

Mr Albert Jacob; Ms Lisa Baker; Acting Speaker; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Mick Murray; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr John McGrath; Speaker; Mr Paul Miles

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) RECURRENT 2009-10 BILL 2009
APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) CAPITAL 2009-10 BILL 2009

Second Reading — Cognate Debate

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR A.P. JACOB (Ocean Reef) [7.02 pm]: I want to speak briefly about what the budget handed down last week means for the people of Ocean Reef. I want to say at the outset that one of the most remarkable things about this budget is that it meets the majority of the Liberal Party's 2008 election commitments. Not only does it meet them in the very first year of the budget, but also it does so in the midst —

Ms J.M. Freeman: No, it does not meet them.

Mr A.P. JACOB: It meets the majority of the commitments made to the electorate of Ocean Reef, which I am referring to today.

Ms J.M. Freeman: Which ones doesn't it meet?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr A.P. JACOB: It meets those commitments in the very first year of our government and it meets them in the midst of a global financial crisis. This budget specifically addresses many of the needs of and commitments made to the people of Ocean Reef. I start by referring to Mullaloo Beach Primary School. This was one of the earlier commitments of the campaign. We pledged \$350 000 for a roof upgrade and to extend the school's data-cabling facilities. It is great to see this happening in the very first year of this budget.

Ms J.M. Freeman: Is that federal money?

Mr A.P. JACOB: No; that is state money in the state budget. I pay particular credit to Peter Morley, the then president of the parents and citizens association, who contacted me during the election campaign. He was not somebody I knew, but he saw an opportunity to champion what has been a long-running issue for his school. I believe the other side made a similar commitment. It is fantastic that P&Cs and other local community groups can use elections as an opportunity to highlight issues in their areas. I think it is a great idea and good on Peter Morley for doing it; congratulations.

Ocean Reef Senior High School is another such example of a Liberal Party commitment, this time for \$150 000—a commitment also met in this year's budget.

Ms J.M. Freeman: Is that federal money or state money?

Mr A.P. JACOB: No; that is state money. I thank the member; please keep asking that question, because every one of these commitments is from state money and every one has been met, or addressed, in this year's state budget.

I will take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Minister for Education who visited the school earlier this year. She saw the facilities and the urgent need for an upgrade, and she obviously took that away and put funding into this year's budget. I also thank Ocean Reef Senior High School for the invitation to its Cacophony of Sound music concert, which is actually happening right now! That is good timing when we consider that these budget funds will go towards a performing arts centre for the school.

A member interjected.

Mr A.P. JACOB: I would have loved a pair, and find it very ironic that I am speaking about that concert three minutes after it was due to start. However, I really appreciate the school's invitation and hope that the concert goes very, very well.

A member interjected.

Mr A.P. JACOB: I certainly hope not! I think it particularly pertinent that last week's budget has contributed \$150 000 to that venue in which one of the school's premier performing arts events of 2009 is being held.

Ms J.M. Freeman: Was there any federal money for that?

Mr A.P. JACOB: No federal money at all for Ocean Reef Senior High School! I highlight that not only is this state money, but also the federal government did not help Ocean Reef.

Ms J.M. Freeman interjected.

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Mr A.P. JACOB: I have no doubt that will come up later. We would love it if it were available. Perhaps the member for Nollamara can speak to somebody she knows.

Ms J.M. Freeman interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Nollamara has not already had a chance to speak, she will have her chance. The member for Ocean Reef is on his feet at the moment.

Mr A.P. JACOB: I pay special credit to Jennifer Gates, president of the Ocean Reef Senior High School P&C, just as I paid credit to the Mullaloo P&C president. Jennifer is one of those people who can be found wherever there is a point of need in the local community, and she is heavily involved in many other activities, such as the Mullaloo Surf Life Saving Club.

The very first, and a key, commitment that I made during my election campaign, which we have now secured, was to the Whitfords Volunteer Sea Rescue Group. Earlier this year I had the opportunity to present the group with a cheque that doubled the group's annual funding and provided half the capital cost of a new boat. This was the first Ocean Reef-specific election commitment to be fulfilled. Although it is old news—it was fulfilled late last year—this is the first brief opportunity that I have had to speak about it in Parliament.

The Whitfords Volunteer Sea Rescue Group is a committed local community organisation that assists with sea search-and-rescue operations off the northern suburbs of Perth. The Whitfords group alone is responsible for more than 300 rescues a year on an entirely voluntary basis, not to mention the other two groups that form part of the Metropolitan Volunteer Sea Rescue Alliance. Much of the election commitment also benefited the Metropolitan Volunteer Sea Rescue Alliance even though that group does not operate only in my seat. As the member for a predominantly coastal seat, I really appreciate the services provided by the Whitfords Volunteer Sea Rescue Group, and I am proud to be a part of a government that recognises the invaluable contribution these groups make to our boating community.

The Metropolitan Volunteer Sea Rescue Alliance, comprising the Whitfords, Fremantle and Cockburn sea rescue groups, has been appointed as the state government's first responder to all sea rescue incidents that occur between the *Alkimos* wreck in the north and the Kwinana grain terminal in the south. The group provides volunteer crew members, radio operators and support personnel, as well as craft, equipment and communication facilities for sea search-and-rescue operations. The Whitfords group also assists the community by providing safety escort vessels for a range of events such as the Rottneest channel swim, the metropolitan sea rescue's Rottneest safety convoy and the annual dragon-boat races in Hillarys Boat Harbour. It is fantastic to see a 100 per cent increase in the group's annual funding. That funding is recurring and is for the budget out years, not just this year. Since 2006, I have worked really hard through various channels to make this happen. I initially engaged with the group as a local councillor. We tried to get funding through local government and through the Western Australian Local Government Association. Finally, the state election offered an opportunity to provide this group with funds. Being able to finally hand over that cheque was one of those moments that make me love being an elected member—a moment in which I could sense an opportunity to make a difference in my local community.

I return to the budget before us. Some of the key metropolitan spends in this budget will have a direct effect on the seat of Ocean Reef, although that money will be spent on projects just outside the electorate's borders. The Joondalup Health Campus expansion is probably the biggest of these in the northern area. I admit up-front that I perhaps have a conflict of interest in that my wife works full-time at the Joondalup hospital. She has been involved with the hospital for about six years.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Resign!

