I say that because the funding department, as it appears on table 7.9, is Treasury. Therefore, those subsidies are paid to Water Corporation under a decision by the government to achieve tariff equalisation on water for the country, the infill sewerage program and pensioner concession cards. A series of other subsidies appear on the same table, which all go towards making up the \$481 million I referred to earlier. They include the Burrup water supply system; the Port Hedland waste water treatment plant, which is listed under royalties for regions; Fleetwood Searipple Village waste water treatment plant, again listed under royalties for regions; Karratha waste water treatment plant temporary package treatment unit, once again listed under royalties for regions; reimbursement of land sales; and statewide water efficiency measures. The total of all those subsidies is \$481 million, but for some accounting reason known only to Treasury, it is being suggested by the government that that \$481 million is somehow justifiably a contribution from Water Corporation out of its \$610 million in dividends and tax equivalents. However, I have already indicated that those subsidies are coming out of royalties for regions funds. The government cannot account for that twice; the money is either coming from Water Corporation through dividends and tax equivalents into consolidated revenue and then being held by the Water Corporation as a subsidy that is granted by Treasury, or it is coming from a different account altogether. But as I have shown on table 7.9, those funding sources range from Treasury to the Department of State Development and, obviously, royalties for regions, but that is accounted as Treasury.

We have a sleight of hand here. A massive profit is being generated by the Water Corporation; that money goes to the state government through consolidated revenue. Treasury then gives money back to the Water Corporation under CSOs and other subsidies to carry out the series of functions I have just read out. However, the Minister for Water has told the media and this house that there is nothing the government can do about it. “Oh, that big profit that comes in from Water Corp? We really don’t hold that money, that money just goes out as tariff equalisation. We’ve got to do that if we’re going to have equal prices for water and sewerage between the country and the metropolitan area”.

That is not true. Only \$291 million of that is for tariff equalisation; all the other subsidies are decisions of government. It may want to do that, it may not; it may want to do other things with its money. Some of the money is accounted for by royalties for regions, so the government is going to put a stamp on three projects up north saying, “This is delivered under royalties for regions,” but the money came from Water Corporation’s own

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profit. It did not come from royalties for regions. It came from the money that the Water Corporation actually handed over to Treasury as part of its dividends and tax equivalents.

The way this is presented in budget paper No 3 is deceitful, dishonest and just downright wrong. Either the money is being allocated from Treasury through funding sources such as royalties for regions, or it is simply money that goes into the money-go-round from the Water Corporation; it cannot be both. My concern is that this is only going to get worse, because if we look at the out years for revenue to government from public corporations, particularly the Water Corporation, we can see that it is \$610 million for this financial year; \$590 million predicted for 2012–13; \$681 million for 2013–14; and \$863 million for 2014–15. By the time we get to 2015–16, the Water Corporation will return to government, through dividends, local government rates expenses and income tax expenses—those things that will be accounted for but actually returned to government—\$1.36 billion.

Today I asked the minister, twice: Can the minister tell us when we will get to the real cost of water? How many more increases will there be until we get to the real cost of water; that is, how much will it cost to process and get water to our households compared with how much we pay? That is the real cost of water. I assume—I might be stupid and wrong—that if the Water Corporation is returning \$1.36 billion to government in profit and tax equivalents, we are probably at the real cost of water and way, way beyond it. Otherwise, the Water Corporation would not be making such a massive profit. Either the minister knows this and is deliberately keeping that from the people of Western Australia or he does not know it, he is stupid and he has not delved into the reasons why the Water Corporation is the most profitable government trading enterprise in the whole of Australia. Why is the Water Corporation the most profitable government trading enterprise in the whole of Australia? Why is some of that profit not returned to the people of Western Australia through lower water bills? We could have a water price increase at much less than the six per cent that people have been whacked with this year and lower water outcomes than the 42.1 per cent increase in water and sewerage costs that we have had ever since the Barnett government came to power. Why are some of those dividends not distributed back to the people who pay the bills in the first place? Why is that \$1 billion by 2015–16 taken into the government coffers and then spread all over Western Australia in other expenses and badged under other terms as though it came from royalties for regions or the Department of State Development or any other body in government? The government pretends that the money came from other funding sources when it came directly from the profits that were returned to the government from the Water Corporation. I am simply astounded by these figures; they have increased every year over the last three years and are projected to increase to \$1 billion.

MR P.B. WATSON (Albany) [7.21 pm]: I would like to talk on behalf of my constituents to the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2012–13 Bill 2012 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2012–13 Bill 2012.

Firstly, I would like to talk about the Albany Regional Volunteer Service group. As part of National Volunteer Week we had a function on Friday night down at the Albany Boat Shed. In attendance were Albany Regional Volunteer Service board members Samantha Stevens, Esme Justins, Tammy Flett, Neil Roberts, Grant Westthorp, Kathy Loncar and Tracy Sleeman. Tracy Sleeman runs the Albany Regional Volunteer Service; she has absolutely transformed it since she has been there. She does a tremendous job and the number of volunteers in Albany has increased enormously. Also at the function was Mayor Dennis Wellington; councillors, David Bostock, Gerry Gregson, Robert Sutton, Alan Hortin and Vince Calleja; CEO Faileen James; CEO staff members Jo Taylor, Karen Piercey and Julie-Ann Gray; volunteers Sandy Brenton, Nancy Harris, Sandra Graham, Emily Carlton, Jo Stephens and Christine Sargeant; and Bruce Manning from the Great Southern Development Commission, who helped me cook the sausages. It was a great night. More than 200 volunteers attended. In regional areas—I suppose it is the same in the city—volunteers are a very important part of the community. Without them we would not be able to do half the things we do. I congratulate everyone involved. It was a great night. People such as the mayor, the CEO and members of Parliament were cooking and serving the meals; we looked after the people who look after us—the volunteers.

I would like to get on to one of my old chestnuts—the City of Albany. Everybody knows the situation with the City of Albany. Over the past few years we have had some real issues. A CEO came in, lasted a short time and was sent on his way. We had an interim CEO and we now have our new CEO. Our new CEO had no experience in local government issues. She held a high position in Queensland Health, which is not what we call a very good place to work given the way Queensland Health finished up. The city sat down, made a decision and appointed this person, who has no local government experience, for five years. I would like to talk about some of the things that have happened since the new chief executive officer and the mayor, Dennis Wellington, who was a great supporter of her, have been in power. When Andrew Hammond was the CEO in 2007–08, the number of personal sick leave hours taken was 4 883, which cost the city \$120 900. In the past 12 months, 15 191.88 hours of sick leave have been taken at the City of Albany at a cost of \$496 005 00. In that time, 137 staff have left and

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 22 May 2012]

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12 senior management positions have gone. Bullying complaints have been made. Those complaints sat on the mayor's table for a long time. When the mayor came into power he said that his job was to be strong and get things done. I have been told that some of those bullying complaints sat on his desk for a long time and nothing happened.

I did not really want to make this a political thing, but I have been approached by councillors. Just let me say one thing; we have had an issue with the City of Albany for some time and a lot of that was to do with councillors. At the moment we have a very good council and the councillors work very well together. The problem is at the top with the mayor and the CEO; it is a huge issue. Decisions have been made by the CEO and the mayor without the council being contacted. Some issues have recently gone to the Corruption and Crime Commission. I cannot really talk about those, but I think there will be some repercussions down the track. I said I did not want to make it political because the City of Albany has been a real problem for probably the past 12 to 13 years or ever since the previous CEO, Andrew Hammond, left, which is probably not that long ago.

My concern is that the mayor was a Liberal Party candidate at the last election. I am concerned that he has too much influence with the Minister for Local Government. I have been to the Minister for Local Government on the bullying issues. He said he would look at it, but nothing happened. I have been to him with the waste levy. A \$50 waste levy was imposed on all the people in Albany. He said he could not do anything about it. I have brought up other issues since becoming an opposition member and nothing has happened. I am concerned that there is a connection between the Minister for Local Government's office and certain people at the City of Albany. I cannot prove this because every time I ask the minister—I asked him in grievances last year—I do not get a proper answer. Every time anybody wants anything done—for example, when the councillors send messages up to the minister for Local Government—nothing happens. I am concerned as a ratepayer and as the member for Albany. I do not want to be involved in local government issues. I am sure every member of the house knows that as members of Parliament, we do not want to be involved in local government; we have enough issues of our own. Some questions were asked last week at the council meeting, as follows —

1. What has been the actual cost of the protracted General Workers Enterprise Agreement negotiated with the ratepayers of Albany?
2. Is it correct that the Mayor made the 'getting rid of dead wood' comment and what are the costs to the rate payers in replacing and training new staff to replace the 137 that have left the City?
3. How much has the City budgeted for the upcoming legal costs that will be incurred to deal with the ongoing employee disputes?
4. Is it true that in a matter involving a dispute over an employee's legitimate entitlements that was dealt with by Fair Work Australia, that the City spent considerably more in defending the action than they were actually required to pay for that entitlement?
5. Has the Mayor made all other elected members of the Council aware of these employee disputes and associated costs to ratepayers?

Answers will be provided at the next meeting. The CEO thinks the best way to deal with people is through litigation. I spoke to the Minister for Local Government last week about a drainage issue. Every time anyone talks to the CEO, they are told, "Oh, you've got to go through our lawyers." The City of Albany staff are public servants for the ratepayers, but their queries are always being blocked by lawyers. A statement headed "Entitlement Recovery Update" was presented in the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission last Monday and reads in part —

Prior to the conferences the ASU was advised in writing that a very 'highly paid' lawyer from a St George's Terrace law firm had been engaged by the CEO to represent her in these proceedings.

As the claims had been made against the city I am at a loss to understand why this highly paid lawyer had been engaged to represent the CEO, and not the City of Albany as the employer. It continues —

It transpired that the 'highly paid' lawyer was under the misapprehension that the CEO is the City and that she is the employer. However, the Local Government Act 1995 is very specific in that it is the local government which is not only responsible for employing the CEO but also "such other persons as the council believes are necessary to ensure the functions of the local government and the functions of the councils to be performed".

This means that the council is her employer. It continues —

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 22 May 2012]

p2940a-2989a

Mr Christian Porter; Mr Roger Cook; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr David Templeman; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Peter Tinley

The CEO was called upon to attend and represent the City herself by telephone after the proceeding was adjourned. She seems to have engaged the services of a very ‘highly paid lawyer’ for no good purpose, as this lawyer was not able to represent the employer in a conference intended to resolve matters.

The question is: how much did it cost the ratepayers of the City of Albany for today’s latest debacle? Why was a highly paid lawyer retained when they were not able to represent or speak on behalf of the city? Were the elected council members advised by the CEO of these legal matters and did she seek budget approval for them for this unwarranted expense? As I say, I have nothing but praise for the people who put themselves forward to be elected as local councillors. We have had a lot of problems over a long period. There are really good people there now, but they are being shut out by the high echelons—the CEO and the mayor—and it is very disconcerting. As I say, it could be said that I am making a political statement but it is an issue raised with me by ratepayers and councillors from both sides of the political divide who are very concerned. I think the minister has to get off his backside and stop saying, “Oh no, we can’t do this and we can’t do that; and this happens here and on the waste levy our lawyer says this and their lawyer says that.” We want a minister who will say, “I’m going to go down there and sort it out.” But it just never happens.

Let me get onto more positive issues in my great electorate of Albany. One of the major talking points in the budget is the future fund. I am not a critic of the future fund; I have not seen the legislation come through yet. I was out on the weekend talking to some of my seniors. When I was younger I was always told to pay off debt and then save money. At the moment we have a blowout of \$9 million a day in state debt. Would it not be better to pay that debt rather than have \$130 million in today’s money to spend in 20 years from the future fund? I have an open mind and will wait until the legislation is introduced, but I am very disappointed that Brendon Grylls, the leader of the National Party, has sold out country people.

Mr D.T. Redman: Rubbish. How can you possibly make a statement like that?

Mr P.B. WATSON: Put it this way: when we voted in this chamber for royalties for regions, I supported it. I did not vote for royalties for regions to be taken out —

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Can I have your protection, please, Mr Speaker?

The SPEAKER: You have my protection member.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Thank you. I voted on the basis that royalties for regions money would go to the regions. That money has been taken out and put into a future fund.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Agriculture and Food!

Mr P.B. WATSON: All my constituents see that their roads are not being repaired and rail is not being built.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Agriculture and Food, if you wish to rise and speak on this, you know I will give you the call. I would like the member for Albany to be heard at this point. Minister for Agriculture and Food, I formally call you to order for the first time today.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Some of that money could go to fix the prison unit at Albany that is sitting vacant at the moment while prisoners everywhere else are double bunking in the Albany prison. The prison officers down there have been to see me and they are very concerned, but it is no good talking to the —

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

Mr P.B. WATSON: He is saying that he wants to rip money out of the royalties for regions account to put into a future fund. I am sure that when we give that information to the electorate, people will be very, very concerned. We have a community garden in Albany, which is used by around 50 people each week, and 10 different community groups are regular users. It encourages composting in the community with local cafes providing fruit scraps so that they can be composted for use in the garden, thereby reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfill.

I also mention once again the great work done by the Albany Sea Rescue Squad. This group of experienced and well-trained volunteers does a fantastic job saving lives and helping boats in distress along our often dangerous south coast. As part of this, the sea rescue squad took the initiative to produce a TV advertisement highlighting the dangers of fishing without a flotation device at Salmon Holes. Salmon Holes is a popular spot for both locals and tourists, but far too many people have drowned there after slipping from the rocks. The ad shows the consequences of not choosing to wear a device while fishing there. It can be seen on the squad’s website albanyvmr.org.au.

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 22 May 2012]

p2940a-2989a

Mr Christian Porter; Mr Roger Cook; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr David Templeman; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Peter Tinley

On 11 June, Albany will play host to the Australian men's basketball team when it plays China as part of the three-game YouYi Games international series in the lead-up to the Olympics. The other two games will be played in Perth, so it is certainly a big coup for Albany basketball. While I am on that, I will mention the Albany Raiders, the country basketball team from Albany. You will know, Mr Speaker, the Buccaneers from Geraldton. The Albany Raiders have been out of commission for quite a while but some very active people are trying to get them going again. I am on the board, and I think it will be great for the Albany region.

We are a bit disappointed about some things that we did not get in the budget for the people of Albany. A group of businessmen from Canada came to see me the other day about the gas pipeline because they are concerned about the time it is taking. The amount of \$500 000 has been allocated for the planning. Planning has been going on for more than four years now. I do not know what the government is going to do. If after four years it does not know where the route is —

Mr D.T. Redman: There is \$20 million.

Mr P.B. WATSON: There is \$500 000 in this budget for planning the route of the pipeline. I do not know what the other money is for because nothing is happening with it. The pipeline is still in the planning stage; it was supposed to start during the term of this government, but it will be another broken promise.

As a regional hospital, it is very important for Albany Hospital to have a magnetic resonance imaging machine. Many people, especially elderly people, have to go to Perth for an MRI. Admittedly the patient assisted travel scheme is available, although the amount has not been increased for a long period. People who work have to drive up on, say, a Monday and have the MRI and then drive back. They sometimes have to take three days off work. I congratulate the government for providing a brand-new hospital, but it needs an MRI machine and a stroke unit. A friend of mine had a stroke just recently. He went to the hospital; they sent him home with Panadol, and then a couple of weeks later they rang him up and said, "Oh by the way, you had a stroke." The building of a new hospital is very, very important for Albany.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P.B. WATSON: When Minister Buswell came down to Albany, he was interviewed on the radio and asked what was happening with the pipeline, and his great one-liner was, "It's in the pipeline."

While we are talking about the member for Vasse, just the other day in the chamber he stated —

In fact, I was in the member for Albany's electorate last week and I met the Albany Bicycle Users Group. That group of people was thoroughly unimpressed with the member's capacity to deliver anything for them! They were absolutely and thoroughly unimpressed with the member for Albany's capacity; but I will go back to Albany to see what we can do with some of this money ...

That was a throwaway remark by someone who has no credibility in this house, but the people from what we call ABUG happened to find that out and were very distressed. They are a non-political group and most of them are friends of mine—they are obviously not friends of Mr Buswell's—and they understand what Mr Buswell is like. When he is asked questions on notice, his answers always include remarks that are very degrading to either the local member or the previous government. We think that is great because we hand it on to the people and they can just see what he is like. But when he makes comments in the chamber like that, people get very upset about it because it is an attack on their personal integrity. A lot of people in Albany read *Hansard*, funnily enough. The minister can have a crack at me—I did not even comment on it in the chamber because I know what he is like; he just tries to goad people—but he should not involve the hardworking people in my community who have been trying for a long time to get proper bike paths in Albany, which has not happened under either government. When they get something like that thrown at them, they get very disappointed. It did not surprise me, but these things come back to bite even the so-called smartest people.

The consideration of the ring-road was disappointing. I had asked the minister in question time and in questions on notice about the ring-road. No planning had been put in place until Tony Crook, MP, the federal member for O'Connor, organised \$250 000, and then the state gave another \$250 000. Obviously that will be used for planning, but it is very disappointing. If people go into Albany at peak hour, the roundabout at the top is very, very dangerous, especially in summer when the grain trucks are coming through. It is very, very dangerous and we just have to have the ring-road. As I have said, I am disappointed about money being stripped from royalties for the regions to go into the future fund.

We often talk about people who live in poverty and those who need government assistance, but we now have the working poor. We have husbands and wives who are both working and are battling to pay their bills. It is all right for the Premier to stand and say, "We're only increasing charges by three per cent this year, and we only did this and this"; these are couples with both the husband and wife working and with their child or children in

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day care, or maybe the mother can only work until 3.00 pm because she has to pick up the children. These people are really struggling. They cannot get any handouts. They cannot get any family assistance payments or things like that. These people are getting off their arse so that they can survive, and they cannot get help. They are really struggling. I remember former Premier Geoff Gallop gave a speech one day and said, “We are going to have the working poor in the next 10 years”, and he was spot-on. These people are the working poor; they cannot do anything else. Some husbands have two jobs. Who suffers? The kids suffer. The other day I saw an article in the paper in which kids were reported as saying, “I want my mum and dad home. I want my mum at home; I don’t want my dad getting home at midnight”, and things like that. The way we are going, this is what is going to happen.

There is a new football team in Albany called the Sharks. I am the number one ticketholder and we were beaten by 28 goals or something at the weekend, but it means a lot of people are getting together and trying to get more people playing sport. A lot of these kids were missing out, and now they have an opportunity to play. Congratulations to all the people down at the Sharks. Jason Akermanis came along to the first game we played; he did not get many kicks but he filled the ground just about, and he spoke very, very well on the night.

I am proud to be a board member of the Proudies Foundation, which supports young Warrick Proudlove, who is still in a coma. He is young boy who was going down to Albany when the car he was in hit a horse, and he has been in a coma ever since. Albany has got behind the Proudloves; it could have been any one of our children travelling along that horrible road from Kojonup to Mt Barker. We talk about dual lanes for the Perth–Albany road; I think a lot of people would be happy if we had two lanes maybe from Kojonup to Mt Barker. It is a very dangerous road, and our young people travel that way all the time.

We had a fundraiser for Ryan Marron; his parents are from Albany and Ryan is an Albany boy. We all know about him going to America for treatment, and we had a great fundraiser at Don and Cathy Perfrement’s home a few weeks ago. It was great to see the people of Albany coming along; and thanks to the Perfrements for letting us use their house.

My local problem is centred around the hospital. When the Labor government was in power it awarded the contract for Albany Entertainment Centre, and a large proportion of work was awarded to local businesses. There are very few locals working under the contract for the new hospital. A Collie company only just missed out to a Queensland company on the air conditioning contract. I was told by a local who is working for the Queensland company that it is paying the lowest site allowance on the job and it has a group of workers on 457 visas who are getting paid less than he is for doing the same work. What has happened to implementing the recommendations of the Buy Local program set up by Minister Grylls?

Mr D.T. Redman: It’s good to see a hospital being built but.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I congratulated the government before for building a hospital, but when locals do not get anything out of it I think that is an issue, and I am sure the minister as a country member would be concerned about that, too.

Jesus Christ Superstar —

Dr A.D. Buti: Are you talking about me?

Mr P.B. WATSON: No.

The Albany Light Opera and Theatre Company is in its fiftieth year. That group, which is based in the old shed near the old railway line, does a great job. I did not realise it, but I have the Messiah living across the road from me! I have to be careful how I say that. In the group’s production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Jesus was played by Airell Hodgkinson; he is our local doctor and he lives across the road from me. Every morning when I go past his house I get down on my knees, but nothing has worked so far! He was tremendous, and it was just a great local production. Mike Staude as Judas was tremendous; Mary was Rachel Theyer; Pilate was Andrew Wenzel; Caiaphas was Ken Ewers-Verge; Annas was Mitchell Mann; Peter was Jonathan Deeks; Simon was Simon Neville; and Herod was Steve Sweeney. The priests were played by Robin Hughes, Peter Leighton and Terry Hanavan. The conductor was Findlay MacNish. We are so lucky to have Findlay in town; he is just the best at everything he does.

The apostles were Robin Hughes, Mark Ford, Darian Mercuri, Greg Nekele, Bayden Redshaw, Andrew Wenzel, Brett Harston, Steve Sweeney and Tim Riessen. On the keyboard was Hayley McDonald-Burns; on the violin was Jim Lie—my doctor, I have to mention him—Jenni Horton, Bede Harold and Anne Pattinson. On the flute was Yvette Elms; flute/clarinet was Karin Bush; oboe was Anne Phillips; bassoon was Greg Farr; trumpet was Justin Laing and Alison Steer; French horn was Althea Bastiani; trombone was Ron de Jong; and guitar was Eddie Orzel. Eddie is a fantastic guitar player; he does not read music. He has this touch that you would not

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believe. He was a pretty dirty basketballer, but he has great touch with his fingers! Bass was Patrick Elms; percussion, Sue Lie; and drums, Jon Hawkhead. The director was Jill Collins, the musical director was Findlay MacNish, the choreographer was Sharon Walsh and the stage manager was Peter Cook. There are so many people involved in this sort of thing. We are very lucky in regional areas to have a group like that. Jon Doust is one of our local authors. He has a book coming out entitled *To the Highlands*. Jon had a book out called *Boy on a Wire* a little while ago, and got to the final 10 in the Miles Franklin Award. He is a tremendous author. There are a lot of good authors in Albany. I am very close to one of the best authors in Albany, but I cannot use that here!

Recently, along with Minister Waldron, I opened the Lower King Community Kindergarten recladding project. The kindergarten building was previously clad in asbestos and the roof was badly corroding, so committee members Michelle Hands, Heather Nicholson and Sam Liddelow set about raising money and applying for grants. They raised over \$5 000 and gathered support from 50 local businesses and 10 community groups to help them achieve that goal. They were successful in obtaining grants from the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal and the gaming community trust. I also had great pleasure in opening the new Rainbow Coast Neighbourhood Centre community garden resource centre, which I mentioned before.

I will mention some of the good things that have happened in Albany. We got an increase in the seniors' cost-of-living rebate, extending to the seniors' safety and security rebate, and also \$130 million in social housing over the next two years to build 433 houses. There is a desperate shortage of social housing in Albany. We need to get our share of this, as the waiting list for houses is getting bigger. North Albany Senior High School was awarded \$1 million in funding.

There was also Anzac commemoration funding. I am concerned about this. I have spoken to the Treasurer. He said the government will provide money in the future, but the main concern for people in my electorate is that the City of Albany has not got any money, yet it has to be the one to start building it. I have had a crack at the federal government, too. I spoke to the Prime Minister and said, "It's all right giving money to us in dribs and drabs, but if you want to have a world-class commemoration in 2014, we need the money now." We have to plan for the future. We have to do everything now. If we leave it until it is too late, then people will say, "Why didn't Albany get it on time?" I am calling on the state and federal governments to provide funding. I do not care which party is in government, this is a tremendous occasion. Albany is the place where the Anzacs left to go to Gallipoli. It is the last place they saw. There will be a re-enactment of the ships. Anybody who has been to Albany on Anzac Day and stood on Mt Clarence to see the last place these sailors, seamen and soldiers saw before they left will know it is a very, very emotional moment.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [7.53 pm]: I am pleased to speak tonight to the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2012–13 Bill 2012 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2012–13 Bill 2012. I begin by making a general comment about what is in these bills for my electorate of Gosnells, bearing in mind the incredible wealth that is being generated in the state of Western Australia. That incredible wealth, from my reading of the state budget, is not being properly shared around. That comes as a great disappointment. My belief is firmed up when I look for specific projects, things that the Gosnells community, people in the south east corridor, were looking for as projects that one might describe as proceeds of the boom. Unfortunately, they are not there. The government has put forward a positive initiative in the future fund. I think a lot remains to be seen about the nature of this future fund. In simple terms, it seems very strange that anyone could contemplate having a mortgage but at the same time is putting money into a term deposit account. That just would not make sense for anyone in terms of their own personal finances. It does not make sense for the state either. My scepticism is indeed aroused when it comes to this future fund.

When it comes to looking after the future of the state of Western Australia, what could be better than to invest in our education system and the quality of our educational assets, especially our schools? I want to focus on a number of issues in discussing these appropriation bills; education is right at the top of the list. Thornlie Senior High School, a school that had its fortieth anniversary last year—it is 41 years old now—was built at a time when there was a need to get schools built quickly. There was rapid growth in that part of the south eastern suburbs 40 years ago, so there was a real need for the high school to be built. I think now, though, we are seeing the consequences of a job done in a hurry—a job that was probably justifiably done in a hurry all those years ago. Now we need to reinvest in Thornlie Senior High School. It is galling to people in the Gosnells electorate to realise that there are other senior high schools, not very far away from Thornlie Senior High School, for which enormous investment is going on. Total rebuilding is going on at Willetton Senior High School. I have total faith in the reasoning and the rationale behind that investment in Willetton Senior High School—I am sure it is absolutely justified; I am very pleased for those people to get that amount of money put into their high school—but Thornlie Senior High School deserves a similar amount. It is a rapidly growing school.

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On some quick counts, because of the movement of year 7 students into high school, at least another 200 students will be at Thornlie Senior High School because of that transition. When we consider that the half-year cohort will complete their schooling by 2015, that is another 100 people, looking at the standard size of a year class at Thornlie Senior High School. We go from a student population of around 930 up to 1 200, probably 1 300, allowing for other growth factors. The principal and others at the school hope that there will be a middle schooling model used at the school. That is found to be the best way to integrate these young people, who previously would have been found in our primary schools, to give them the very best style of education and the very best style of teaching. The best style is to have them in this middle school model. That requires the creation of a number of home-room classes, ensuring we have teaching staff available for teaching English, maths, science, and society and environment, making sure students can return to identifiable home rooms, and making sure they have purpose-built classrooms.

A policy change has really driven this need for improved facilities at Thornlie Senior High School. That policy change was the decision made by the Minister for Education and the government of the day to incorporate year 7s into high schools. That policy decision has been made. Has it been adequately funded? I do not believe it has. The manner in which the policy change has been implemented is one that says to schools, “You’re going to have to grin and bear this. You will have an increased student population; you’ll have to find space for them; you’ll have to find the classrooms for them. You’re going to have to squeeze them in somehow.” That is not good enough. If we are talking about investing in the future, having some form of future fund, we should use that money to improve the quality of our schools and make sure they can accommodate the increased number of students because of this policy change. We need to ensure our schools deliver the quality of education that every child in this state has a right to, and make sure we have the necessary teaching staff. There is no reason that our children should put up with schools that have cement falling away; that have mortar from brickworks falling away; that have leakages from gutters when there are heavy downpours, forcing students to walk through big puddles and run from classroom to classroom to avoid getting caught in a shower; that have ceiling areas falling down where damp comes through; and that have old dank toilets that are unpleasant for students to use. Those sorts of things are totally unacceptable. We should be investing in our future. To that extent, I agree with the concept of a future fund, but it needs to be a future fund that is applied today. The investment in the future should be in our students who are going through schooling and getting a good education so that they can be the leaders of tomorrow and the people who help deliver us the brighter future in the years to come. That is the legacy that we should be looking towards from this incredible wealth that is being generated by the state of Western Australia in 2012.

We must make sure that we invest in education. That should be the absolute priority. I see it going on in other schools but, unfortunately, I do not see it in my electorate. I do not think this investment in schools in the south east corridor is taking place. I do not understand it. I saw a media release yesterday by the Minister for Education about a \$265 million program of capital works, which was around accommodating the policy decision to have year 7s in high school from 2015. But it is not helping my electorate; it is leaving behind areas such as Gosnells, Thornlie, Huntingdale and neighbouring areas. We are being left behind. Meanwhile we read that improved facilities will be found at Applecross and other schools in the area, and that Canning Vale College will get an upgrade. I am very pleased for those schools to be getting that kind of investment. However, I say that it should not stop at those schools; it should be shared across our high schools, and schools in the Gosnells electorate should be recipients as well.

I would like to turn to another issue now, and this is one that I am really quite amazed by. A decision has been made to cancel a household energy efficiency program. Bear in mind that since the Barnett government came to office in 2008, we have faced a 62 per cent increase in electricity prices, with almost nothing in the way of assistance from the state government. It has provided no means at all of really helping people handle those electricity price rises when some very obvious things could have been done. Personally, I found the manner in which those price rises were implemented and the reasoning behind their introduction spurious. The government, if it had wanted, could have brought in those increases, along with programs that would help people reduce their electricity consumption and possibly even maintain the level of their bills. As their electricity consumption declined, they could have kept their bills at a steady level. But this government does not even believe in those kinds of programs. Here is the proof of it: the hardship efficiency program has been cancelled. It is a program which did not cost the government very much at all but which delivered great results. The program has been proven to deliver savings to households in the order of \$340 a year. The program can show people how to become more energy efficient in their home, help them get some basic changes done to the structure of and appliances in their home, and show them how to save \$340 a year. That is what has been found to be an achievable reduction through the hardship efficiency program, yet, what has the government done? It has cancelled the program on the basis that it would use the funds saved to give eligible people a handout of \$53 a year. That is a pathetic handout really. It does not go anywhere near helping them with their cost-of-living

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problems, yet it has been called a cost-of-living assistance payment. It has the name COLA. I suppose that is to give us some idea that it has a bit of fizz to it or a bit of a sugar hit perhaps! The cost-of-living assistance payment is \$53 extra, but at what cost has it come? It has come at the cost of a program that was delivering to people savings in the order of \$340 a year.

I will talk a little more about the cancellation of the hardship efficiency program, as it is such a bad decision that the government has made that I do not think it can possibly understand what it has done. It probably does not even really understand what is involved in a hardship efficiency program, so I will explain that a little. It starts in this way. People go into a home and do an energy audit of the home. Qualified people look at the bills people have received in the past few months and at the way the home is organised, and then talk the householders through a few things they can do. They perhaps point out to them a few basic things, such as the fridge having a broken seal makes the fridge work much harder to keep the milk and other perishables at the right temperature. They point out that if they do not have good window coverings in winter, the air they heat—probably heat in a fairly expensive manner—goes straight across to the cold window, gets chilled down and then circulates back into the room. They point out that it is a very expensive and inefficient way of trying to keep warm and that by simply installing curtains that reach down to the floor and by putting pelmets on the windows, they can stop that circulation of warm air hitting the cold windows, coming back around and cooling the room. They advise them that they can break that cycle, make the room much more comfortable and save energy as they do so. Those are the sorts of very basic things that, unfortunately, many people in our society need guidance on; they need to be told of the ways they can save money and live more comfortably. That is what the hardship efficiency program at its core was doing, and it had great success. Many homes a year were visited under the program. In fact in 2009, when it began, 480 homes were visited; in 2010, 916; and in 2011 it had got up to 2 212 homes a year. So there were some good numbers there. All the signs were that the experts who were doing the analysis—such as Synergy, which was keeping a close eye on this program—were very happy with how the program was going. Could members imagine that we would cancel this modest program—the total cost was \$1.5 million—that provided a cost saving per household of \$340 per annum? That amount of \$340 is probably not far off the cost per household for providing this program. In other words, with a modest \$1.5 million we could very quickly fund the home energy audit and advice service to some 4 500 homes a year. It is a very simple program but one that this government has seen fit to cancel.

The budget papers are rather interesting in that they refer to a saving of \$52 million over four years that will be made through cancelling this program. The numbers on that just do not add up at all. I hope when the Treasurer responds to our speeches on these appropriation bills, he will be able to detail how the numbers really work when it comes to the cancellation of this project. I note in the Finance pages of the budget papers a reference to the newly created Public Utilities Office. The reference states that the office is —

... to perform its role as a change agent leading development and implementation of policy to meet the State's energy needs.