Mr A.P. JACOB: I am particularly close to Joondalup Health Campus and have been very privileged to serve on its community board of advice for the past three years. For the year prior to the election I served as the deputy chairperson, and I continue to serve on that board.

The \$229 million expansion of Joondalup Health Campus will double the size of the hospital and will significantly expand the hospital's public facilities.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I think we should have an inquiry into this!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order; the member for Mandurah is, I think, on two strikes!

Mr A.P. JACOB: This will greatly transform hospital care for people living in Perth's northern corridor, which is the fastest growing region in Western Australia. The population growth in this region has resulted in enormous demands for hospital services, and this demand will continue to grow in the years ahead. Design plans for the extension of Joondalup Health Campus are being drawn up, and the expansion is expected to be completed by

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2013. Staged construction work is planned. The hospital will continue to function normally during this period. One of the most important parts of it is the new state-of-the-art emergency department that will be coming online. It will be almost two and a half times the size of the existing department. The current emergency department is the busiest in Western Australia, with more than 63 000 patients treated a year. This expansion will provide a 61 per cent increase in bed numbers for public patients, which will mean an additional 171 beds by 2013. Eleven new operating theatres will replace the existing six and a 20-bed dialysis unit will be established. The new private hospital at Joondalup Health Campus is due to be opened in 2012 and will initially contain 85 beds. This will result in a combined total of 536 beds at Joondalup Health Campus, making it the third-largest hospital in the metropolitan region.

I turn now to public transport, a subject that has attracted a range of discussion on this budget and no doubt will continue to do so. A total of \$46.6 million has been provided over the forward estimates to implement the better transport system strategy, which will deliver 3 000 Park 'n' Ride car bays at stations along the Joondalup and Mandurah lines. What does this mean for Ocean Reef? Edgewater station, which is probably one of the most popular stations for the electorate of Ocean Reef, even though it is just outside, will get an additional 170 bays. That is the station right near my house so I will be happy to see fewer cars on the verges.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr A.P. JACOB: I know a local member who is championing local issues. That is fantastic.

Mr D.A. Templeman: We're going to have to watch you very closely. If your wife becomes matron —

Mr A.P. JACOB: Fortunately for me; sorry, that was nearly a Freudian slip.

As I said, Whitfords station will get an additional 200 car bays on top of its current 671. It is also a very busy station for not only my seat but also the member for Kingsley and other northern metropolitan members. A total of \$147.4 million has been provided over the forward estimates for the extension of the rail line to Brighton, commencing in 2010-11 at an estimated total cost of \$282.9 million. It will be going much further and be built sooner than the previous government had promised. As a northern metropolitan member, I welcome this extension. I believe that it will go some of the way to relieving the traffic pressures currently being experienced at the northern end of the Ocean Reef electorate. However, it is not a solution in the long term. It will help but it is not a long-term solution to the congestion issues that we currently experience in and around the suburb of Kinross. There remains a strong need for the freeway to be extended further north. The Connolly Drive extension, which was funded in this year's budget, should also go some of the way to relieving some of the traffic burden. The contract for that was awarded in recent weeks. I believe that work will start any day now. I know how eagerly the residents of Kinross are awaiting that. At one point I tried to drive through Kinross in peak-hour traffic. To give members an idea of how horrific the bottleneck can be, it took me 40 minutes to travel 500 metres. The good thing was that at the time I was towing my election trailer, so plenty of people saw it.

I realise that with any budget there is always more work to be done. As I said, it is remarkable that this budget can achieve so many of our election commitments in its very first year, especially given the current economic circumstances. What is important for all of us is that there is long-term vision in this budget and there is room for WA to improve and to truly become the economic powerhouse of our nation.

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [7.14 pm]: I want to start my comments about the budget by focusing them fairly and squarely on the community sector. I want to give a description of what I mean when I say "community sector" so that I am speaking from the same page as other members. These are the organisations in the community that deal with issues such as health, disabilities, employment and training, aged community services, family support, children and youth, drug and alcohol, Indigenous affairs, cultural and linguistic diversity, safety and justice, and housing and advocacy. I have some statistics in front of me, so I will refer to my notes. The non-government sector in Western Australia undertakes an increasingly diverse mix of activities in a wide range of roles. For example, in Maylands we have 6EBA-FM, the multicultural radio station; Bayswater Elderly Citizens Help Organisation; the Employment Law Centre of WA; Youthcare; the Bayswater Historical Society; Environment House —

Ms J.M. Freeman: Women's Law Centre.

Ms L.L. BAKER: Yes, the Women's Law Centre of WA; I thank the member for Nollamara. We also have Oxfam Australia and Ellis House. They are all very diverse and cover different parts of the spectrum I mentioned earlier. More than 560 non-government organisations in WA deliver what we call human services across WA. These agencies spend more than \$1.25 billion a year in their economies, regions, towns or cities. All members have them in their electorates; I am sure they all know them quite well. They are vital parts of members' communities. Of that \$1.25 billion, the government provides less than one-third to these NGOs—about

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\$343 million. Two-thirds of the funds, the remainder, come from trusts, foundations, other grants, the commonwealth government, donations and fees for service activities. I do not want members to start thinking that community service organisations are dependent only on the government for their survival. They are strong and vigorous organisations. They employ more than 36 000 people in Western Australia. Most of those people are female and more than 50 per cent of them are over 40 years of age, and we can add to that the tens of thousands of volunteers who are also engaged in delivering services. They are a rich part of our social fabric. Four hundred thousand people each year use the services they offer. The people who are most likely to be in trouble and need the services from the community sector might be people who are on low incomes or in poverty, people who find themselves unemployed, people with a disability, seniors over 65 and also our first nation people, Indigenous Western Australians. That is what I mean when I talk about community services.