Bear in mind that the state Public Utilities Office is the successor to the Office of Energy and that many components of the Office of Energy were from the former Sustainable Energy Development Office, which was an initiative of the Gallop and Carpenter governments. It was an excellent office but somehow this government saw fit to cancel the Sustainable Energy Development Office and bundle the energy efficiency aspects of that into the Office of Energy. The government then decided it did not like the Office of Energy, so that has been shifted over to the Department of Finance into the Public Utilities Office. I note here the reference to the implementation of policy to meet the state's energy needs. I will be watching closely to see how the Public Utilities Office is implementing such a policy, because now that the government has stripped out of the budget the hardship efficiency program, I do not see what other measures it is putting in place to ensure that it is implementing policy to meet the state's energy needs, and also policy on energy efficiency, which is surely one of the most cost effective ways of meeting the state's energy needs.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: I now want to talk about the comments that some of my constituents have made on this issue. Mr Richard Sallis of Thornlie has told me that when he got his last electricity bill, he was so shocked that he had to phone Synergy and ask whether there had been an error. He was convinced that the increase in the bill was due to some error in meter reading. This is man who had gone to the trouble of fitting photovoltaic panels. He is very energy conscious. He is very careful about how energy is managed in his home. But he has experienced a dramatic electricity price hike. The same goes for Mrs Kathleen Smith of Thornlie. She is looking at ways to mitigate these dramatic increases in electricity bills. She is considering whether the photovoltaic panel scheme is still an option for her and whether that may reduce her consumption—reduce her bills, rather. It will not reduce her consumption, but it may reduce the level of her bills. That is something that she will have to

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weigh up now that we have only a very small 7c feed-in tariff scheme. That is something that she will have to assess carefully.

Another constituent of mine, Catherine Gibson of Gosnells, is in a similar situation. She has had horrendous electricity bills over the course of the summer. She is feeling a bit easier now that the weather has cooled down. But it remains to be seen what her energy bills will look like over the course of the winter. We are now in that fortunate phase of the year when some people are finding that they may need to heat a bit at night, but basically they can do without mechanical heating or cooling at this time of the year. Another constituent of mine, Mr Yihhon Yihhon of Thornlie, has been finding that his electricity bills are “beyond the limit”. Those are his exact words. He has been finding his bills very difficult to cope with. He tells me that he does not even cook at home these days, yet his electricity bills have still been enormous.

I want to talk now about people who live in Department of Housing properties and the Transfield arrangement for the maintenance of these properties. I had a very interesting meeting yesterday with residents at a complex owned by the Department of Housing at 7 Fremantle Road, Gosnells. It is a big complex; many people live there. I must say there is a wonderful community spirit in that housing complex. I especially acknowledge Marie and Russell Lenox, and their friends, who provide a valuable network of contacts and advice to people. Because this Transfield contract has been so ineffective and so hopeless, Russell and a couple of the other gentlemen who live in that complex have been called upon to do a lot of the basic maintenance at that complex. I commend them for the community spirit they have shown and the way they have helped people out. There are a lot of people in that complex who are single, are suffering some form of disability, or are widowed, and they do not have the skills to do those sorts of home maintenance jobs. But through that community spirit, many people have been able to endure things and get by.

There is an old expression that we can give a person a fish, or we can teach them to fish. Obviously it is better to teach people to fish. I would have thought that was a philosophy shared by many in the Liberal Party. That is why I am so surprised that the hardship energy efficiency program has been cancelled, because that was a beautiful demonstration of how people can become energy efficient in their home and manage their bills accordingly.

There are some other things that I have been looking for in this state budget. People in my electorate are very anxious to see an upgrade of the huge roundabout that is the junction of Nicholson Road–Yale Road–Garden Street, Gosnells. The Leader of the Opposition came to Gosnells recently to visit me and we stood on this roundabout at about quarter to eight in the morning, and it was gridlocked in all directions. There was just chaos. Traffic was barely moving. It is causing people great frustration every day when they have to go through that roundabout. The member for Southern River and I have been lobbying hard for funding to be made available for that roundabout. Some fairly simple measures can be taken to fix this roundabout. It is not explicitly in the budget, though. That is my worry. I cannot see it in the budget. There is no mention of the \$1.5 million, or maybe it will be a bit more, that will be necessary to fix up this roundabout with the creation of a couple of slip roads that will keep the traffic off the actual roundabout. That would make all the difference in the world to the people who use that intersection. But unfortunately that is not mentioned in the budget. I am very worried that that money will not be there. I hope it is simply the case that the project has not been detailed yet and it is included in some of the other figures that are more global.

Dr A.D. Buti: You’re very optimistic there! It won’t happen under this government!

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Member for Armadale, I am certainly worried. Perhaps my scepticism will prove to be ill-founded, but we wait to see.

People in the Gosnells electorate are also very concerned about the future of the Nyoongar Patrol in the Gosnells area. But there I think there is some room for optimism. We have seen in the budget papers a line item that mentions funding of \$1.2 million for one year for the Aboriginal community patrols funding extension. I will give the Minister for Indigenous Affairs the benefit of the doubt and assume that the funding is there for another 12 months for that Nyoongar Patrol. That is something that we very much need, because it is making a big difference. I have been with the Nyoongar patrollers on a number of occasions, and I have seen the way they work and the respect that they get from people who perhaps would not listen to me. Indeed, I had that experience with a young gentleman who did not want to engage at all with me. He was incredibly angry, actually. But when the Nyoongar patrollers came along, he was talked down straightaway. He had immediate respect for those Nyoongar patrollers. So I am very aware of the value of that program, and it is a program that we need to extend. But ultimately, it is a bit of a band-aid solution. We need to tackle the root causes of the situations that would have caused this gentleman to be angry, and that lead people to congregate in unpleasant areas and abuse alcohol and drugs. But I am worried that this budget will again fail the test and not deliver on those sorts of social programs that will make a difference and turn around people’s lives.

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Although I acknowledge that there are some things in the budget that will make some difference, such as increasing the number of community nurses, we need a more targeted approach to people who are likely to be in difficulty. They can be identified; we can target programs to meet their needs. There is no trouble about that.

In the time remaining, I want to say that it is very disappointing to see yet again that there is no funding for the Nicholson Road train station. I am very keen to see at least a commitment towards it. At the moment, we simply have the 2031 plan from the government that does not even mention that train line extension. All we know is that there may be consideration of it beyond 2031. That is totally unacceptable.

Another very important issue for the people in the Gosnells electorate is electronic school zone signs. We know that the cost of those signs has dropped remarkably in the last few years. It costs only \$40 000 to fit up a typical primary or high school with signs that flash to alert motorists that they are in a school zone and to make it safer for students. That amount of \$40 000 would provide a really dramatic improvement in the safety of students when they cross often busy roads. I have some busy roads in my electorate; Yale Road and Corfield Street are very busy. There are no ESZ signs for Yale Primary School, Ashburton Drive Primary School, Seaforth Primary School, Saint Munchin's Catholic School or Southern River College. I think it should be a matter of urgency that those schools get ESZ signs. I have asked the Minister for Transport to explain how he has prioritised the rollout and he has not delivered that explanation. I know that criteria have been looked at, but that does not tell me how the prioritisation has been determined. I am very keen to see the schools in my electorate get those ESZ signs in the next six months, because if it takes any longer than that, we really would be taking a risk that we do not need to take.

I think this budget fails the test of being an equitable redistribution of the incredible wealth which this state is presently producing and which some people are enjoying; there are too many who are missing out. I do not see the initiatives in the budget that are designed to invest in the future and in schools in my electorate. I do not see the plans that will make sure that we all share in this state's wealth. That is the big disappointment with this budget.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [8.22 pm]: I am very keen to make a contribution to the debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2012–13 Bill 2012 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2012–13 Bill 2012. I rise to highlight to this house the very poor budget that has been delivered, particularly for the Peel region and the Mandurah electorate. This is probably one of the worst budgets I have seen, particularly with regard to the government's recognition of the importance of the Peel region to the economy of Western Australia. I have stood in this place on a number of occasions to highlight to members on both sides of the house that the Peel region continues to be overlooked by this government, particularly with funding from royalties for regions. Despite the fact that the Peel region remains the third highest contributor to the state's royalty coffers and despite the fact that my region—the one that I live in—continues to have the highest growth in population and also continues to have the highest rate of economic stress, its share of royalties for regions continues to be pitiful. After raising the issue a number of times, and with members of the government representing sectors of the Peel region, I would have thought that a better budget would have been delivered by the Treasurer and the Premier. It has not happened; they have failed the Peel region and Mandurah.

Most of the announcements in the budget for the Peel region were already in the forward estimates. Most of the announcements relate to water infrastructure and were announced a number of years ago. Despite the fact that the Peel region has the highest number of people under mortgage stress and the highest number of families and individuals seeking financial support through the hardship utility grant scheme to help pay their electricity, gas and water bills, despite the fact that the region continues to have above the national and state average rate of youth unemployment, despite the fact that more people in the Peel region are on fixed and low incomes than in other regions in Western Australia, and despite the Deputy Premier, the member for Murray–Wellington and the member for Darling Range representing the region, the Peel region does not get a fair slice of royalties for regions funding. We have not got our fair share since that program was set up by this government. I am sick and tired of saying in this place how unfair it is that areas such as the wheatbelt, with a total population of fewer people than in the City of Mandurah, continue to get over and above the per capita spend. I am sick and tired of hearing that regions such as mine and the south west continue to receive a disproportionately low percentage of those royalty funds. One need look only at the Peel region to see the deceit that this government has shown the people in my area. There are growing populations in the Shires of Serpentine–Jarrahdale, Murray, Boddington and Waroona and in the City of Mandurah, yet what has this government done in this budget? It has done very little, despite the need that I have highlighted.

I want to read to members a letter to provide an example of a family in my electorate. This says it all. I asked my constituent whether I could read this in Parliament and she said yes. Her name is Amanda Tongue. She lives in Coodanup. She wrote to me by email on 17 May —

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Dear Mr. Templeman,

I am writing because my family needs your help.

I am Amanda, a stay at home Mum of three young girls. I am also a carer for my husband, Glenn, who is on a disability pension. Glenn had an accident at work in 2008 which required surgery. As a result of that surgery he developed Adhesive Capsulitis or Frozen Shoulder as its more commonly known. We received a compensation payout late 2008 after we were advised the longest AC would last was 2 years. Well here we are four years on. Numerous surgeries, Physiotherapy, Acupuncture, Hydrotherapy and cortisone injections later and nothing has worked. In fact he has now had surgery on his other shoulder because that has deteriorated so much from overuse. You may ask what all this has to do with anything. I promise I have a point.

Due to Glenn's injury, I am unable to work. He cannot care for our children, aged 4, 2 and almost 9 weeks. We are surviving solely on Centrelink benefits and while some may think this is a "cruisy" lifestyle. I can assure you, it is not. We struggle fortnight to fortnight to make ends meet. I am thankful we are only in a small amount of debt even though we can only afford the minimum repayments so aren't actually reducing our debt. I fear that as our children grow up and the cost of living increases our situation will become so much more difficult.

In January 2011 we decided to put our names on the public housing waiting list. We were told it was a seven year wait. I have to say we were disheartened. We didn't realise it was so long. Last week we went to add our third child to our application and were told they are processing applications from 2005. So in a year and a half the wait list hasn't budged. To say we were heartbroken is an understatement.

We are very lucky to be in a private rental at the moment. Pretty much 99% of real estate agents won't look twice at our applications for homes because we live on Centrelink and would require bond assistance to move into one of their properties. Why rent to us, when they can rent to a working couple or family? Even though we are living in a private rental, our rent price still increases every year. It may only be \$10 a week but I wonder where I am going to find that \$10. And what should happen if the owner decides to sell or wants to move into the property? Where will we go then? Questions like these keep me up at night.

These are real people; real people whom the government has forgotten. The letter continues —

Something needs to be done about the public housing waiting list. I need to raise my kids in a stable home. We have moved 4 times since our eldest child was born because we were chasing a cheaper rental. This is no life for our children. Our eldest will start school next year; I don't want her chopping and changing schools because we can't afford to stay in the catchment.

I sincerely hope that you can help my family. Because I don't have anyone else to turn to.

Thankyou for your time,

Real people are facing the major stresses of everyday living simply because they are finding their budgets harder and harder to manage. They have had to shoulder burdens, like increases in power under this government of 57 per cent plus the 3.5 per cent it has added on. Then, of course, there will be further increases in the out years. The cost of water has increased. The cost of gas has increased. Every time they try to look at saving some dollars they get smacked by this government. That is what Mrs Tongue said. She is not alone. The experiences of her family are replicated throughout my community and many other communities in Western Australia.

I now turn to Melanie and Matthew Young from your electorate, Deputy Premier. They have written to the Deputy Premier. They have a different issue. It is about services. It is about recognising that Peel has specific needs that should be delivered in Peel; that families should not have to travel to Perth for many of the services that they are expected to travel for, simply because the Premier has decided that we are not a regional centre but are simply part of the metropolitan area. That is what he said. He confirmed it in this place. I asked Mr Young whether I could read this letter to the house. Melanie and Matthew have two children, aged eight and five. Their youngest daughter is a beautiful kid who was born with Down syndrome. She has specific needs. She is happy and playful, but with Down syndrome she requires assistance to ensure that in the long term she can fully integrate into our society. More immediately, she needs physiotherapy assistance for gross motor skills, occupational therapy for fine motor skills and speech therapy assistance to learn to communicate. The letter reads —

People with disabilities and their carers/parents feel extremely vulnerable, and as in our case, have to juggle high child needs with employment and many other demands.

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Over the last three years they have asked for a package of Disability Services Commission services. They have looked at the Lakes Road Mandurah Community Health and Development Centre. We would expect them to be able to get some services from there. That is not a slight on those staff, by the way, because they are brilliant; they have brilliant staff down at Lakes Road. The letter reads —

Replacement services were supposed to be provided by Therapy Focus for Mandurah residents such as ourselves, however this has not been satisfactory, and remains as a service operated out of Perth.

...

We now find the ridiculous situation where ‘normal’ children are able to access services from Mandurah Community Health and Development Centre, but ‘disabled’ children either receive no services (due to demand and wait lists for services), are provided a very poor level of service (by comparison) ... or as in our case, travel to Perth for services.

This is what their young daughter has to endure —

Our daughter now receives services from Kids are Kids Therapy Services, based in Bateman. Whilst we have been more than satisfied with the services offered —

They have no problem with the service —

Emma is taken out of her school classes one day a week to travel to Perth—which is about a 3.5 hour round trip. What we find infuriating is that other children from her same class requiring speech therapy need only travel 5 minutes down to the Mandurah Community Health and Development Centre for their services.

Our daughter presents us with additional challenges, and to date my wife has not been able to turn to employment due to the constant demands of being her carer.

What is even more frustrating is that these services are not closing down. If tomorrow our son Harry requires a speech therapist he could access it at the Mandurah Community Health and Development Centre.

However, Emma, with a known disability and high needs, will not be able to access the same services in our City of Mandurah, where she should be able to get them. The family said in the letter —

We need a champion for our ‘cause’ and for logic to prevail over bureaucracy. Emma and other children with disabilities within Mandurah and the wider Peel region should have access for local services, and not drive-in drive-out services from Perth (where you are ‘lucky’ enough to get it).

I am sick of people in this place not respecting the fact that we are a regional centre. There is no reason for those services to not be delivered locally to families like this one. Why should they not be? Those people have the right.

They are two examples. I have hundreds of them, but I will not read them all because they say the same thing. This government has got to understand that the Peel region is a vital, vibrant region in its own right. This government continues to overlook us. We are wedged between the haves and have-nots. People like the Young family are expected to go to Perth to access services; it is only an hour and a half away. That is the reality when someone is driving, by the way. That is replicated by people who need specialist treatments, some of which need to be delivered locally. Some of them cannot be delivered locally because they are tertiary, specialist treatments and, understandably, people will have to travel to Perth for them. The Minister for Health knows that every day busloads of people needing cancer treatment travel up and back from Mandurah. Over the year it is a couple of thousand people up and back, up and back. We have got to do it better.

The Minister for Health has got to help me to get his Premier to understand that this is about us being recognised as a regional centre—a vibrant region in its own right—and to stop the Minister for Regional Development overlooking us all the time with royalties for regions funding. The Minister for Health knows, as do the members for Darling Range and Murray–Wellington, that we have been bypassed by this government in terms of royalties for regions funding. The evidence is clear. Let us look at the evidence. Back in March this year Hon Sally Talbot asked a question of the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Regional Development. Hon Sally Talbot asked about this statement made by the minister —

“By 2015 Royalties for Regions will have allocated more than \$1billion towards health services and infrastructure in regional areas including an investment of \$538million to strengthen medical care and services in rural communities in the southern part of WA.

The questions were —

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- (1) How much of the \$538 million has been allocated to the Peel region?
- (2) What services in the Peel region are receiving, or are scheduled to receive, part of that funding?

That money—\$538 million—is championed by the Minister for Regional Development! It continues —

- (3) How much of the \$538 million has actually been spent in Peel in this financial year to date?

First of all, Hon Sally Talbot was told that the question should be directed to the Minister for Health. Let us look at what Hon Helen Morton replied on behalf of the Minister for Health. In response to question (1) on how much of the \$538 million had gone to Peel, Hon Helen Morton said nil. Nil!

Mr R.F. Johnson: Same as Hillarys.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Regional, sir! Royalties for regions! What is the answer to questions (2) and (3)? Not applicable! Why was the answer “not applicable”? Because we got nothing! The government talks about all these wonderful things going to the regions but continues to overlook the fastest growing region. Let us get some facts. I will quote from a letter from the Shire of Murray to Mr Andrew Murray, chair of the Western Australian Regional Development Trust about the WA country local government fund. Here is a telling point —

It also should be noted that the Peel Region is being underfunded through the Royalties for Regions funding. Following is the value of minerals and petroleum by region in 2010/11 as provided by the Department of Mines and Petroleum:

What follows is a list. Where is Peel on that list? It is the third highest. What percentage of the royalties for regions funding does Peel get? What cut? It is 2.77 per cent, for one of the highest populations. The south west got a little more; it has the highest population and got 7.19 per cent. The wheatbelt got 11.78 per cent. There is a dramatic discrepancy. I am not asking for all of it; I am simply asking for a fair share.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: On need! Did the minister listen to what I said at the start? I told him how many people in my community are under stress; I read the letters from Ms Tongue and from Mr and Mrs Young. The minister was not listening; he just sits there with his head in the sand. He should start delivering some of the royalties for regions money to where the population is growing and from where some of the royalties are actually being generated. All I am asking for is our fair share, but the government is giving us nothing; I could use another word, but it would be unparliamentary.

Why have we heard nothing from those members opposite who represent these areas? We have heard nothing; nothing has been said about this unfairness. Maybe it is because they think their seats are safe and they do not have to say anything because their electorates will buy the argument that they are being looked after. Quite frankly, I am sick of it, and it is time that the Peel region was recognised for the value that it provides.

I want to go onto a couple of other key areas that I think the royalties for regions program should be funding because of the growing infrastructure needs of the City of Mandurah and the Peel region. The first is our traffic infrastructure. We all know that the Forrest Highway was completed along with the extension of the freeway south. What needs to happen, but has not happened in the forward estimates, is a very clear determination of the infrastructure in the City of Mandurah. I am particularly talking about two key bridges. One is the Mandurah Estuary Bridge, which links Dudley Park with Halls Head. It is currently three lanes. In fact, it was built as two lanes but it was extended to three lanes because there was enough road reserve width on the bridge to do so. That bridge currently carries some 30 000-odd vehicles. It is understood by the council and by the people of Mandurah generally that the old Mandurah Bridge, given its structure, will not cope with large volumes of traffic in the future. That bridge is also a priority. My view on this is very, very clear: we need to make provision now for the duplication of the Mandurah Estuary Bridge. We need another bridge alongside it so that we have a six-lane bridge. In doing so, that bridge must be seen as the key distributor road for through traffic from the south of the city to the north. That bridge should be the focus for through traffic, and it needs to be done very soon. Even given the opening of the Forrest Highway, traffic volumes in Mandurah are creeping back up to what they were before the highway was opened, so we have to deal with that now. After the next election, the government—of either persuasion—has to make provision for the duplication of that bridge; that is an absolute priority.

I turn now to the old Mandurah Bridge. This is something about which we can be bolder. From the modelling I have seen, I am not convinced that the engineers are right. They are saying, “No, we’ve got to get rid of the old bridge and we have to have a four-lane bridge”. I do not agree with that. My view on this is quite simple. I think the old bridge has a number of pedestrian, tourism and historical aspects that should be considered first. If it so

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happens that we cannot keep the old bridge and we have to build a new bridge behind it—which I think should be a three-lane bridge rather than four, and I will explain why—it should be a bridge that is of a design that incorporates and maintains the tourism, pedestrian and cultural aspects that have made the old bridge so important and special for the people of Mandurah and for visitors to Mandurah for nearly 60 years.

I actually think we should be very bold, and I am pleading with the City of Mandurah to not just accept the engineers' view that we should just bowl the old bridge over and put up some four-lane structure. In my view, that will encourage more traffic through an already congested CBD and, in fact, slice the city in half, east to west, at a very strategic location for the city, the southern boundary. Let us be a bit bolder than that. Whether it is the old bridge remaining with a new one behind it, or the new bridge on its own, we need something that is unique to Mandurah or even Australia. We all know of ancient bridges like the Ponte Vecchio in Florence or the Rialto in Venice that incorporate shops or alfresco dining areas. Why could we not look at something like that for Mandurah? One of the great things about the old bridge is that it faces north; there are not many great places in Mandurah that face north, unfortunately, because of our geography. We should build a bridge that is functional and delivers traffic, but not to such an extent that it will slice the city in half and channel traffic into an already congested area. We need a traffic bridge that recognises the importance of local traffic and a design that will utilise the north-facing aspect to allow for businesses to be incorporated. As I understand it, there is no bridge in Western Australia that is like that; there is not even a bridge like that in Australia that I can think of. That could be incorporated into any bridge design, regardless of whether it is decided to destroy the old bridge and replace it with a new one. But my great fear is that the engineers advising the council will come up with any number of reasons to bowl the old one over and put up some new flash thing that slices the city in half and destroys the tourism, pedestrian and heritage values of the old bridge. I am pleading with the City of Mandurah to be bold on this one.

Why should this not be funded by royalties for regions? I know that the minister for all the other regions except the Peel region has already said, "No, that is not a project we will fund". Why not? It is a major infrastructure project that will enhance the city, and it is part of what we are, who we are, where we have been and where we are going to. I challenge the minister for all the other regions except the Peel region to understand the importance of getting on board, rather than attacking us.

We are waiting with bated breath to find out whether the minister is even going to fund the Mandurah Aquatic and Recreation Centre redevelopment. That is a big development and it is very badly needed; the centre is nearly 30 years old, but our population has gone through the roof. When is the minister going to fund the Mandurah Aquatic and Recreation Centre expansion? It will not be done with a piddling \$2 million or \$3 million; we need \$15 million to make this project succeed. Is the minister going to fund the Lakelands Community House in my electorate? That is very badly needed for the northern suburbs of Mandurah. This budget was the chance for this Minister for Regional Development and ministers and members who represent the Peel region, along with me, to deliver something, but they failed. They have failed.

Dr K.D. Hames: Can I just point out —

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: No; I have only four minutes and the Minister for Health can make his speech later. I want to hear his speech because he should be standing up for the people of Mandurah—the people of Peel. He should talk to the fellow who sits next to him, the Premier, who says that Mandurah is simply part of the metropolitan area.

Dr K.D. Hames: I have done that.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: But he has not done anything about it. The minister should speak to the Premier and say, "Sorry, mate; the people in Peel recognise that the Peel region is a unique region in its own right. We value our identity and we value being recognised by government as a region that is continuing to deliver to the benefit of the state, including the benefits that are of an economic nature."

I am glad the Minister for Police is here because I will spend one minute on policing.

Mr R.F. Johnson interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes, I am going to talk about that in a minute. This budget also lacks any commitment to the Peel waterways, which is the most significant natural asset in our region, yet there is no significant commitment shown to it.

I want to get onto police very quickly.

Mr R.F. Johnson: We can have gondolas.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Do not be smart. I went to the meeting in Rockingham last Wednesday night because the Commissioner of Police was there. I asked him about the capacity for the current police service, now that

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Peel has been sucked up into the south metropolitan hub. The Minister for Health did not do anything about it, did he? He did not do anything.

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: No, because I have always argued very strongly that the Peel police district should have remained intact. Do you know what the commissioner said? He said, “We’re going to have to have a look at it again because of the growth; because of the geographical issues; because of the policing concerns.”

Mr R.F. Johnson: Of course we look at growth.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Why did the minister not do it in the first place? I told him he should not have done it. It was wrong and now places such as Singleton and Golden Bay are “police-free zones”. That was mentioned more than four or five times. If the minister asks the commissioner, he will tell him that those suburbs and parts of Mandurah and the southern part of Rockingham are already now considered to be police-free zones because they know they are not being serviced.

Mr R.F. Johnson: They’re all patrolled.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Go and talk to the commissioner about the comments made the other night by the residents of Golden Bay and Singleton.

Mr R.F. Johnson: I do.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: They all stood up and said, “We don’t see the police because we’re in a police-free zone.” The minister needs to fix this up by resourcing the Peel police district as it was, because we have significant policing issues that he needs to fix up.

Finally—I will say it in one minute—we have only one railway station, the Mandurah terminus, which caters to the 90 000-plus catchment of not just Mandurah but also Murray and the outer regions. Mandurah needs another railway station to the north of our city. That is where the priority should be. I have argued and always will argue that Lakelands is the locality where it should be built. In any event, the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Transport must understand that we have a chronic parking shortage at our station simply because it is the only one for people who live in Mandurah or the wider Peel. There ain’t no other; the next one is 22 kays north at Warnbro. In this budget, give the Peel the funds it deserves.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale) [8.53 pm]: When following the member for Mandurah there is always the feeling of being the supporting act following the main act, a bit like George Michael following Elvis Presley!

Unfortunately, I get up on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2012–13 Bill 2012 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2012–13 Bill 2012 to repeat what I said last year about the budget. This budget has nothing for the City of Armadale, nothing for the electors of Armadale and nothing for my community. I will talk more about Armadale in a minute. I want to talk about some broad issues regarding the budget. I probably was not telling the truth when I said this budget has nothing for Armadale, because what it does have for the residents of Armadale is increased household charges. Over the term of the Barnett government, household charges have increased by more than \$1 000. Over the term of the Barnett government utility charges have increased by 62 per cent. The Treasurer and the Premier like to tell us that the utility charges will increase by only 3.6 per cent over the next financial year, but, of course, as we very well know, the budget papers show a 25 per cent increase to look forward to over the period 2013 to 2016, conveniently following the next state election. The electors of Armadale, the people I meet when I doorknock, who complain about the increase in utility charges and increases in household costs, receive no joy in this budget—none whatsoever. The member for Albany referred previously to the working poor. Unfortunately, the number of working poor is increasing more and more. These are people who cannot enjoy any of the relief in the budget that may be available for a small section of the population. They have to absorb the increase in costs that is far and above what has been the notional increases in wages in Western Australia. For instance, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in the period 2011–12 salaries have increased, in nominal terms, by 7.9 per cent. In the two years before that earnings had grown between 5.3 per cent and 5.6 per cent. That compares to the Barnett household charges, which rose nine per cent last year, more than 11 per cent before that and a whopping 60 per cent over the term of this government. That can only be considered to be utterly regressive. As the member for Gosnells mentioned, this budget does nothing to ensure the whole community of Western Australia benefits equally from the resource boom.

This government labours the fact that the goods and services tax revenue is being sucked out of Western Australia. We take that issue very seriously. We also believe there should be a change in the GST distribution formula. That is why our opposition leader and shadow Treasurer went to Canberra to discuss this issue. Who signed the formula when the GST came in? It was Premier Court and Minister Barnett. They were the people

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who put their signature on the dotted line to allow the current formula to exist, so it is a bit rich for them to now complain about the circumstances when they were among the architects of the system in the first place. What they forget to tell the public of Western Australia is, yes the GST formula is inequitable for Western Australia now, but the GST revenue is only a small part of the overall state revenue. If it were a major part of the revenue, our revenue would not have increased from \$19.3 billion in 2007–08 to \$25.5 billion in 2012–13. There has been a 32 per cent increase in state revenue over the life of this government. Is the GST revenue distribution that we are receiving unjust? But the government is gilding the lily if it is implying that the GST is a major part of our overall revenue. It should be honest about that to the public of Western Australia. The Treasurer stood in this place a few weeks ago and lauded the federal Leader of the Opposition, Tony Abbott, while he was in Western Australia for making a positive statement that the GST carve up should be changed so that Western Australia is not disadvantaged. Surprisingly, a day or two later, when Mr Abbott was in Tasmania, he changed his mind when he said, “There will be no changes, Tasmania will receive what they currently receive.” That is classic Tony. As John Hewson said, Tony Abbott tells an audience what he thinks they should be told and the next day he tells another audience another story. The WA Treasurer should come back into this house and cite not only what Mr Abbott said in Western Australia but also what he said subsequently in Tasmania, which will tell us that the people of Western Australia will get no joy from Mr Abbott when it comes to the GST revenue carve up, and members opposite know that is the case. Tony Abbott is not governing for Western Australia; he is governing for what he thinks is in the best interests of his political party. Most of the federal seats are in the east, so we should not think the GST carve up will improve under an Abbott government. Both sides of the house agree that it is inequitable, but members should remember that Premier Barnett’s hand is on that formula, so it is a bit rich for him to now come into this place and complain about it.

I will now turn to my electorate. As I have said, there is nothing at all in this budget for my community, apart from the increases in household charges. When it comes to transport, nothing in this budget will bring joy to the residents of the south east corridor south of Cannington. When it comes to schools, there is nothing in this budget for my community. The budget papers contain a long list of current and future school projects; I could find nothing in the budget papers that related to my electorate. The one possibility—it would be interesting to hear from the Minister for Education on this—is on page 398 of volume 1 of budget paper No 2 where it states —

A total \$13.0 million has been provided for additional classrooms/student accommodation for schools under accommodation pressure in older residential areas.

I would like to know whether “older residential areas” includes the Armadale region. It should; Kelmscott Primary School is, I think, the second oldest or oldest primary school in Western Australia, so members would imagine that the residential area around Kelmscott Primary School would be an older residential area. It would be interesting to hear from the Minister for Education whether part of that \$13 million will go towards schools in my area. That is the only possible link to the Armadale region I could find in the budget papers. Of course the charges are linked to the Armadale region, as they are linked to everyone’s, but there is nothing in the budget relating to my region.

It is a shame that the Minister for Health is not in the chamber, because Armadale–Kelmscott Memorial Hospital is under incredible pressure. It is a catchment area for not only the Armadale region, but also the south of Armadale; on weekends, it is even a catchment area for many country towns. The money that was to be allocated for the future expansion of Armadale–Kelmscott hospital has been put on hold, and the forward estimates show no money being allocated for the further expansion of Armadale–Kelmscott hospital.

The budget papers tell us that the Premier’s priorities are being funded. Where do those priorities lie? They of course lie in the “Barnett Palace”, and they also lie in the central business district. As the Treasurer said last week, we do not want Kings Park and London Court to be the only things that tourists want to take a photograph of—he did not talk about, of course, the famous belltower—but the “Barnett Emperor’s Palace” will be ready quite soon. Yes, the CBD does need work, but that does not mean that there should be investment in the CBD at the expense of the suburbs. The Perth CBD is a very important area—no-one denies that—but most people do not live in the CBD. Most people live in the suburbs, and there is nothing at all in the budget from which the people in the suburbs of my area can derive joy.

That is brought home particularly in relation to the Armadale courthouse and police station. Last week, I and the member for Darling Range filed two petitions in this house that contained nearly 12 000 signatures relating to a 24-hour, seven-day public access police station and a new courthouse in Armadale. I think that is a true reflection of the demand in my area and that of the member for Darling Range for a courthouse and a 24/7 public access police station.

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A few weeks back the Commissioner of Police came to Kelmscott and held a community forum at which he stated that the south east corridor has the highest crime rate in the Perth metropolitan area—I think he said Western Australia, but I am not 100 per cent sure; I know it was definitely the highest in the metropolitan region. He then said that he is a great believer, as is the Minister for Police, in the hub system. I would dispute whether we should develop the hub system any further, but let us leave aside the issue of policing theory and policy about whether a hub or smaller community stations should be pursued. I believe we should have smaller community police stations because then we have a greater chance of a connection between the local community and the police. It is that greater connection between the local community and the police force that assists in developing a community approach to crime prevention. That is what is needed.

Armadale is a major regional centre, and for it not to have a police station open 24/7 for public access is a shame; it is deplorable. The Commissioner of Police said that he is looking at other hubs, but Armadale was not on the radar. How can Armadale not be on the radar of a new police hub? That is just something that cannot logically be true. The Commissioner of Police is telling us that the south east corridor has the highest crime rate in the metropolitan area and that the Armadale region is one of the fastest growing regions. Also, just south of Armadale, in the member for Darling Range's district, the Serpentine–Jarrahdale local government authority is the second fastest growing local government authority in Australia. How can the Commissioner of Police not consider a new police hub in the Armadale region? As I say, I believe we should have community police stations.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Absolutely.

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is what we need; we need the connection between the community and the police. However, if we cannot win that argument and the government will continue with the hub argument, there must be a hub in Armadale.

Mr D.T. Redman: You made the decision to shut six in regional areas in some of our communities.

Dr A.D. BUTI: If we are looking at the hub system, a hub is needed in Armadale.