I now want to talk about the impact that families are already feeling in Western Australia as a result of the global financial crisis and relate that to how we need to manage the funds that are coming from the state government into the community sector, and in some cases the lack of funds. Community service agencies in WA report that they are turning away one-third of the people who need their help. Eighty-one per cent of these people who are turned away are turned away because the services do not have the resource capacity to meet their needs. Services are being overutilised at the moment. Health services, in particular the services offered in the community as preventive health care, are under increasing demand as people struggle to find help to cope with the stress that is placed on families through economic slowdown and tight times. The Western Australian No Interest Loan Service, which provides assistance to low-income households to help them purchase essential items such as refrigerators or washing machines, reports that it is processing three times the number of applications that it was in November 2008. WANILS processed about 50 applications in November 2008, and it is now processing 150 a month. Foodbank—I am sure many members know the incredible work it does around the community and in schools—is already reporting that it is distributing more than 25 per cent extra food to people who have already found themselves suffering from the impact of a crisis in their lives.

Relationships Australia, a mighty organisation in our community, reports an increase in the number of people presenting with relationship difficulties due to financial stress or unemployment, and sometimes both. The Consumer Credit Legal Service WA reports an increasing number of people experiencing negative equity in their home because of declining house prices. On that subject, house repossessions have increased in Western Australia.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): I advise the member for Cockburn that when he walks between the member on his or her feet and the Chair, he must wait for permission.

Ms L.L. BAKER: In the last financial year, 686 applications for property repossessions were processed. This figure was an increase of 233 from the previous 12 months. Figures released by the Supreme Court of Western Australia showed that 251 applications for repossessions were lodged in the July to September 2008 quarter. This figure represents an increase of 88 per cent on the corresponding quarter in 2007. These figures are all a bit dry, but members need to consider they are about people's homes—the centre of the universe for many people, and members should remember that.

Let us look at what the new Liberal-National government has done in its budget. The first thing I saw at page 794 of the *Budget Statements*, under the Department for Communities, was a line item that showed that payments to non-government organisations are being reduced by \$305 000 in 2009-10; \$316 000 in 2010-11; \$327 000 in 2011-12; and \$348 000 in 2012-13. I am not sure because I do not have the detail yet, but I have been told these cuts include reductions to women's programs such as the Women's Advisory Network and Indigenous Women's Congress. I am not sure but, but I am led to believe that Western Australian grants for women may have been cut. I will be watching with interest to see what the government does with the Office for Women's Policy. Will that go, too?

The Under Treasurer admitted to all in attendance at a briefing yesterday that he is aware that non-government organisations are underfunded. However, there are no increases in this budget to help these agencies deliver critical services to most vulnerable Western Australians. The community sector has delivered to the government very well documented evidence that it is currently 30 per cent underfunded in helping those people. In addition—this is very important particularly for rural members to understand—non-government organisations in regional centres need an additional seven per cent on top of that 30 per cent to be able to cope with the high costs of service delivery in regional WA. That is a very conservative figure. Members know that if an NGO has a service in Halls Creek or somewhere in the north west, it is likely to be paying more on housing staff than the total salary of the chief executive officer of the agency. This has been documented many times.

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The budget does not provide any increase in funding for the increasing services required for the increasing number of people needing support; in fact, there is a decrease in funding. The budget does not provide additional money for wages for a predominantly female workforce. On top of that, a number of grants that the non-government sector has previously been able to apply for—for example, from the Office of Crime Prevention and the confiscation of proceeds of crime grants—will, I believe, no longer be available to the non-government sector.

The government has also blown out the waiting time for government housing from 83 weeks to 93 weeks. I cannot wait for the effect of that in my electorate office. Members know what I mean when I say that. We deal with public housing on a daily basis.

Mr A. Krsticevic: We do, too.

Ms L.L. BAKER: I am saying that all members know what it will be like having to tell people that they must stay even longer on the waiting list.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: Has that actually happened in six months and not over the past eight years?

Ms L.L. BAKER: It is acknowledged on page 549 of the *Budget Statements*, under “Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators”, that the government is allowing the public housing waiting list to go from 83 weeks to 93 weeks. That change is indicated, and this government has done that.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

Ms L.L. BAKER: That is not the point I wanted to make to members.

While on the subject of housing, I refer to crisis and supported accommodation in the community. Members might also have dealt with this matter in their electorates. Crisis and emergency accommodation is meant to be provided for three months. However, I know that some people in crisis and emergency accommodation, for instance in Victoria Park, have been there for two or more years. There is nowhere for them to go, and the people in charge do not want to throw them out. Therefore, there are no places in crisis accommodation for other people. Funding for crisis and emergency accommodation requires an urgent increase of 50 per cent; that is, about 350 beds. Instead, this budget shows a reduction in funding of 50 per cent—from \$8.473 million to \$4.72 million in 2009-10, and less into the out years. That is detailed on pages 551 and 552 of the *Budget Statements*.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: Do you think that perhaps the government might be reducing the requirement for emergency housing because it is building thousands of new homes? Will that not have an impact on the perceived need for housing?

Ms L.L. BAKER: Absolutely no—not with the 20 000-strong waiting list. I understand what the member is saying, but it will not fix the problem in the community right now.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: It has been a cumulative job.

Ms L.L. BAKER: I absolutely agree with the member for Scarborough. More work should have been done on public housing and this government is doing some good stuff. I am pointing out the gaps.

On a different subject, the proposed funding arrangements for multicultural affairs, which has already been mentioned, sees the establishment of a new ethnic organisation fund that will effectively put the peak organisation, the Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia, in direct competition with its membership organisations. It seems that it is expected to provide direct services to clients instead of being funded in its own right as an advocate of people from multicultural backgrounds. I raise this point because for 11 years the community services sector struggled under the Howard government, and if members want to read about this, I direct them to a University of Sydney paper titled “Silencing Dissent”, which well documents what happened when the previous federal government shut the community sector up. Fortunately, that approach has now changed. It is okay to give out soup, but do not ask why people are in the queue and find out how to fix that situation. Silencing advocacy is the most detrimental thing that can be done in a democracy, and, according to this program, it is now being done by the Western Australian government. That is not good enough.

Last week we debated the child protection system, and in that debate the Premier agreed with the need to ensure that the provision of absolutely critical services is continued. I will go through what I have identified. I hope I am wrong and I look forward to the estimates debate to find out whether I can kick myself and say, “Goodness; you didn’t really do that!” The three per cent efficiency dividend has been imposed on not only the Department for Child Protection, but all departments involved in child protection. Therefore, all of them will have to cut back

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core delivery services, and many of them will cut back on the interagency initiatives in order to meet reductions. Child protection relies on all agencies, including police and health, in a cooperative effort to address child protection.