Mr J.M. Francis: Where is your nearest 24-hour station?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Our nearest 24-hour station is Cannington.

Mr J.M. Francis: And other than that one?

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is it.

Mr J.M. Francis: Yes, but —

Dr A.D. BUTI: There are Fremantle, Perth, and there is going to be Cockburn, I know, soon.

Mr J.M. Francis: Yes, I know; I'm just curious.

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is something that the community of Armadale desperately needs and wants.

What about the courthouse? I have constantly communicated to the Attorney General–Treasurer on that matter since I have been in this house. I give the Attorney General credit in the sense that when I have raised this with him in correspondence, he has always replied, and generally the reply has been in a pretty timely fashion—although the last time I wrote, it took him a few months to reply, but I know he is very busy with his two portfolios. Nevertheless, the Armadale courthouse desperately needs to be demolished and replaced. I believe the Attorney General visited Armadale not long after he became Attorney General—before he became Treasurer—to visit a site that has been put aside for a new courthouse and police station. The Attorney General is very familiar with that site and very familiar with what is needed. I then visited the courthouse with a local journalist from the *Armadale Examiner*, which is the local newspaper in my region, and a couple of Department of Justice officials stated that Armadale courthouse was the highest priority courthouse in the metropolitan region for future capital works. Armadale courthouse is the only metropolitan courthouse that has not been replaced in the past decade, so obviously it should be the highest priority, but nothing in the budget papers provides funding for the new courthouse. The Law Society of WA wrote to the Attorney General about a new courthouse in Armadale. The Law Society stated —

Dear Attorney General

...

The Society notes that a number of concerns have been raised in relation to the Armadale Courthouse. These include overcrowding, unacceptably small courtrooms, insufficient meeting rooms and a troubling lack of privacy, security and parking.

Mr Christian Porter; Mr Roger Cook; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr David Templeman; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Peter Tinley

It has been brought to the Society's attention that in relation to the courtrooms, the majority of people waiting to be heard cannot wait in the courtroom allocated to them. Further, in relation to the courthouse's waiting areas, the waiting area outside the dedicated children's courtroom overflows into the main waiting area. We note that there is only the one waiting area in that regard. This main waiting area cannot hold the overflow from the courtrooms. This results in many people having to wait outside the courthouse where there is no shelter.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr A.D. BUTI: The letter goes on to state —

Overall, what we are faced with is a situation where all persons being heard are essentially "thrown together"—either in the small main waiting area or outside the courthouse itself. This is the case whether they be accused persons, police, witnesses, victim, families and/or children. Clearly, this raises some quite serious concerns.

It goes on. The Treasurer; Attorney General replied to me. As I said, he always replies to my correspondence. I received his reply on 10 April. He states —

The Armadale Courthouse and Police Station is a project which is considered in the context of other court projects, both regional and metropolitan. The project is a priority for the metropolitan area in this year's State Budget for both the Western Australia Police ... and the Department of the Attorney General ... However, in recent years greater priority has existed for courts in regional areas. This having been said, the court remains a metropolitan priority.

Unless I have missed the page in the budget papers, I can see nothing allocating any funding to the Armadale courthouse. It is the number one priority in the metropolitan region, but there is no current or future funding for it! Even though there is a site available for a new courthouse and police station—it is ready to go—the government is not prepared to commit, so that site may be lost. The Attorney General goes on to talk about the various country courthouses that require work. I do not deny that work is needed in those places. He talks about the Supreme Court. The Treasurer; Attorney General states —

One of the State Government's major infrastructure initiatives is to redevelop Cathedral Square in the Perth CBD with the private sector.

That all sounds very reasonable to me. His final sentence is —

I trust this response will go some way towards reassuring the Council of the priority that is being placed on the construction of a new Armadale Courthouse.

No, the letter does not give me any confidence! I do not think it will give the City of Armadale any confidence either. All we hear is that it is a priority but there is no funding allocated to it. The government can keep saying it is a priority but eventually there has to be money behind that priority.

If members visit the Armadale courthouse, they will see how deplorable it is. There are a number of local newspaper articles on the issue, basically talking about how overcrowded it is. There is a special domestic violence restraining order facility, which is absolutely revolting. Women who have been through the traumatic experience of domestic violence have to go into a tin shed to file a domestic violence order. Because the courthouse is so overcrowded, often the victim of the domestic violence incident is in very close proximity to the offender. The stress that causes is of course something that should not be borne by victims of domestic violence.

Either last year or the year before, a trial at the Armadale courthouse involved up to 20 prisoners from Banksia Hill Detention Centre appearing as witnesses. My understanding is that there are only three holding cells. Three holding cells had to house up to 20 prisoners. Of course there is a security issue there, but the privacy issue is phenomenal. There are lawyers taking instructions from clients in corridors; there is no room for that. There are lawyers trying to receive instructions and give advice to clients, and there are children all over the place. Child care is not available at the Armadale courthouse. It is a depressing situation. Courthouses are usually depressing places on a day-to-day basis—I am not blaming the government for that, I can assure members—but the fact is there is a desperate need for a new courthouse. The government admits it. The Treasurer; Attorney General admits it—it is the highest priority in the metropolitan region. It is the only courthouse in the metropolitan region that has not been replaced in the past 10 years. It would be nice for the Attorney General in his letter to say that it remains a high priority to actually —

Mr A.P. Jacob interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Joondalup is pretty new, though.

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Mr J.M. Francis: Fremantle.

Dr A.D. BUTI: There is a new courthouse in Fremantle. That was Jim McGinty's electorate.

A new Armadale courthouse needs to be built. Of course it makes a lot of sense to build it with a new police station. That police station needs to be operated 24/7. The current one operates 24/7, but the public do not have access to it 24/7. The Minister for Police and the Commissioner of Police will argue about this—I am not denying there is some justification for arguing it—but we want police out on the beat, not at the police station. The problem is there are not enough police on the beat. The police commissioner showed us the statistics when he came out to a community forum in Kelmscott: the south east corridor has the highest crime rate in Western Australia. A number of constituents who have come to my office have told me they have waited for hours for police to arrive. We also know of the ones who have gone to the federal member for Canning, who, in his colourful use of language, denigrated the police minister. One of the people who instigated the petitions, which resulted in nearly 12 000 signatures being filed in this chamber last week, was assaulted. He drove to Cannington Police Station and was told to take a ticket and wait. I think he waited for a number of hours. Surely whether one believes in a police hub system or smaller community police stations, that is not acceptable. That is completely unacceptable for the state of Western Australia—a state that is very rich and has a revenue base that is increasing day by day.

I do not know why the Armadale region seems to be forgotten. It was forgotten in last year's budget; it has been forgotten in this year's budget. As I stated, it is very disappointing that the future expansion of the Armadale–Kelmscott Memorial Hospital has been put on hold. There is no current or future investment for any schools in my region. I will be interested to find out from the Minister for Education whether the \$13 million-odd that has been allocated for schools in older residential areas includes some schools in my area. It should, because Kelmscott Primary School is the oldest or second-oldest school in the metropolitan region.

I would like to address now the 2011 bushfires in Kelmscott. I would like to start by quoting three victims. This article appeared in the *Comment News*. The first quote is from Frank, whose house burnt down, and states —

Mr Barnett has made it quite clear on a number of occasions that the payments to Toodyay and Margaret River is not compensation but a “hardship” payment. How come the hardship suffered by ... these people is any more than that suffered in Kelmscott? Help these people Mr Barnett.

The second quote, from Teena Elliot, states —

We lost everything in the Kelmscott fire. We are rebuilding now. I was also under insured. We will end up owing a lot more money, just to go home. Is that right?

The third quote, from June, states —

My 90-year-old partner and myself (80) lost our home of 16 years in the Kelmscott bushfires—we lost everything—all of our beautiful things gathered over a culmination of 170 years. We now live in my eldest daughter's lounge room. We would love to go home, but even though we were insured, the cost of rebuilding is considerable and not something we could contemplate without help.

This is an interesting issue. It is not easy for governments to determine the amount of money that they will pay out to victims of bushfires or fires. But the government has stated that it is not a compensation payment; it is an ex gratia payment. An ex gratia payment is a hardship payment for what was suffered. The point made by the victims at Kelmscott is that surely their suffering is as great as the suffering of those in Toodyay and Margaret River. They have lost their homes. Are the losses of Kelmscott victims not considered to be at the same level? We are not talking about the cause of the fires here. The Premier has made it quite clear that it is not a compensation payment; it is a hardship payment. Therefore, if it is a hardship payment, surely the hardship that has been suffered by the victims of the Kelmscott fires is as great as the hardship that was inflicted on the victims in Toodyay and Margaret River. If there is a difference in the hardship, why is there a difference? This issue is brought home to me even further when I consider what has happened with ex gratia payments in Victoria, where they have been awarded for hardship. The government in many respects should be congratulated for giving hardship payments, but if it is going to give hardship payments, it must make them equal. If it is a compensation issue, the cause will have an effect; I agree. But the Premier stated in this house last year that it was an ex gratia payment and that it was a hardship payment, not a compensation payment. People like Frank, Teena and June expect to be treated in the same way as were the victims in Margaret River and Toodyay.

In conclusion, this budget is a disappointment for my electorate, that being the community in the Armadale electorate. It contains nothing but an increase in household costs and an increase in utility costs, and also an increase in the state debt that will result in increased imposts to the taxpayers of Western Australia, which include my entire local community.

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MR A.J. WADDELL (Forrestfield) [9.24 pm]: A couple of months ago I was at a community event in my electorate called the Corymbia Festival Fun Day. It is probably one of the bigger festivals in Forrestfield. That day was a dreadfully hot day. It was a special day for me, as a large number of my colleagues visited the seat of Forrestfield; they really got to see it in a positive light and met a lot of people there. My opponent was there as well. He had a stand not too far away from mine. He had it fitted out with a big banner which read “Better Government”. I thought that was quite funny because I was not too sure whether he was advocating for better government or whether he had simply recycled his banner from the previous election. I suspect it was an act of recycling. However, it reminded me that the slogan “Better Government” was put about at the last election. It reminded me that a lot of what this government does is based on the perpetuation of a lie that it provides better government. Earlier today we saw a classic example of that when the Treasurer tried to justify his electricity increases by pointing out that Labor would have done the same, if not worse. His numbers were fairly rubbery.

Mr P. Papalia: Claiming, not pointing out.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Claiming, yes. I thank the member for Warnbro for the interjection. The Treasurer was claiming that Labor would have done the same, and he was using some extraordinary logic to make that claim. The first thing the Treasurer got wrong was that, although this government was elected in 2008 and imposed a 10 per cent electricity hike at that time, the then Labor government had already brought out its budget for the year and was certainly not advocating any further increase. Therefore, in 2008, if we take an average family household with electricity charges of \$963 per annum, right out of the gate that \$963 would have been \$963 had Labor been in power. Of course it became \$1 059.30 under the current government—a difference of \$96.30. I remember very clearly those advertisements that said a Liberal government would deliver lower power prices. So, right out of the gate, in the first few months of the government, that promise was broken by the delivery of an increase of what turned out to be \$96.30.

In the following year, 2009, this government implemented a further increase of 24 per cent. Of course that 24 per cent was cumulative on the previous 10 per cent, which would have raised the original charge of \$963 to \$1 313. Had Labor been in government, it would have put in the promised 10 per cent increase, which would have taken it to \$1 059—thus a difference of \$254. The Liberal government therefore delivered an increase of \$254 more than a Labor government would have. Again, that promise of lower prices under the Liberal government is not true.

In 2010 there was a further 10 per cent increase by this Liberal government. In 2010 another 10 per cent would have been imposed by the Labor government, had it been the government, taking the respective prices up to \$1 444 under the Liberals and \$1 165.23 under Labor—a difference of \$279. Still we have no lower prices.

In 2011—at this time the government was waking up to some of the pain it was causing—it introduced only a five per cent increase. Let us assume Labor would have gone on with its 10 per cent increase. Under the Liberals it would have been \$1 517 to Labor’s \$1,281—a difference of \$236. The gap is slightly narrowing. Still the Liberal claim is not true; the Liberal government did not deliver lower prices.

In 2012—now it is really putting the brakes on—the Liberals introduce an increase of 3.5 per cent. Let us compare that with Labor’s 10 per cent. Let us also, for the sake of argument, throw in the nine per cent carbon tax. Again, contrary to what the Treasurer said, that nine per cent carbon tax will apply to consumers regardless of who is in government. Regardless of whether the Liberal Party is in government or we are in government, the federal government will impose a nine per cent carbon tax. Let us take that nine per cent and add that to the Liberal government’s 3.5 per cent increase, which now takes it to —

Mr J.M. Francis: Hypothetically.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: No; the 3.5 per cent plus nine per cent on the government side will take us through to \$1 706.

Mr J.M. Francis interjected.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Yes, but it will be paid by consumers. An increase of 10 per cent plus nine per cent would give \$1 525 on the Labor side—a difference of \$181.48. Cumulatively, that family has paid \$1 047 more under the Liberal government than it would have under the policy of an equivalent Labor government for the same period of time.

Mr J.M. Francis interjected.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: I am just pointing out that the Treasurer essentially tried to create an illusion in this place earlier today about what is really going on. But the reality is that nothing but pain is associated with what the government is doing. The government is trying to bring the brakes on now, but the horse has bolted. The

Extract from Hansard

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community is aware of the pain that the government has caused, and no matter how much the government tries to blame somebody else, no matter how much it tries to blame Canberra, and no matter how much it tries to blame us, the reality is that these are decisions that the government has made.

Forrestfield is in the eastern corridor. The member for Armadale has just pointed out how there is virtually nothing in the budget for Armadale. I think this is true for the majority of areas in the eastern corridor. We continue to be the poor relation in this state. In fact, on my examination of the budget, I could clearly say a similar thing about Forrestfield. There are only a few mentions in the budget of Forrestfield, or of any of the other suburbs that I represent. The main mention is the Gateway WA project, but in fact virtually all of the Gateway project will not occur within my electorate. That is despite the fact that the Minister for Transport keeps trying to school me with his giant posters on the Gateway project. I would like to thank the Minister for Transport for his efforts on the weekend. I remember being quite incensed when I saw his face on television and I caught a glimpse of the guy who will be running against me standing next to him, and I thought, “What’s going on here?”, only to find out that the minister had invited only Liberal candidates to his press conference. The debate over the next couple of days was absolutely terrific, because, for the first time, the media reported the fact that all of this great work that is being reported is 70 per cent funded by the federal government—again demonstrating that what the minister is delivering is far less than what he is trying to make us think he is delivering.

There has been a big song and dance about the money that is being spent on those high schools that will need to have some work done to bring in the year 7 entry. I point out that nothing has been delivered in Forrestfield on that score—in fact, quite the contrary. The major high school in Forrestfield has just been delivered a massive blow. A few days ago we read in the paper that there has been a change of policy and schools will now have to focus on their local intake and will not be able to take in people from outside their intake area. Darling Range Sports College has one of the premier sports programs in the state and it draws from pretty much every electorate that is represented in this place. It is doing very well. It has been well represented at state and national championships for various sports. I have spoken to the principal of that school, Mr Peter Noack, and he is very proud of the work that the college has managed to achieve. However, this new policy that the government is introducing will destroy all the work that that college has done over the last five years. The elite sports program that the college is putting in place will be diminished significantly. I think the government is making a huge mistake by bringing in that policy. The government is bringing in that policy because there has been a lack of planning and a lack of funding in the budget for the year 7 entry, and this is a stopgap measure to deal with that.

I have spoken in this place many times about the need for an upgrade at Maddington train station. There is nothing in the budget per se about that station, although I did go to a briefing the other day at which Hon Helen Morton indicated that there is probably some money in the budget for that train station. I have had a look at the line item for train station works. It is about \$19 million across the entire city. I cannot imagine that we could get very much for that at a modern train station. So I expect that the station will probably get a new lick of paint, and maybe some wheelchair ramps, or something like that, but I am not expecting big things there.

The big thing that we did receive in Forrestfield was increased fees and charges. The cost of living in Forrestfield continues to go up. People are finding it increasingly difficult to survive. A further six per cent increase in water charges will impact on a lot of people. Even though the increase in electricity charges has been dropped to 3.5 per cent, the reality is that people are aware of the fact that they face a further 25 per cent increase over the next few years from this government. That will impact significantly on their ability to balance their books. But balancing books does not appear to be a priority for this government. We are seeing debt blowing out of proportion. When we compare the debt that the government inherited from the last Labor government with the current level of debt, we would have to say that this is probably one of the biggest spending governments that has ever sat in this place. The government seems to have no concern whatsoever about the legacy that is being left for our children. I think that is a real tragedy.

I understand that sometimes there is good debt. Good debt is where we build infrastructure and build the productive capacity of the state. However, I do not see a lot of evidence of that good debt here. We hear a lot of big promises, and we hear a lot of talk. I have sat here for the last three years and have listened to the Premier talk up the Oakajee project and how it is the most significant development in Western Australia—it was everything. In fact, when I first entered this place, I was very surprised at the ferocity of the debate, and I learnt a great deal about this project, particularly as the government had indicated that it wanted to take partial ownership of that project and put the state’s money into it. I thought that was a rather odd position to take for a conservative government. But now we have learnt that Oakajee is an abject failure, and it has essentially been removed from the budget, along with a number of other things.

So what is the government spending the money on? That is the question. The government is building monuments to itself. The “Premier’s Palace” is coming on board. I think that will be a great tourist site. It will probably pull

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in people from all over the world to look at “Col’s folly”. But we will also get the foreshore development. I do not know what people in other members’ electorates think, but it is a great topic in my electorate. Whenever I talk about it, people roll their eyes and go, “You’ve got to be kidding me! Why would we waste our money digging that up? We quite like the Perth foreshore. We don’t see the need for that project—and, my goodness, what is it going to do to transport in the area?” Members need to understand that those of us who live in the eastern suburbs often go via Riverside Drive to get to the western suburbs. Now we will be forced to travel through the tunnel, which can be congested at the best of times, and I think even the extra lane in the tunnel will not solve the problem. So what will we get for this half a billion dollars that the government will be spending on the foreshore—more coffee shops? That is probably the last thing that we need.

The other great project that the government talks about is the stadium. Frankly, sport is sport. Sport has an important place in our society, but we could have made do. There were better options. We do not need to spend that kind of money. It reminds me of when I was building my house. We always try to get our priorities right. We have to balance this; we have to balance that. If I had gone to my wife and said, “Hey, I tell you what; I’ve got this great idea. Let’s build a world-class home theatre, with all the latest electronics and a gigantic screen and surround sound, but, in order to do that, we’ll not be able to afford a driveway, because we don’t need a driveway, and the bathroom doesn’t actually need to have a floor, or a roof, or hot water, because we’ll need to spend all our money on this lovely home theatre”, she would quite rightly have told me that my priorities were completely out of whack. We should take care of the essentials before we start building on the luxuries. But, unfortunately, that is what the government is failing to do. The government is failing to take care of the essentials. The government is failing to take care of the basic needs—that is, basic public transport, basic health and basic education—and it is spending the money on these great monuments to itself. It is the utter height of arrogance for the government to think that in some way it is building important things when it is doing that. The reality is that the government is making very poor decisions, because it is deciding to build monuments to itself, such as the foreshore and the stadium, and it is pulling money out of health and cutting back on important projects in our education system, and people know that.

Before the government starts shouting at me about the future fund and its vision for the future fund, well, do not get me started on the future fund! Again, let us go back to the household example. I want to improve my superannuation fund. It would be great if I had an extra \$200 000 in my superannuation fund. That would be terrific. How am I going to get that? I know! Why not put it on my Visa card! I could probably get a 10 per cent return on my superannuation fund, if I was lucky. I would be paying a minor 22 per cent interest rate on my Visa card, but I will not worry about that; I will worry about that debt in the future. The reality is that I would be falling behind by 12 per cent all the time. That is what the government is doing with its future fund. It is borrowing money to save money. That makes no sense at all. It really worries me that the government thinks that that is a good idea. I do not have a problem with a sovereign wealth fund, if we have a surplus. If we had money and we did not know what to spend it on, that would be terrific, but we do not. The government is skimping on the essentials, cutting back programs and carrying a huge debt, yet it is trying to create smoke and mirrors by saying that it is visionary with its future fund.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr A.J. WADDELL: The reality is that people see through the future fund. The government must realise that it cannot fund this sort of thing with debt. What people really want are the simple things. They want their kids to go to good schools. They want the hospital system to work. They do not want ambulances ramping. They want to know that when they pick up the phone and call the police, the police will come. That is one of the most common complaints I get—that the police do not come when they ring. Recently, there have been some terrible incidents within my electorate. People are rightfully concerned about the impacts of crime on them. Recently, there have been a number of horrifying attacks on people in their own homes. In these home invasions, criminals have simply smashed their way into houses and demanded cars, money and items from the families. I will read a couple of reports about these incidents. The first one states —

Six offenders smashed their way into a Forrestfield home sometime between midnight and 1am and assaulted two residents—men aged 36 and 32—with what was believed to be a wooden pole or bat ... The attackers stole a handbag, ornamental swords and a Ford Falcon XR6 Turbo Sedan from the property.

Later that same evening there was another terrifying home invasion, but this time in Maddington. The report in the media states —

Just after 1am, about four men armed with knives smashed through a glass lounge room window at a home in Sevington Street ... They demanded cash and the keys to the Subaru Impreza WRX parked on the front lawn. The offenders fled in the stolen car.

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In the second invasion, a husband was physically threatened while his wife and children, who were sleeping in the house, were also put at incredible risk—in their own home. That family will never feel safe again. If people cannot feel safe and secure in their own home, what is our society coming to? In the past 12 months in Kenwick, just one suburb in my electorate, there have been 150 burglaries, 115 of which were in homes. In just one suburb, there are three burglaries a week. They might not all be as violent or as newsworthy as the ones I have just read, but each of those burglaries represents someone's house, somebody who no longer feels safe and somebody who feels that they are not being properly protected in our society.

There have been 66 assaults in the past 12 months in the same suburb. Sixty-six individual people have been either physically or sexually assaulted; that is a rate of one every five or six days. People are asking me, "Why is it that when we pick up the phone, the police aren't there? Why is it that we get referred to the Midland hub? Why isn't the local police station open 24/7?" That is what they want. They want to feel safe. They want to feel that the government is delivering the services that they rightfully deserve. The Labor Party will deliver those services when it is next in government. We will make sure that local police stations are properly resourced. We will move back to community policing. That is what people want. They want to know that there are police within our suburbs who understand those suburbs and do not have to come from 10 kilometres away, that the police know the local people and the local circumstances, and that the police know whose door to knock on when certain things happen. They want to feel safe in the knowledge that there are police in our suburbs who have good knowledge of our suburbs. They want our suburbs to be places that they can feel proud to live in. They want to say, "This is a place that I can raise my children in and not have to worry about the seamier side of life impinging on it." Of course, that is another one of the great debates that we will one day get to have in this place if the government ever decides to follow through on its 100-day plan—that is, the idea that it will not introduce brothels into our suburbs. Again, the government says that they will just be in industrial zones. Industrial zones happen to abut suburbs within the Forrestfield electorate, areas where people live in High Wycombe and houses in Maddington. The reality is that when the government introduces its laws, it will allow brothels to operate within a few metres of where kids live. People do not want that. They are not asking for that. They do not want the government to drag down the communities. I am sure that it will not happen in the leafy green western suburbs. They know that. They know that it will happen in the suburbs that I represent. The people in my electorate know that they deserve better than that, and that is why they are disappointed by this government when it tries to bring in policies of that type.

The other issue that I want to talk about is one on which I have clashed several times with the Minister for Transport—that is, the Berkshire Road–Roe Highway intersection. The Berkshire Road intersection is a weird little dogleg. There have been many significant traffic incidents on it. It is dangerous. Large trucks have to enter the very busy and high-speed Roe Highway across this dogleg. They often have to completely block Roe Highway as they make the turn. This issue has been raised with me many times and I have spoken in this place about it on several occasions. I was dearly hoping to see something in this budget—that this black spot would be dealt with. The minute the budget came out, the first thing I did was dive through the budget papers to see whether there was any mention of the Berkshire Road–Roe Highway intersection, but of course I could not find one. The budget papers are not flimsy. They are certainly significant; they are rather thick. But the detail in them can often be scant. The government is big; there is a lot of money to be played with. There might be line items that refer to \$19 million for new capital works or \$20 million for a train station program. I suspect that somewhere buried in the budget papers is a bit of discretion. I would like to challenge the Minister for Transport—I see that he is in the chamber now—to use some of the discretion that probably exists within the budget and promise the people of Forrestfield in the next week or so that he will deliver on that intersection. Let us stop playing politics with it. Let us stop the "he said, she said". Let us do something that the community wants. Let us fix a problem and not play partisan politics for a change. That is what people are asking of me. They say, "I'm glad that you've announced that you'll do it when you're next in government, but the reality is that we know you're not in government now. How can you get this government to support it?" I said that I would raise it on every opportunity I could, and that is why I am raising it today. I will look for any holes I can find in the budget so that I can argue that there is an opportunity to fund it. I will certainly challenge the Minister for Transport to do that. I hoped that he would make that announcement when I saw him on television the other day standing next to my opponent. I was going to say, "That is terrific. That is what the community needs. Congratulations; well done. Now here are three other problems that we need to fix." I note that the minister has now left the chamber, but I am certain that he heard my message. I hope that he will take it on board and see that that discretion is there. He attacked me the other day. He said that he felt that the promise that the Leader of the Opposition and I made was an unfunded one and that the money would not be there, because we said that it would be part of the existing Gateway WA project. Our promise is our word. If we say we will do it, we will do it. I am certainly not going to be yet another empty-headed seat warmer who simply talks the talk but does not deliver. I honestly believe that whatever I can bring to the seat of Forrestfield and the

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suburbs of High Wycombe, Forrestfield, Maddington, Kenwick, Wattle Grove and Maida Vale is really what I am here to do. I am here to bring them as much as I possibly can to bridge the gap that has been building for quite some time. As I said, I would welcome that announcement; I would be very pleased if the Minister for Transport would come out and do that as soon as possible.

While the minister is at it, he could probably explain why there was no mention in this budget of the train line. He came into this place and talked about it a couple of months ago—I believe he was waving a newspaper about. I certainly saw in the local newspaper his claim that he thought a train line out to the foothills is a good idea. Well, unfortunately, there is not one cent for that in the budget; not one cent to investigate it, not one cent to work a plan and not one cent for community consultation—nothing whatsoever for that. It does not surprise me. This government’s record on public transport, and particularly trains, is fairly appalling. The Liberal Party is very good at making promises. I recall during the last election campaign the Liberal Party saying that it would deliver a train line out to Ellenbrook; it matched the Labor promise to do that. Of course, the minute it got into government, it reneged on that. Everyone in Western Australia knows that it was a Liberal government that shut down the Fremantle line. Everyone knows that this government wants to shut down the tier 3 grain freight network, which is going to result in so many more trucks cruising the streets, particularly through the suburbs I represent. Everyone knows that Liberal governments have a very poor track record when it comes to trains. It did not surprise me to not see it in the budget, but, again, we should start the process. It is inevitable that in Perth there will one day be tightly and decently planned public transport infrastructure. There will be train lines going out to my area. There will be light rail throughout the city. Let us get on with planning for that and the process. Let us talk with the community to determine the best places for it to go. I would love to see a train line running down Sultana Road in Forrestfield; I think that is a perfect place for a train line to come from the airport out to the foothills. I envisage it one day joining up with the Midland line going to the north and the Cannington line going to the south. I know I cannot go to an election and say that this is my grand plan and that this is what I am going to promise—I suspect the Leader of the Opposition would tell me that my several-billion-dollar promise was a bridge too far—but what we can do is to start to talk about the need for it and we can start to plan for it. That does not take a lot of effort or money. It is disappointing that the Minister for Transport was quite happy to grab a front-page story in the newspaper and say, “I think it’s a good idea whose time has come and we need to do it”, yet at the same time he did nothing, zero, zip to actually get one cent into the budget to start that process. I challenge him to forget about partisan politics. He should hold a transport forum in the area. Let us talk with the community to find out the best way to deliver the public transport services that are needed throughout Forrestfield. Let us start that planning process. I know that it took Labor more than one term to get the Mandurah train line up and running, but we did it. I remember being at the state conference where we announced it.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro) [9.53 pm]: I would cede some time to the member for Forrestfield if I had the opportunity to do so, but unfortunately I cannot.

I intend to take the opportunity in this debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2012–13 Bill 2012 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2012–13 Bill 2012 to focus a little on the shadow portfolios I hold—education and agriculture and food—and to speak quite extensively about my own electorate; to speak to the people and on behalf of the people of the electorate of Warnbro. Before I do that, I will take the liberty of indulging myself a little by reflecting on the fact that last Friday morning I had the privilege of attending a special event at HMAS *Stirling* on Garden Island in the member for Rockingham’s electorate in the Australian clearance diving team 4 building. I was able to witness His Excellency the Governor Malcolm McCusker, AC, present to Western Australia’s diving team—there are only two in the nation; one on the east coast and one on the west, and we are very fortunate to have that diving team here—the Gloucester Cup for 2011. The Gloucester Cup is an award in the Navy. There is one for each of the services, but in the Navy it is presented to the premier operational unit each year. There is obviously a bit of a lag, so it was awarded this year for last year. Last year, for the first time in the history of the award, it went to a unit other than a big grey ship or a black submarine. I was very proud to be there to witness Lieutenant Commander Baz Purkiss, the commanding officer of that team, receive the cup from the maritime commander and be honoured by the presence of the Governor. I was there in the company of other former navy clearance divers. Former Commodore Clem Littleton was there, as was my friend Jason Dunn, who was a fellow member of clearance diving team 3, representing the Western Australian branch of the RAN Clearance Divers Association. What was notable on that day was that also present were at least half a dozen senior sailors—these were petty officers—who had served in Afghanistan in an explosive ordnance disposal role with the Australian forces. Every one of these gentlemen was bemedalled and worthy of acknowledgement. They were wearing the combat badges they had earned in that theatre of operation. All of them had risked their lives on countless occasions on each of their deployments. It was a bit humbling to meet them, talk to them, discuss their exploits and acknowledge them as the professionals they are. We are very fortunate that we, as Western Australians, have such a wonderful unit. I am very proud of having been a former commanding officer and executive officer of that unit. I just wanted to

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place on the record this evening that the team has been acknowledged more widely. As the only non-vessel to be awarded the prize, it is an incredible accolade and appropriate acknowledgment for clearance diving team 4, predominantly for those individuals who were deployed as detachments, but also for a number of clearance diving team 4 personnel who have served off the Horn of Africa in counter-piracy roles in high-level boarding operations. Those people rarely get acknowledged or recognised, partly because some of the individuals who go on those operations have served in counter-terrorist roles or were trained as counter-terrorist specialists with the commando regiment and are, by necessity, subject to some secrecy. Those sorts of deployments and the other operational roles that the team performed in the year meant that they were worthy recipients of the award.

I now turn to the budget. There are a lot of disappointments in this year's budget. Viewed by me as not just a member of the opposition but also a citizen of Western Australia, it is clear that the poor financial management of the Barnett government has resulted in a vast accumulation of debt, with very little else to show for the last three and a half long years of the Barnett government. That is no more evident than in the education portfolio. The Minister for Education recently put out a release trumpeting the move of year 7s to high school in 2015, which she had announced on 8 December in conjunction with the Premier. She put out a release on Monday stating that the government had put \$256 million in the budget to fund this move. The helpful little budget-at-a-glance card included with the budget papers provides some additional information; it provides the full costing of that move. Apart from the money in the education budget, there is money from royalties for regions allocated to achieving the objective of moving year 7s to high school in 2015. When it is all added up, it equates to \$341 million. That sounds interesting and worthy, and sounds as though the government is providing additional funds to the education of our young people in preparation for what will be a significant change to education in this state if, in 2015, year 7s transition into high schools. The problem is that when we explore the announcement a little further and look behind the gloss and the spin and ask a few questions, it becomes very clear that it is a sham.

It is not often that there are many benefits in waiting until 10.00 pm to deliver a budget reply speech, but on this occasion there was one: tomorrow's *The West Australian* has arrived in the Parliament, which probably explains why most government members have left the chamber and are assiduously reading articles by, I imagine, both Gary Adshead and Gareth Parker, and trying desperately to determine how negative the budget stories will appear to the people of Western Australia when they read them tomorrow. There is indeed an article on page 5 of tomorrow's *The West Australian* that illustrates one of the biggest problems with this budget: the falseness of many of the arguments that have been put in this place and elsewhere by the Premier and the Treasurer over the last week; the suggestions that have been made by the Treasurer when addressing members of the business community at Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia breakfasts and the like; and remarks made by the Premier when addressing press conferences around town in the week since the budget was delivered. This article gives the lie to many of the claims made by the Premier, the Treasurer and, indeed, the entire government, over the last week or so. It has the heading, "Labor digs up 'sham' Budget", and it is indeed a sham. The shadow Treasurer today revealed that the Treasurer has used a sleight of hand and a manoeuvre that, to paraphrase the Treasurer, is as slippery as a bucketful of eels, or eels in slippery oil, or whatever analogy it was that he used and then laughed at—because he always laughs at his own jokes—while the government backbenchers dutifully laughed along.