I refer now to staffing limits. The previous government put in place 500 extra child protection places. Staffing levels now will be reduced. For every child coming into care, there will be one fewer worker in DCP to support that child. An amount of \$4 million has been removed from the family crisis program. Money to promote the working with children initiative—the great piece of legislation that protects children and the conditions around working with children—has been almost halved.

Mr P. Abetz interjected.

Ms L.L. BAKER: Will the government advertise that it needs people with certain qualifications to work with children? I do not think so. It needs to be constantly in the public arena.

Several members interjected.

Ms L.L. BAKER: I agree, but it is almost halved, and I am very concerned about that. Some \$200 000 has been taken out of the childcare service. I am yet to find out what that is about but, hopefully, it is not out of direct childcare delivery. The one I am speechless about is a tiny little program called the funeral assistance scheme, which has done so much good in the department. It has been entirely cut out of this budget. The \$723 000 that provided help to the poorest people in this state to bury their loved ones has been cut out of the budget. I would like to know how many funeral services for children were helped out by this scheme. I do not know the answer to that, but I would like to know. It is tragic.

The government has said that it wants to extend mandatory reporting. This will expand the number of cases reported and create a major increase in workload.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms L.L. BAKER: Other states have reported that they are currently unable to keep up with demand and that serious cases may be overlooked. Western Australia will also be in that position. Examples from jurisdictions across Australia and the world demonstrate that when mandatory reporting of child abuse is in force, the number of cases being dealt with explodes. When the community demands a more interventionist model for child protection, the need for services increases exponentially. The government knows this, yet it is not funding sufficiently to cope with it. The government should be very careful if it expands mandatory reporting. The implication in the budget is that the government is looking at it. There is not the money in the system. Justice Wood, who last year reported on the child protection system in New South Wales, said that three things interfered with child safety in the childcare system. The third one that Justice Wood identified was that productivity savings demanded by government was one of the major negative impactors on child protection in that state. The government should think about that carefully.

I want to mention fees and charges, while I have another few minutes. We have talked about this in some detail. An estimated \$350, or maybe \$400 when it is all tallied up, will be the extra impost on families in this state. I would like to talk about the need to help the most vulnerable people in this time. The state government must ensure that it supports the people who will be most hurt by the current economic storm. There need to be adequate concessions and rebates to make sure that people can keep gas, electricity and water on. Remember what happens when power is disconnected. People light candles and use leads from someone else's house. People die. It is not okay for unreasonable disconnections and hardships to happen. The state utilities are not managing disconnections effectively. The state has one of the highest rates of disconnection in Australia, and that is not okay. The government must regulate the utilities' hardship policies in order to protect vulnerable people. For instance, we need a unit centrally that monitors the affordability and accessibility of essential services. We need to ensure that customers with payment difficulties have the right to request and be placed on shortened bill cycles and that there is a provision for bill smoothing. When a disconnection is proved to have been in breach of the Energy Retail Code, it is called a wrongful connection and the retailer must compensate the customer. Wrongful disconnection payments should be increased from the current figure of \$50 a day to \$250 a day as a disincentive for retailers. During last year more than 10 000 households went without power. Think about the children and families that it impacted upon. Retailers must be required not to disconnect services at a time when an appointment is made with a customer to discuss the situation. They must be asked to wait until a financial counsellor has been consulted and a path forward has been developed. Consumer and consumer representatives must be provided with a copy of a company's hardship policy on request and at no charge. For the regulation of water, we need a water ombudsman, similar to the energy ombudsman, and outside the Department of Water otherwise the office will not be independent.

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I want to finish by mentioning a couple of local issues that have come to my attention. They are to do with school crossings in my electorate and the failure of the government to afford to fund lollypop men on those two crossings. St Peters and St Columba's Primary Schools have both lost lollypop men.

Several members interjected.

Ms L.L. BAKER: They could have been ladies; that is quite right. However, these were lollypop men. I know because I have shaken their hands.

Ms J.M. Freeman: You could have said attendants.

Ms L.L. BAKER: I could have. Guildford Road is not a quiet road. Would members want unescorted children crossing Guildford Road during peak hour on the way to school and on the way home? Would members want unescorted children crossing Grand Promenade, which is a major thoroughfare? Members would not, and neither would I. The funding for both lollypop men has been cut. It is not a huge amount of money. Why we cannot keep children safe on crosswalks, I have no idea.

People who want to take advantage of the train stations in Maylands, Bedford and Bayswater have the perennial problem of parking. They need a whole lot more parking bays. Only about 40 are provided for in the budget. More are needed. The government has a responsibility to ensure that we can promote the good use of public transport, to get people through Maylands into the city and their jobs and back out through Maylands in the evening.

I want to raise one other point, which is worthy of funding in the community sector. At the beginning of May the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Michelle Scott, called for more funds to bolster youth support services because of the big rise in unaccompanied young children found wandering in Northbridge late at night. This is not news to any of us. She said that more services and care accommodation options are needed to support these kids, who are often simply sent home to where the problems were stemming from in the first place. Eighty-seven families are on the waiting list for the Making Tracks program that is run by Mission Australia. It provides counselling and other sorts of support for those children and their families. That program alone would do some real good in tackling antisocial behaviour and helping to solve some of the problems at a local level. It is another instance of a really good community service offering a really good option to keep kids out of trouble, and yet it is struggling to find funding to continue. Again, I would say that is not good enough.

In conclusion, what do I think about the government's budget? Not surprisingly, I am sad for families and for the community sector. It is sad that there is not enough support and that the government could not find money to put into child protection and some of the programs and activities that I have mentioned. It is a missed opportunity. I am very sad that the government saw fit to cancel a program such as the funeral assistance scheme and that the government would be prepared to sacrifice it for a three per cent efficiency dividend or whatever else. The government has hit households very hard, but, most importantly, it has hit children and families very, very hard.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [7.40 pm]: I wish to make some comments on the budget bills for this year. I do so in a number of capacities. I will first make some observations about the way that health has been treated in this budget. I will also make some comments about Indigenous affairs, and raise a number of issues that relate to my electorate of Kwinana that are worthy of mention.

In some respects, this budget is a non-event. Our expectations about this budget had been raised, and we were getting quite excited about it. A colleague of mine actually made the observation that this budget is a bit like the 1980s band Milli Vanilli, which was famously caught out for lip-syncing—they wanted to say something in their stage performance, but nothing came out, and they were found to be frauds. However, we are not talking about fake pop stars here. We are talking about the government's budget. I want to draw the attention of the chamber to the state of the health budget. The health budget is essentially an exercise in disappointment. It is a disappointment at the delays that are rife within the budget. It is disappointment at the cuts that are rife within the budget. It is a disappointment at the loss of the vision that has been binding the health sector for so many years. Those delays and cuts are written large in the budget papers.

I remember that the night before the budget came down, the Minister for Health was looking quite chipper and excited. He actually made some intimations that maybe some federal funds would be approaching this state. Part of me thought, "Good Lord! He is going to get everything! He is going to meet his election commitment to maintain Labor's health reform agenda, and, in addition, he is going to achieve the Royal Perth Hospital upgrade." But when we woke up the following day, we found that that was not the case. This budget is not about commonwealth funds coming to the rescue of the minister. It is about cuts and delays across the health sector to pay for the promises that the government has made about things such as Royal Perth Hospital.

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I will give some examples by going through the policy decisions that affect total public sector asset investment. The first example is the \$50 million that has been taken out of the forward estimates for Fiona Stanley Hospital. I know that we will get an opportunity to examine these numbers in greater detail during the estimates hearings. Indeed, a couple of ministers who are not on top of their portfolios reminded us of that today so that they could avoid some questioning in this chamber. Therefore, I will not go into a great amount of detail now about what that cut means. The government has also written down the funding for the redevelopment of Albany Regional Hospital by \$34.1 million next year and \$9.2 million the following year. Of course we all know that Albany Regional Hospital was one of the Liberal Party's great election promises. The Albany Action Group was agitating to make sure that redevelopment went ahead. The Liberal Party made a solid commitment that it would build this hospital in one hit—in one stage—and it would be finished by 2012. Now, rolling forward six months, the government is running away from that commitment at a rate of knots.

The Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital diagnostic and treatment facility has been taken totally out of the budget. I assume that these are some of the beds that the minister needs to take away to rescue the faulty vision that is behind the Royal Perth Hospital development. That is over \$200 million that has disappeared from the health budget. The reconfiguration of Osborne Park Hospital stage 1 has been delayed. A range of Western Australian Country Health Service programs and capital work programs have been axed. The Busselton integrated health service has been axed. This must be galling for the people of Busselton. Such was the grandstanding from the Treasurer about the redevelopment of Busselton hospital that they must feel gutted about this decision to delay the redevelopment of Busselton hospital, even though it sits within the Treasurer's own electorate. The Carnarvon district health service has gone completely; it has been cut. It is interesting that the government should chose to withdraw services from that particular development. The Harvey hospital redevelopment has gone; it no longer appears in the forward estimates. The Esperance integrated health service redevelopment has been pushed back three years. The Fremantle Hospital reconfiguration stage 1 has gone.

The Western Australian comprehensive cancer centre has also been cut, with \$22.8 million taken out in the next budget period, and \$9.9 million taken out in the following budget period. I am sure we will get the opportunity to discuss that in some detail in the estimates debate. We were reliably informed by the Minister for Health that that is a cash flow and management issue and that there will not be any delays with that cancer centre. If that is the case, that is a good thing. However, before members on either side of this chamber get too smug about stage 2 of the cancer centre, we need to remind ourselves that stage 2 of the cancer centre was about the expected demand levels in 2008. That is why we are now talking about stage 3, because that is where we need to get to if we are to catch up with the level of service that is required. Part of the problem is the delays at Fiona Stanley Hospital.

Dr K.D. Hames: There are no delays at Fiona Stanley.

Mr R.H. COOK: Sorry, minister. I am talking about the delays in the project overall—that is, those delays that occurred during our time as well. Some comfort was delivered to the cancer treatment community, because Fiona Stanley was to come on stream in about 2012-13, and that would have reduced the pressure on stage 3 of the cancer centre. Now that we have these delays, stage 3 is crucial.

The cuts at Harvey hospital and Osborne Park Hospital are particularly sad. The developments that were proposed for Osborne Park hospital were primarily for mental health facilities. That is of concern. We will have an opportunity to examine these matters in more detail in the estimates. It is of concern that there has been a winding back in the roll-out of capital expenditure for those hospitals.

The minister has made much of the early works that are being done at Princess Margaret Hospital. However, a huge cloud is still hanging over that hospital—not only on what ultimately it will be called, but also on how ultimately it will be funded. The minister has assured us it will be a public-private-partnership opportunity, and that that may even be a large PPP opportunity that takes into account not only the children's hospital but also the redevelopment of the women's hospital. However, in the current climate there is a huge concern that capital equity will not be available to enable that to take place. Therefore, there is a very real question that needs to be asked. Even though there may be some chest-beating about early works at Princess Margaret Hospital, the vision for the overall project remains untidy and vague. The government needs to do a lot of work to explain to the people of Western Australia where the remainder of the resources will be coming from.

I said that part of the disappointment which I am sure extends from the health budget relates to lost vision. The budget papers already explain to us that we have some concerns about risk statements; they talk about, essentially, a train wreck down the track as the government seeks to commission both the redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital and the development of Fiona Stanley Hospital. The government says that we should watch this space and that it has a solution for that, but it is clear that it has not convinced the Department of Treasury and Finance of this when the budget papers state —

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The costs associated with hospital services have grown significantly above the rate of growth in activity. Unabated, this trend in expense growth is financially unsustainable.

The budget papers go on to state —

The Government's decision to retain Royal Perth Hospital (RPH) as a tertiary hospital and major trauma facility will result in significant recurrent cost implications for the health system. Prior to this decision, it was intended to close RPH as a tertiary facility and transfer associated expenditures to fund the new Fiona Stanley Hospital. The health system will incur significant operating costs in 2013-14 from operating the 400-bed RPH trauma facility and the commissioning of the new 643-bed Fiona Stanley Hospital.