It is, however, an appropriate analogy, because the Treasurer has shifted the Public Transport Authority from where it is normally reported in the budget to a place that creates the false impression of a \$196 million surplus, when in reality the surplus is only \$26 million. There is not one member of the government who could put their hand on their heart and say that the people of Western Australia would view a surplus of \$26 million in a more sceptical or critical light than that which was delivered by the Treasurer on budget day. It is impossible to suggest that this was done for any other purpose than to create the false impression that the government is in control of the state's finances. The reality is far from that; the reality is that this is a government that has lost control of expenditure, and that is why so many government departments are being compelled to cut expenditure over the coming year. They are being compelled to cut costs, not necessarily because of appropriate efficiency moves, but because the Premier, the Treasurer and the government have lost control of the budget.

That is what is happening in education. The other side of the education story, as the Treasurer announced on budget day last week, is an allocation of \$341 million to education to fund the transfer of year 7 students to high school. The Treasurer did not say that the efficiency dividend, which is the catch-up as a result of the appalling financial management by this government and the money it will rip out of education, is the equivalent of \$317 million. What does that leave for moving year 7 students to high school in 2015? I suggest that it is barely enough to do the planning or to fund this year's allocation of about \$20 million. It is extraordinary for the government to suggest that it will be able to shift year 7 students to high school in 2015 for around \$20 million, because that is the net difference between the money that the government will be forced to hack out of education and the money that it has put in to suggest that it is somehow adding to education. It becomes even more critical

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when we consider it in light of the estimates of the cost of shifting year 7 students to high school that the Department of Education provided the Labor government in 2007. I ask members to remember that this is not 2015. In 2007 the cost of shifting year 7 students to high school was put at in excess of \$800 million. Even if the \$341 million was the real cost and those funds were in the budget to shift year 7 students to high school in 2015, one could reasonably assume that figure would be completely inadequate based on the department's own estimates provided only a few years prior to now.

When we consider what the former Queensland government did to achieve this process, the Barnett government's efforts appear even more amateurish, more inadequate and worthy of more criticism and scrutiny. The former Queensland Labor government recognised that moving year 7 students to high school in 2015—it set the same target date—would be incredibly challenging. The Queensland government knew that, and instead of foisting the decision upon the parents of its state in December and then announcing an inadequate funding mechanism in the following budget in May and suggesting that consultation would commence after that date, it set a process in train in February 2010. It started planning five years before it would shift year 7 students to high school. The Queensland government produced a green paper and distributed it widely so that everyone in the state—the opposition, parents, teachers and anyone interested in education—could see its plan for undertaking that major shift of year 7s to high school. The former Queensland government did that in February 2010, five years before it wanted to achieve the move. The government put out the green paper and told everyone in the state that it would conduct consultation; it welcomed input from parents, teachers and anyone else around the state.

The former Queensland government undertook more than 90 public consultation forums right around the state; it sought input from people and enabled people to question the departmental and ministerial representatives and to provide direct input. The Queensland government also enabled a long consultation period so that people could make written submissions or appear before the public forums. Once the Queensland government received all those submissions, it extended the deadline past the end of 2010 to take more written submissions. The whole of 2010 was dedicated to consultation. The Queensland government then extended the consultation period. In June 2011, the Queensland government produced a white paper based on all the consultation, the input, the considerations and the problems that had been identified by talking to the people of its state. The white paper was available to anyone to look at. It proposed a time line, a phased implementation, because the Queensland government acknowledged that it would be challenging, that it would be costly and that there was a great deal of concern among the parents of the state whose children would be subjected to this significant change that they had not necessarily anticipated when their children commenced their schooling. In 2013 they planned a trial of year 7 students in 20 high schools. In 2013 they will introduce a junior secondary category in high schools for years 8 and 9, so that model can be fine-tuned for two years prior to the year 7s arriving. They will move year 7s to high school in 2015, so that process will be an effective, consultative, inclusive, well-planned and fully budgeted process that will take five years to implement. Compare that to what we have here. The Minister for Education spent two and a half years wandering around schools occasionally mentioning that it might be necessary to move year 7s to high school.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P. PAPALIA: She never made any real announcement until 8 December last year. With the Premier holding her hand, the minister came out and said —

Mr C.J. Barnett: Don't be so patronising; it's appalling. Show respect for women in Parliament.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The Premier is the most abusive person to women in this place. He cannot speak to the member for West Swan without being abusive. He is arrogant, dismissive and condescending to women at all times. It is incredible that he even has the gall to suggest that. Has the Minister for Education released a major announcement without the Premier's photograph on it? It might not have been accurate to say that the Premier was holding her hand, but he is always at her press conferences when she makes a major announcement. He is always there. He does not allow the minister to go out on her own and make serious announcements. That is the observation I was making; it is a fair observation. He did it for this announcement.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It is patronising to one of the most respected women in Western Australia.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The Premier makes patronising people an art form; he has elevated patronising people, particularly women, to an art form. We have many more women on this side and they are often subjected to his inappropriate and patronising behaviour.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Give me an example.

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Mr P. PAPALIA: Every time the member for West Swan speaks, every time the member for Girrawheen interjects on you.

Mr C.J. Barnett: He never stops. You are incredibly weak. I have listened to you for 20 minutes. You have not grasped what the year 7 change is.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am glad the Premier is here. The decision to move year 7s to high school was made by him without consultation; is that not true?

Mr C.J. Barnett: No; it's been talked about for the past three years. It's part of the national curriculum.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister went to morning tea after a ribbon-cutting ceremony and talked to someone about moving year 7s to high school. Is that what they did in Queensland? Is that an appropriate consultation process?

Mr C.J. Barnett: You still do not understand what the change is.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is the Premier saying people in the regions have been adequately consulted about this announcement he made in December last year? Is he suggesting it is 100 per cent supported by people in the regions?

Mr C.J. Barnett: I am not suggesting anything. But I talk to country people and when I talk to them, they accept it.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The Premier has, himself, acknowledged —
Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I can barely hear myself speak, Mr Speaker. There is some noise coming from the other end of the chamber, but I welcome the Premier's interjections.

He has acknowledged in the budget papers, himself, that this will be very unpopular and very challenging in the regions because he has included the opportunity for some parents at some schools to approach their principal to somehow make an arrangement for their children to remain in year 7 at their local primary school for the three years from 2015, 2016 and 2017. The problem is that the Premier does not give information as to which schools they are. He does not give them any support. He does not give them any funding or resourcing —

Mr C.J. Barnett: How would you know that?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Because it is not in the budget.

Mr C.J. Barnett: For goodness' sake! The project team will go around and visit every secondary school in the state.

Mr P. PAPALIA: There is a project team that will go around and visit every secondary school in the state.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Every single secondary school.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Where is that stated?

Mr C.J. Barnett: I am just telling you what is going to happen.

Mr P. PAPALIA: So the people of Western Australia can now rest assured that the Premier has announced in Parliament at 10.15 in the evening that there will be a project team, but he has not told anybody.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I just told you

Mr P. PAPALIA: He has just told me, but what about the parents of the children who are going to be subjected to this move? Does the Premier think it is appropriate that he consult them prior to them encountering the move? Does he think that it might be worth asking them what they fear as to the implications for their children? Does the Premier think it might be an appropriate thing for a minister or a Premier before announcing the decision in this manner to actually go and meet with people and say what he intends to do and seek their input?

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, because parents have known this change was being considered for some time—all P&Cs. I recognise, and the minister does, that there are some issues in country areas. That is why we are allowing, if you like, a soft phase-in in country areas. Thirty per cent of schools already have year 7 in high school.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I beg your pardon?

Mr C.J. Barnett: Thirty per cent of the share of the secondary education already have year 7 in secondary.

Mr P. PAPALIA: How many public schools?

Mr C.J. Barnett: About six.

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Mr P. PAPALIA: Correct. How many public high schools are there?

Mr C.J. Barnett: There are about 60.

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, there are 92.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You are including district highs in that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is not that important. The important thing is what the Premier said earlier. He said that he did not think it is appropriate that he consult parents.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, I did not say that. They are your words, not mine.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Actually, we will look at *Hansard* and I think we will find that they are your words.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I myself have talked to secondary schools in country areas about it.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The Premier has not gone out. Until 8 December last year, no-one in the Premier's government had gone out and said, "We intend to shift year 7s to high school in 2015." The Premier has not done that. That happened in December. To suggest otherwise is just ridiculous.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I haven't suggested anything. I have suggested we made a decision. It is the right decision, and we are allowing some flexibility in country areas.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I find this interesting, because the Premier says it is the right decision.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Yes, because it is part of the national curriculum. You cannot have the national curriculum without doing this.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Actually, Premier, I consulted Minister Garrett's office on Monday, and I asked whether it was part of the national curriculum for year 7s to be in high school, and he said no. The federal minister for education, who is leading the national curriculum process, said, "No, it is not necessary for year 7 to be in high school"—as they know in South Australia, as the Premier well knows —

Mr C.J. Barnett: Yes, let's hold South Australia up as a shining example—give us a break! Their schools are declining. Their population of students is going down. That tells you something.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Interesting. What I want to do, though, is elicit from the Premier a little more. It is not the national curriculum, so what is the argument for moving year 7 to high school? I am not saying either way.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I have listened to you for 20 minutes, and you have not understood it for one moment.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Illuminate the subject for me.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I will tell you. Under the national curriculum, what is taught and the structure of education in year 7 is different from what it currently is. It is not a shift of year 7 primary schooling to secondary school; it is the creation of a new year 7 on a secondary syllabus and curriculum with specialist teachers, not the format of primary education. That is the reason. Have you got it now?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Which part of the national curriculum says that there has to be year 7 in high school? It is not necessary.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It is the structure of the curriculum that dictates year 7 being —

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, the Premier is wrong. He is actually wrong.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Sorry; that is the decision that has been made all around Australia.

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, it has not been made all around Australia.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It has—because the other states have already got it.

Mr P. PAPALIA: If it was in every state, that would be true, but it is not.

Mr C.J. Barnett: South Australia—give us a break!

Mr P. PAPALIA: The Premier is claiming on one hand it is the national curriculum. What other argument does he have? It is not the national curriculum, so what other argument has he got?

Mr C.J. Barnett: Thirty per cent of secondary students already are in school systems which have year 7.

Mr P. PAPALIA: A lot of independent schools do it.

Mr C.J. Barnett: And government schools, too—Ballajura, for example.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is an interesting argument. Has the Premier got any other arguments?

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Mr C.J. Barnett: Those are two fairly convincing ones, I would have thought.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The reason I am saying it is that the Premier has not consulted the people of Western Australia. He had not suggested to the parents whose children will be subjected to this move in 2015 that he was going to do it. Before December last year, which was only a few months ago, he had not said it to anybody.

Mr C.J. Barnett: And it is 2015—three years away.

Mr P. PAPALIA: As I said, a proper planning process was put in place in Queensland, and they took five years.

Mr C.J. Barnett: We can do things quicker in this state. We do not take five years to make an education decision.

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, the Premier does not talk to people! He does not ask people. The reason —

Mr C.J. Barnett: I can see why you could never make a decision of any merit in government, because you could never actually get to the point of making a decision. Right across your portfolios you flounder around!

Mr P. PAPALIA: You are extraordinary! You have made an incredible litany of bad decisions, and you are claiming that somehow to be meritorious!

Mr C.J. Barnett: I hope you never, ever get to be an education minister.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is not meritorious to make stupid decisions and then have to backflip, such as the pauper funerals; what a ridiculous decision! What a ridiculous decision! Pauper funerals—ridiculous decision!

Mr C.J. Barnett: What's that got to do with year 7?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Like the compensation for child abuse victims in state care—stupid decision! Consistent backflips! Like your stupid decision to —

Mr C.J. Barnett: You can always pick someone who can't handle an issue when they change the topic! You can always pick someone who hasn't got the intellect to keep to the issue.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, like your stupid decision to take pensioners' compensation money from the federal government that you had to backflip on because it was a stupid decision. It is not a good idea; it does not befit —
Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Making bad decisions does not make you good; just because you leap in and make bad decisions without consulting people —

Mr C.J. Barnett: Just a weak member—a weak member. You'll never be a minister—you ain't got it!

Mr P. PAPALIA: — if you sought out anyone other than sycophants, you might actually get some advice that might help you not have to do so many backflips! I mean, you are starting to look like an Olympic gymnast!

Mr C.J. Barnett: That was a joke.

Mr P. PAPALIA: You will be off to London shortly!

Mr J.M. Francis: This is coming from the party that changed its mind on Sunday trading!

Mr P. PAPALIA: Playing to the peanut gallery!

Mr C.J. Barnett: You know you will never be a minister; you ain't got it.

Mr P. PAPALIA: If I ever become a minister, you know what I will do —

Mr C.J. Barnett: You will not be; you're not good enough! You're not bright enough!

Mr P. PAPALIA: — before I make an announcement like you did on 8 December that will impact on every parent of every child who will go into year 7 in 2015 and subsequently, I would talk to them; I would seek out their advice as to what are their concerns, feelings and fears with regard to that move. I think the Premier does not comprehend that; it has been so long since he was in that phase of his life that he has forgotten what it is like.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I beg your pardon?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am talking about —

Mr C.J. Barnett: What are you saying?

Mr P. PAPALIA: — the fears of these families who are going to be impacted upon by the Premier's decision —

Mr C.J. Barnett: My son only finished school a few years ago; I have had four children go through school!

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Mr P. PAPALIA: — which was announced without any consultation. You said you do not care; you do not need to consult with them.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I didn't say that at all.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I asked you if you thought you needed to consult them and you said no.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Did I say I don't care?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, you did not say that.

Mr C.J. Barnett: So you just told a fib!

Mr P. PAPALIA: I voluntarily withdraw that accusation of —

Mr C.J. Barnett: I mean, keep to the argument; try to make a decent argument! This is pathetic.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Okay. I have a couple of minutes and I might just stray off subject and go to tomorrow's *The West Australian*.

I wonder whether the Premier was too busy to consult the parents of Western Australia because he was too busy meeting with Gerry Hanssen and being told how he would become the Premier of the state, and how he would take over the leadership of the Liberal Party at the behest of Gerry Hanssen? Is that what he was doing? Is that why he was incapable of consulting the parents of Western Australia; was it doing things like that?

Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am just quoting from the paper, which states —

Construction company boss Gerry Hanssen said he was the first member of the forum and described it as the “best thing the Liberal Party has done”.

“To influence the politicians, the best way is for key CEOs to sit down in front of them and read the riot act to them,” Mr Hanssen said.

That is really interesting, but what is even more interesting is the real story about how the Premier came to lead the Liberal Party in the lead-up to the last election.

Mr C.J. Barnett: The real story? That will be interesting.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is in the paper; all I can do is quote!

Several members interjected.

Mr P.C. Tinley: Is it true or not?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is it true or not? The article continues with Mr Hanssen saying —

We hammered him to death with ‘what the hell do you think, this chair-sniffing will win government?’ He resigned, Deidre Willmott stood aside (as candidate for the seat of Cottesloe) and Colin became leader.”

The article also reads —

It's really to teach ministers how to conduct their affairs ...

Mr Hanssen said. That is why they have this forum. They teach your ministers how to conduct their affairs. Is that what is going on? Is that why the Minister for Education was incapable of consulting with the parents of Western Australia, because she was being taught how to conduct her affairs by Gerry Hanssen and the like? Is that what was going on for \$25 000 a pop?

Mr J.M. Francis: You are an idiot, really!

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am quoting from tomorrow's *The West Australian*.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, members! Member for Warnbro.

Mr P. PAPALIA: There will be a lot of other people quoting from it, too.

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee) [10.25 pm]: Mr Speaker, I note for our personal record that this is the fourth time you have presided over at least the commencement of my contribution to a budget debate; hopefully you will make it to the end this time.

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I rise, of course, to add my contribution to the speeches we have heard tonight and today on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2012–13 Bill 2012 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2012–13 Bill 2012, and it will not be surprising that I might want to dwell for a little while on a couple of portfolio areas I have a particular responsibility for. Of particular concern to me and to other members on this side of the house, and to the many people I represent in the seat of Willagee, is housing affordability. It is one of the key issues facing the state, as we all know. It affects all of us, and in every electorate across the state we hear countless stories from Western Australians who are unable to afford to buy their own home or who are in mortgage stress and may not be able to retain their home. As recently as only a few weeks ago—I think it was about a month ago—the Anglicare “2012 Rental Affordability Snapshot” was released, which was sobering reading. It found that for single Western Australians on New Start or youth allowance, there was not a single affordable rental property. Anglicare surveyed 3 828 listings across the state, of which only seven were considered affordable for singles on an age or disability support pension. For couples on the age pension, only 0.8 per cent of rentals were considered affordable. I note that the definition of affordable was requiring no more than 30 per cent of gross income.