The budget papers provide a warning that into the future we will face an unsustainable reality in relation to health and that the government cannot develop Fiona Stanley Hospital and RPH at the same time without incurring significant costs and without incurring significant operational and logistical problems and the costs associated with them. The minister recently made a statement to the chamber about cardiothoracic services and how they will be configured under a three tertiary hospital arrangement that is consistent with the government's new ideas about the three tertiary campuses. I think it is telling that a range of specialist clinical staff across the system have made their concerns known in the newspaper and to me and others that the model that the minister speaks of in rotating staff through three campuses with one single unit director across those campuses is simply unsustainable for a specialist medical unit. This is part of the problem; we are losing the critical mass of specialist services that we need to create centres of excellence in our hospitals. I look forward to the government explaining in some detail how it will maintain specialist services across the tertiary campuses. However, I think it is interesting that we note that even now, when the development and the costs the government is talking about occur almost outside the forward estimates period, the department is raising red flags about how the government will confront some significant and unsustainable expenses.

Dr K.D. Hames: Does the member want me to quickly explain that?

Mr R.H. COOK: I want to talk briefly about the three per cent cuts because my time is running out already and I do not have time for interjections. The department has already admitted that it is not going to meet its three per cent cuts in health and there is a glib reference to other efficiency measures of \$26 786 000 in the budget papers. This essentially represents the hangover of the expenses that it failed to identify in this financial year for the three per cent efficiency dividend. The Department of Health already has a \$26 million, or almost \$27 million, hangover from the three per cent efficiency dividend campaign of this financial year. That will be carried forward into future financial years, so the department will be chasing these issues in years to come.

I move briefly to Indigenous affairs because a very disturbing development in Indigenous affairs is taking place in the budget papers. The Treasurer; Minister for Commerce; Science and Innovation; Housing and Works inherited a range of departments from previous arrangements within government. He inherited the Office of Native Title and the Aboriginal economic development unit of the Department of Commerce. It is telling that the Treasurer has now moved both of these departments away from anywhere in his jurisdiction so that he cannot be bothered with the difficult area of Indigenous affairs. There may be an argument that says, "Well, hang on; that's not part of my area. That should be DIA." However, it is important to note that every government department has a responsibility to the Indigenous people of this state to ensure that they receive the services, the rights and the facilities that they deserve as citizens of Western Australia.

I will provide a quick overview of the impact of the Aboriginal economic development unit. It was previously known as the Office of Aboriginal Economic Development and was established, I believe, by Hendy Cowan some time back. The OAED, as it was then, and the AED, as it is now, is one of the quiet success stories of government. It is a small unit working effectively across its areas of engagement to identify opportunities in Indigenous communities for sustained economic benefit, whether that is employment, Indigenous businesses or the simple engagement through good capacity and networking to achieve economic outcomes. The list of this unit's achievements in terms of projects that it has partnered with at some point to produce good outcomes is outstanding. They include Ngarda Civil and Mining.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr R.H. COOK: Ngarda Civil and Mining is one of the great success stories of the Pilbara mining industry and it involves many Aboriginal people working in the mining sector. The Clontarf Football Academy has had a significant impact upon the education of young Aboriginal men in this state. I believe that one year, it may have been 2003, it accounted for one-fifth of all Indigenous students going through year 12 across the state—20 per cent came from this one institution. That is a huge success story, and the AED —

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Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: — was involved in this organisation early on in the piece. The minister was just trying to point out that it was not the only one, which is true. The AED was there at the beginning and AED officers continue to assist the Clontarf Football Academy to identify opportunities, partnerships and networks so that it can continue to grow and roll out that success story.

The AED is also particularly effective in the area of tourism. One of its success stories is Indigenous Tours WA, which is run by Noel Nannup and his son Greg, and has now set up, in effect, a sustainable business at Rottnest Island—Wadjemup—that provides an Indigenous tourism product for people visiting the island. They also have Indigenous tours at Kings Park, and are utilising a partnership with one of the Rottnest Island ferry companies for a river-based Indigenous tourism product. That is an absolute success story that would not have occurred if it had not been for the AED.

The AED is responsible for the very effective work of the commercialisation of art project that assists Aboriginal communities, particularly in a remote context, to establish art centres so that they can achieve an independent, commercially viable and sustainable income for their communities utilising the intellectual property and the natural talents that they have. For instance, one of those is Martumili Artists in the Pilbara area, which is engaging people in very remote communities in a sustainable small business. That would not be possible without the efforts of the AED. Another example is the work that the AED is doing with the Gnaala Karla Boodja community in the Collie region. That community has been successful in pulling together a really important agreement with Boddington goldmine that will provide them with an income stream for the future and with the capacity to have business opportunities into the future. Who is partnering with the community? It is officers from the Aboriginal economic development unit. The unit is not necessarily providing funding, although that is always a very important seeding capacity that the unit has, but it is providing the community with skills, networks, suggestions and training about what is required for Aboriginal people to participate in the economy of Western Australia.

What did the government do to that unit? It gutted it. It gutted that unit and that organisation. Eighty per cent of the funding has been ripped out of the unit. The government is transferring a small portion, \$300 000, to the Small Business Development Corporation, and another small portion, \$300 000, to the Department of Agriculture and Food. That will barely sustain the most unambitious aspirations for this unit. We saw some glib references by the Treasurer in the media this afternoon, saying that it is about stopping duplication. There is no duplication here. The AED unit was a centre for excellence in sustainable Indigenous businesses. Its axing is an absolute disgrace.

But there is another element still. The AED unit is not responsible just for creating small businesses. I think the chief executive officer of the AED unit was a lead negotiator in the Kimberley gas hub negotiations with the Kimberley Land Council. I have been told—I do not know whether this is the case, but, if it is, it is appalling—that he received a phone call in the Kimberley. The department of which he is the head landed an infrastructure project of absolute importance to this government. It is so important that not a day has gone by when the Premier has not talked long and hard about it. It is absolutely important to the government, yet a week later it dismantled the very instrument within the government that delivered it that outcome. That is an extraordinary effort. Therefore, I deliberately asked a question of the Minister for Indigenous Affairs this afternoon about this. I cannot believe that a Minister for Indigenous Affairs can be so stupid as to actually sit by and watch this happen. The minister made a rather unfortunate reference to the fact that it is not within his portfolio. Technically speaking, it is not in his portfolio, but it is front and centre a part of his department's core business; it is front and centre an issue for every stakeholder that he is involved with as Minister for Indigenous Affairs. The minister did not want to comment. Perhaps he does not want to comment on Indigenous education either. It is fortunate that he is also the Minister for Health, because at least we can get some commentary from him on Aboriginal health.

Ms J.M. Freeman: But you can't close the gap when you do things like that.

Mr R.H. COOK: People cannot close the gap when they do things like that.

I wanted to make reference very quickly to the fact that the government has axed the funeral assistance scheme. This scheme is available to many members of the community, but I think we all know, and I am sure the Minister for Indigenous Affairs knows, unless he has contrived some ignorance about this also, who the main clients of that fund are. Who are the people who access that fund more than any other? We know that it is the most disadvantaged. A high proportion of Aboriginal families would access it. We know that there is a very strong cultural obligation on Indigenous people to be involved in sorry business. Once again, this is an extremely important program. It is not so much for the high impact that it has compared with the AED, but it is a very important, symbolic program for the Indigenous community. However, there has not been a peep from the

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Minister for Indigenous Affairs. But, of course, it is outside his portfolio responsibilities, and he believes he does not have to worry about it.

Ms J.M. Freeman: What about the Indigenous Women's Congress? Did you find out about that?

Mr R.H. COOK: One of my colleagues has just reminded me about the WA Indigenous Women's Congress. She will not be surprised to hear that it is similar to a range of organisations and committees that will no longer be able to be accessed.

I want to draw my colleague the member for Nollamara's attention back to the issue of the Aboriginal economic development unit. One of the things that it funds is the WA Indigenous Tourism Operators Committee. That is a really important committee that brings together Indigenous tourism operators to promote their industry and to agree upon strategies for moving forward. What has happened to it? It has gone.

I was going to make some comments tonight about mental health, but, of course, it is very difficult to do a detailed analysis of the area of mental health. There is a reason for that. I will detail some of the outcomes set out in some of the statements from the Department of Health about it. The department states —

The State Government has recognised the importance of mental health services with the appointment of Western Australia's first Minister for Mental Health —

Tick. That is one thing done —

and the establishment of an independent statutory Commissioner for Mental Health and Wellbeing.

My God, I do not know how many times we have heard this one about how important this is to the Barnett government. We have heard it so often that it is part of its 100-day plan. The only problem is that I think we are up to about day 225. It is not happening. Of course, such is the importance that the government makes of mental health that it has commenced work on a state mental health policy, it is undertaking a mental health strategic plan, and it is developing a comprehensive \$13 million WA state suicide prevention strategy.

Ms J.M. Freeman: It did posters.

Mr R.H. COOK: It has done the posters and pamphlets—excellent—but it has done nothing else. There is a lot of planning, a lot of reviewing and a lot of engaging with consultants to do these strategies for it. The department notes that it has completed construction at the Joondalup Health Campus to deliver 42 mental health unit facilities. That is excellent, except, of course, that that was already in the later stages of construction under a Labor government. The department trumpets the finalisation of planning to commence the development of new mental health facilities at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and Osborne Park Hospital. However, the development at Osborne Park Hospital is delayed, so it is not doing it at all. The only tangible thing that the government could have pointed to that it is doing, it has completely stopped.

I want to turn briefly and finally to some issues that relate to the area of Kwinana. Of course, the Minister for Mental Health and for Water still does not get away with it. One of the things that has been axed from the budget is the \$133 million for the East Rockingham waste water treatment plant. There are some conflicting emotions here. The conflicting emotions are that this decision will be celebrated by a lot of people in the suburb of Hillman, who woke up recently to find that this development was going forward without any consultation with or reference to them. They felt particularly surprised and alarmed by the development of the waste water treatment plant, which they believe is so close to their suburb. I am assisting the Department of Water to engage in some discussions with the people of Hillman, and I am very happy to do so. However, I also have a concern, and that is for the people of Baldivis, where there is a great deal of residential development. The people may not be thinking this, but I understand that a lot of those developments depend upon bringing on the development of that waste water treatment plant. Again, I am looking forward to getting some clarification of these issues. How will the areas of Baldivis Central, Rivergums estate and so forth continue to develop, even though the development of this waste water treatment plant seems to have been put off to the never-never? I know that the minister said in Parliament today that it was delayed. However, as we have been reminded by the Premier on many occasions, the forward estimates do not mean a great deal. I can only think that a project that does not even exist in the forward estimates must be delayed to the never-never, which is another way of saying that it has been axed.

Finally, I will pay my respects to the people of Kwinana who are doing a great job working with disadvantaged and young people in the electorate in these difficult times. I have been working with Pastor Gerry McCoy and his son, Michaél, at the Freeway Church, who run a fantastic service, the Foodbank. I hope that they can work through these difficult times to continue to move on with success.

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MR A. KRSTICEVIC (Carine) [8.10 pm]: I rise today to thank the Treasurer, the Premier and ministers for contributing to what can only be classified as an outstanding 2009-10 budget. Our economy is under threat as a result of the global financial crisis, and I am proud to be part of a government that has stepped up to the challenges facing this great state. The hard decisions have been made and will be made into the future.

Securing the future prosperity of all Western Australians is the fundamental platform upon which this budget has been based. The Liberal-National government has correctly classified the 2009-10 budget in four key areas: protecting jobs and supporting the economy; securing the state's economic future; supporting families and our community; and protecting the state's finances. No doubt the opposition will find politically convenient reasons to criticise this budget. I am sure they will find it difficult to find even one positive statement to add to the debate! All they can offer to the Western Australian community is cheap political rhetoric. During the past eight years in government, overseeing the once-in-a-lifetime boom, they did not give a thought to some of the statements they are making this week. All of a sudden, when they find themselves in opposition, the people of Western Australia become a priority. Unfortunately, most of their priorities are politically based and not community based.