The picture for Western Australian families is no brighter. The survey found that the average rental in Perth was \$565 a week, which represents 66 per cent of weekly income for a single-income, minimum-wage household with two children. That is, 66 per cent, or two-thirds of income, is going to put a roof over the family’s head. The situation is not getting any better. In some suburbs, the median rent for these families has increased nearly \$400 a week over the 12 months surveyed. Clearly Western Australia is in the grip of a housing affordability crisis, which puts families with children at the centre of homelessness in this state.

In my electorate, and in some of those of members on this side and maybe the other side of the chamber, houses are increasingly crowded; that is, a couple of generations live under the one roof and in extended families. The term I hear used a lot today is “couch surfing”. Families, ostensibly living in their cars, move round and temporarily use the facilities of their relatives and neighbours. It is very difficult to get a position even in a caravan park on the outskirts of the city. People are resorting to living in tents. For example, Jane Snare was living with her two children in the back of her van in various parks and areas around Willagee. It took nearly three months for us to find her a place to live—and she is not alone. Many others come to my office weekly with these sorts of stories who are either on the edge or have fallen off. It is outrageous that in a state as rich as ours that people who are skilled and capable find themselves in these situations. I am not talking about people who are completely challenged with mental health issues; that is a different story altogether. I am talking about—dare I use the word—normal Western Australians with the capacity to produce, but who just cannot fit into the housing picture in Western Australia.

The housing market in Western Australia is a failed market. That is the bottom line. The failure is in the supply of two and three-bedroom units at the affordable end of the market to give young people, or people of any age, an opportunity to get on the property ladder. There is simply not enough stock in the \$300 000 to \$400 000 mark or less—it really should be in the \$250 000 to \$350 000 mark—to meet requirements to allow these people to at least get on the property ladder.

The other aspect of market supply failure is in the delivery of two and three-bedroom units for age-in-place persons. This even affects places like the western suburbs where people have grown up, raised their family living in a large house on a large block and want to downsize but do not want to leave the district—which is completely understandable. The age-in-place situation is itself contributing to stress and holding up supply of the regurgitation of established houses into the market for those who need them. The public housing sector is absolutely over-represented in that situation. We have single occupants of multibedroom houses who have raised a family and lived in the premises as long-term tenants who would like to release themselves of the burden of looking after a large house and its attendant large gardens on a quarter-acre block in Willagee, Hilton, Hamilton Hill, Mirrabooka and many other places around the city and the older suburbs. They too would like to downsize and age-in-place. I believe there is a real opportunity for a public–private partnership between the retirement industry and the government, with the lead agency being the Department of Housing, to develop some of the allocated crown land in some key strategic areas that would allow people to age-in-place and transition through the spectrum of aged care. Why should the Department of Housing not service the client base that it has serviced in its entire 100-year history? However, like the rest of this budget, the Barnett government’s commitment to these issues amounts to nothing more than smoke and mirrors, as far as I am concerned, when it is compared to the relative scale of the problem. It has been missing in action in the understanding and development of solid, at-scale strategies to make a tangible difference in affordable housing, and particularly public housing. If we accept at face value the Barnett government’s promise to provide 20 000 additional affordable houses by 2020, which is a mammoth task, this strategy will at best simply maintain the status quo when taking into account the increased housing demand associated with the state’s projected population growth, which was revised upwards by more

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than 400 000 than previously expected, to be more than three million by 2026. The government's self-lauded housing affordability policy will deliver, by its most conservative estimate, only four per cent of affordable housing options for new arrivals to this state. The policy does not even consider calculating housing affordability with the current population—this is in addition to it. Putting that aside, what progress has been made to date to deliver these 20 000 homes by 2020? The centrepiece of the housing budget was an injection of \$130 million over two years for the delivery of 433 new social homes. Do not forget that 20 000 homes is the target for new affordable homes. Of that figure, the public housing piece is 433 new homes that have been delivered by this government, which, in this financial year alone, sold 279 state housing properties with a further 23 awaiting sale. Members might say that is good because the properties will be turned over and developed, but once they are sold, they are gone. The government does not have a replacement strategy that sees a throughput to develop a net increase in the amount of available housing.

This issue is so serious that the Legislative Assembly's Community Development and Justice Standing Committee took it upon itself to investigate this situation and produced a report titled "A Fading Dream — Affordable Housing in Western Australia", which came out in November last year. When did the government respond to this report? It responded to it last week under the shadow of this budget. The government snuck it in despite members on this side and some of the media hounding the government to respond to it. What did we get in response to the 30-odd recommendations? They were virtually dismissed out of hand. The government agreed to a few of the recommendations in principle, but mostly it did not accept the committee's recommendations.

Some very real gains have been made in the delivery of affordable housing stock in Australia via significant federal funding, which has been largely unacknowledged by this government. The delivery of 6 000 new affordable private rentals under the National Rental Affordability Scheme is certainly accounted for in the budget, but is not acknowledged. It is about time this government put some rationality and some balance into its rhetoric when it talks about the federal Labor government. It is happy to accept money from the federal government but it is not happy to hand out any sort of accolade other than what is required to actually meet its own partisan objectives. I give members as more recent evidence the Gateway WA project. I saw an article in yesterday's edition of *The West Australian* indicating that the federal government, as the Minister for Transport said today, is funding 68 per cent of that project, yet no federal government representative was even invited to its establishment ceremony. That is a blight on this government. Its inability to attend appropriately to its federal relations is just a sham and a disgrace.

I am not sure that this government expects its affordable housing strategy to even make a difference. In its own budget it estimates the public housing wait list in 2012–13 will increase a further 13 weeks from the previous year alone, bringing the total average wait time for public housing to 134 weeks. That is a blowout of 43 weeks; that is, almost 11 months longer than when the Barnett government took office in 2008. Meanwhile, the government's imposition of a further two per cent efficiency cut across the public service is doing little to hold itself to account for the waste of millions of dollars in the failed Homeswest housing maintenance contract. This head contractor model, do not forget, was meant to deliver \$20 million worth of savings over three years. Those are modest savings—\$20 million—for what? It was for a \$200 million contract. Did it do it? No way. Is it likely to do it? I am not convinced. Nothing in the KPMG report or in anything the Minister for Housing said today has given me any confidence that he will be able to provide an increased level of service, repairs or maintenance for the state's public housing stock. In fact the government's own report, the KPMG report, identified that there have been significant issues and potentially even fraudulent behaviour, which the minister said he had obviously referred to the appropriate authorities. As he said, he is no expert in these matters and he has referred them to the particular agencies that need to give these things some sort of forensic scrutiny. The minister said that every dollar he saves on maintenance is a dollar he can spend on a new house, which means that it can reduce the waiting list. He said the money that the agency saves will flow back into delivering more refurbishment and more houses.

There has been no reinvestment of saved money because there has been no cost saving; in fact, it has cost more. There has been no reduction in the Homeswest wait list; in fact the wait list has blown out by more than 40 per cent under this government. There has been no delivery of new houses. There has been no improvement in efficiency or performance under the key performance indicators; in fact it is worse.

The independent audit by KPMG commissioned by the minister has cost taxpayers so far \$140 000. It just confirms exactly what we knew; that is, it is a failed privatisation program of maintenance. It has failed in its conception and it has failed in its implementation. The fact that the minister could conceive of doing anything to adjust something that has been in place for such a long time, which created a massive cultural shift for a single department to take on, and not do a business case and not ask Treasury for its opinion about the cost savings and efficiencies it expects to get and not thereby at least have something by which to measure himself, is absolutely disgraceful. There is not a business along the Terrace that would get away with it. The shareholders and the

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board of a business would go apoplectic if one of the executives went out and did something without a sustainable business case that proved at least the thesis of what he wanted to do. This program was a random thought while shaving, brought to work by some bright spark and put to a minister who was overeager to see what he could do to make a difference without taking pause. Anyone applying any modicum of business acumen to this particular problem would have come up with at least a little more cautious approach. I want to put on the record that I am no supporter of the old system. I am no supporter of the Department of Housing's previous maintenance program. Why? Because I never got to see it. As a local member and as a shadow minister, I never really got to see it in operation so I cannot compare it with the new system. Guess what? Nobody else can compare it either. According to KPMG's report, nobody else has the capacity to compare what the old system delivered relative to what the new system is delivering. More importantly, when we give every zone in the metropolitan area, where the vast majority of the 36 500-odd dwellings are that the department looks after, to a single head contractor, how will we compare their performance in the marketplace? There is no marketplace. The marketplace in this case is Transfield and it has a monopoly. The government is asking for a shift of public moneys from the public sector to the private sector in wholesale rates, and it is unaccountable.

We have a head contractor model—a housing maintenance model—that is in disarray. The department has clearly spent its budget. We cannot get routine maintenance done. How long does a Homeswest house stay vacant? On average, it stays vacant for over a year. If someone owns a home and is a landlord, as some of us are, and their tenant moves out, as happens from time to time, would they be happy with a vacancy for one day? A lot of landlords are nicely negatively geared. They would be keen to get that house filled.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P.C. TINLEY: These sorts of issues are only emblematic of the wider problem. The cost-of-living pressures on Western Australian households are almost—I would not want to overuse the word—getting to crisis point. Those people who are not directly benefitting from the boom—they are in the second lane, the slow lane—are on quite decent incomes. I have people in my electorate, as most of us have, on about \$70 000 to \$90 000. That is not a bad wage. When we sit down with them and take the time to go through how and where they spend their money, we are quite surprised at the level of tension they experience and the lack of tolerance in their budget to accept any budgetary shock. God forbid they get traffic infringements, which are not cheap. We all get them from time to time. We cannot just say it was as a result of being irresponsible. We cannot blame people for wanting to have all the sorts of things that are normal in a modern society and from time to time making mistakes that cost them money, such as parking and traffic infringements. We cannot lambast them because they want air conditioning or heating or use a mobile phone, all the modern accoutrements of a developed nation. These are the sorts of things that are embedded in our way of life. We need to accept those things.

I question what the Treasury model calls an average household. What is the basket of goods that it is using, because that basket has changed? We need to accept that. We all want to enjoy the benefits of modern life. I think we need to accept that the claimed levels of cost-of-living pressures are not real. I would wager that the \$1 050 increase to the average household is not truly reflective of the increases in fees and charges. We all know about those statistics. I will not run through the rises in electricity, gas, household utilities, rates, fees and charges. Some local authorities want to increase their rates by as much as 15 per cent in response to their own cost pressures. These are the unintended consequences of the knock-on effects.

I would now like to quickly move to planning. From a planning perspective, the government continues to spend big on a couple of key projects while the suburbs and families in this city and this state are languishing. I note from the budget papers that in the next four years, the Perth Waterfront project and the Riverside project in East Perth will consume \$430 million. That is the amount that will be spent on these two CBD projects alone. I note also that the market is giving a signal. The budget papers identify the slower than expected, or anticipated, uptake in leases, particularly for the Riverside development. It concerns me that we will be delivering a supply of commercial, residential and retail space that will glut the market. I will be interested in estimates if we can get down to the business cases of these projects and see what the minister is projecting with the City Link project and the various projects in the CBD. I note also that by 2015–16, there will be 168 000 square metres of commercial space in the suburbs alone. That will service the inextricable exit into the suburbs of a lot of companies that would ordinarily occupy the CBD. I am keen to get into how the overlap of that supply from the suburbs will relate to that supply in the CBD at various product ends.

Where that \$430 million could be better spent, in my eyes, is in the next outer-ring suburbs, such as the Murdoch activity centre down my way, around Fiona Stanley Hospital, and the Stirling regional centre—the Stirling City Centre Alliance, as they are calling it now—in the City of Stirling. These two centres are not insignificant. The Murdoch activity centre will have 37 000 people working there on a daily basis, and 6 000 dwellings. That does not include the 25-hectare site that Murdoch University will be developing, which will include a village, and

Extract from Hansard

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residential and retail components. Likewise, the Stirling regional centre will provide 30 000 job opportunities and 13 900 dwellings, which is not insignificant either.

I would like to move on to local content, but I will not, because I think the electors of Willagee deserve at least a once over, particularly the local groups that I have been assisting and that are doing fantastic work. What we are seeing in Willagee—we see it in all our seats, particularly in the suburbs that are being the hardest hit by the increases in fees and charges from this government—is that it is providing, in my view, the opportunity for groups to unify, with shared feelings, to help their communities. One of those groups can be found in Coolbellup, and it is called Cooby Now. Coolbellup is a particularly challenged suburb, with a long history of antisocial behaviour and a pretty rough past. However, it is on the change and on the up. Cooby Now is a group of young mums, basically, who have decided that the local school is worthy of their support and they want to make sure that it is well looked after. What often happens now in the suburb of Coolbellup is that parents go to the adjoining suburb of Samson, because they believe its primary school is of a better quality. I do not believe that. Samson Primary School has been around for longer than Coolbellup Primary School and it has created that image for itself, and it is a very good school, but so too is Coolbellup Primary School. Cooby Now is supported by some very active women, who are determined to ensure that that school, which is not that old—it is an amalgamated school—is really well supported. The school has about 240 students now, which is a good size, and it easily could take on another 100, without a demountable. So they are moving around the suburb and creating events that highlight to parents that this school is a worthy school to send their kids to.

What is happening in these older suburbs is that there is a demographic shift as older people move into the aged care area, or pass on, and their houses are being bought by young couples keen to renovate, and it is perfect. It is not their first home; they are not first home owners. It is about their second or third home, because they are going for homes around the \$600 000 or \$700 000 mark. They are typically professionally trained people who are looking for the great opportunities that are delivered through an older suburb with lovely old trees, big, wide verges and lovely common areas.

One of those events was last Sunday. We had a breakfast barbecue in the park in the morning. It was a beautiful morning. Members might reflect on last weekend and consider that it was a lovely time to be outside. We got out there, and about 90 to 100 people were gathered there, which was not bad. It was all done by invitation on Facebook, which was quite interesting for a group that has only 25 members of its own. It did really well. I want to congratulate the committee—Katie Attwell, Jemma Wuthenow, Sonia Lamond, Sandie Stewart, Selvi Parameswaran and Charmaine Brooke, who have shown no less than 100 per cent passion to support their local community, and their local member will give them nothing but 100 per cent support wherever I can.

That school will also feed in to the nearest high school, Hamilton Senior High School, which I cannot say enough about as a school, as it has driven itself to make itself relevant to the community and to ensure that it will be there for a long time. Next year is the anniversary of its fiftieth year, so big celebrations are planned. I would really like to congratulate Donna McDonald, the principal. She is very, very passionate about the school. A former principal at the Port Hedland high school, she knows the challenges in a difficult school, and she delivers every day for the staff. That school has one of the lowest turnovers of staff—it has some great staff. Phil Casas, the deputy principal, and Jeanette Sealy are good examples of the sorts of people who make the difference in the bricks and mortar that we call schools and who deliver sustainable differences. They are out there doing well beyond what their enterprise bargaining agreement says and well beyond what any reasonable professional standard says because they get what is at stake. If they do not get it right, as we see the migration of people to private schools and independent private schools, they will be on the block.

Similarly, at the other end of my electorate—the northern end—in Melville, the Melville Senior High School, as I have said in this place previously, is even more challenged than Hamilton Senior High School. The reason is that it has to compete with John Curtin College of the Arts to its west, Santa Maria College to its north and the high schools in Riverton, Applecross and Willetton. In due course they will all be drawing students away and giving parents multiple choices in where they can send their kids. Melville high school picks up an increasing number of kids. It has an increasing number of kids going into year 7. It is particularly concerned that it is not on the list for some upgrade to its facilities. If that school falls below 1 100 kids, it will not be able to offer the multiple streams in years 11 and 12. One of the things I have learnt—it might not be new to some members of this place—is that that is about the minimum that we want a school to be at to provide the academic streams needed in years 11 and 12 to give those kids the best opportunities. Hamilton Senior High School does not have that; South Fremantle Senior High School does not have that; and Melville Senior High School is just hanging on. It needs everybody's support, if we are truly genuine about public education and what it can deliver. As a former student at the then John Curtin Senior High School, I know what is possible; I know what can happen to a school as it evolves—not when I was there but after I left, and not because I left. It produces an outstanding result because it attended to its own specialisation. There is something we need to do there. It is up to each and

Extract from *Hansard*

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Mr Christian Porter; Mr Roger Cook; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr David Templeman; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Peter Tinley

every one of us in this place, I believe, to treat public education as probably the most important thing for the sustainable economic future of this state.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr R.F. Johnson (Leader of the House)**.

House adjourned at 10.55 pm