The 2009-10 budget delivered by this government is a community-based budget: \$5.1 billion to deliver health services, including new hospitals in Albany and Busselton; \$117 million for planning for the new acute children's hospital at QE2 Medical Centre; Royal Perth Hospital will be kept as a tertiary hospital; as well as the construction stage of Fiona Stanley Hospital and the redevelopment of Joondalup Health Campus. In addition, 14 schools will be built and upgraded, including \$13 million for Lake Gwelup Primary School. I know that the member for Mindarie, who was the former member for Innaloo, will know about this primary school, because I believe that around 2001 he made a promise that he would try to do something about getting a new school built there. It is good to see that it has finally come about under a Liberal-National government. The rebuilding of the school is well and truly overdue. The community has outgrown the school, and some of the buildings are 95 years old. Only recently I visited the school and saw that parts of the roof were falling down due to termite and other damage. When I was elected, one of the first things I did was to write to the minister about the disrepair of Lake Gwelup Primary School, and I am glad that the money has been allocated to help with that building project. The budget provides for additional school psychologists, more behavioural centres, school chaplains, and training to help teachers deal with classroom behaviour. All those things were well and truly overdue.

The budget provides for 500 extra police personnel and 200 expert civilian staff. Law and order is something that this government is tough on, and will continue to be tough on. A sum of \$113 million will be spent on building the Perth police complex, a further \$34 million on other new police facilities, and \$8 million to reopen regional police stations. I have spoken to a number of police officers, even an assistant commissioner, who is well and truly excited about what this government is doing in terms of offering personnel. That was a very strong statement to get from the assistant commissioner.

A total of \$655 million will be invested in 2012-13 to create an extra 1 657 prison beds across the state. Unlike the opposition, we will not be putting mattresses on the floor; we will be developing real infrastructure. The budget provides a \$142 million boost to disability services, an extra \$15 million in 2009-10 for child protection services, and \$78 million for residential care for children.

Seniors Card holders will get an annual cost-of-living rebate of \$100 for singles and \$150 for couples. They will also receive a \$200 rebate per household for home security devices, and free off-peak public transport.

Mr P.B. Watson: This is supposed to be from the heart; you should not be reading it.

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: I am not reading it, and it is from the heart. These are some of the facts, which members opposite have left out in their speeches; the facts about where the money is going are important.

Mr P.B. Watson: So you do not know the facts; you have to read them?

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: I do know the facts. There are just so many of them. There is so much money going around the state in so many different areas that, unfortunately, I have not been able to memorise those four or five volumes, but I am sure by next week I will have it all well and truly under control.

Small business will get a full rebate on payroll tax for firms with payrolls up to \$1.6 million and a partial rebate for firms with payrolls up to \$3.2 million. I thank the Treasurer for coming out to Carine with the member for Scarborough and me to listen to the concerns of businesspeople. Some of the issues that were discussed have well and truly been taken into account in the budget, albeit that people always want things to go a little further. These tough economic times make it much more difficult to achieve those outcomes. If members opposite could

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not achieve those things in the past eight years when there was more money going around than they knew what to do with, it is going to be much harder to do that in today's environment.

The budget provides for eligible unemployed people to get free exemptions on training courses to combat unemployment. More than 1 000 new public dwellings will be built at a cost of \$316 million, and \$654 million will be spent on road construction.

The net debt is projected to reach \$19.1 billion at 30 June 2013, bringing the net-debt-to-asset ratio to 85.4 per cent and maintaining the state's AAA credit rating, which is an outstanding achievement—unlike Kevin Rudd, who is sending Australia into \$300 billion of debt. And the opposition complains about this government moving into \$19.1 billion of debt! Western Australia is the most prosperous state in this country, the state which is basically carrying the country, and now we have to carry Kevin Rudd's \$300 billion debt as well.

Mr A.P. O'Gorman interjected.

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: Let me put it this way, he gave \$20 million in cash handouts. I was reading *The West Australian* only the other day and it said that 95 000 people who earned over \$100 000 a year—well over \$100 000, because they are salary sacrificing into superannuation—received the \$900 cash handout. Some of these people are earning millions of dollars and are salary sacrificing, and lo and behold the government gives them \$900 on top of it! Are they not lucky! Those 95 000 people should be thanking Kevin Rudd. Ninety-five thousand times \$900 is a lot of money thrown away for nothing! Let us not talk about the amount that is going overseas and what is being wasted.

Mr R.H. Cook: Did you get the \$900?

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: I did as a matter of fact.

Mr R.H. Cook: Did you send it back?

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: No, I am going to donate it to the Good Samaritans. That is where my \$900 is going.

Mr R.H. Cook: I didn't get it.

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: I do not need it, and I am going to give it away. I am giving it to the Good Samaritans; I would rather it go somewhere useful than on buying a plasma TV for someone. Then again, people cannot buy a plasma TV because there are none left in the shops because the demand has gone through the roof.

Ms J.M. Freeman interjected.

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: Yes, the Chinese economy, which is fantastic for China.

WA stays in surplus with \$647 million this financial year, \$409 million in 2009-10, and \$23 million in 2010-11—surplus, surplus, surplus! Which other state can boast this?

The government will push ahead with public sector reforms in a bid to achieve improved performance and efficiency. The government has committed to a \$23.8 billion capital works program, an increase on the \$18.5 billion spent over the past four years, with a record \$8.3 billion to be spent in 2009-10, a \$263 million investment in high-efficiency gas turbines at Kwinana power station and an extension to the northern suburbs railway line to Brighton. Port infrastructure will receive \$377 million for harbour deepening at the Fremantle port and construction of Port Hedland's multi-user Panamax berth. The government has committed \$220 million to the Ord stage 2; \$1.2 billion to expanding and improving the state's electricity infrastructure; and \$1.1 billion to investing in water services, including the commencement of the \$955 million southern sea water desalination plant.

This is a budget for the times. It is a budget which offers so much to the people of Western Australia, a budget that is setting us up for the times ahead when things do turn and prosperity comes back. The capital infrastructure that will be spent will support the future strong growth of this economy.

I realise that when we look at a budget and the expenditure contained in that budget, we can always criticise and say that there is not enough money being given to certain sectors—there never has been and probably never will be, unfortunately. It would be fantastic if there was.

I listened to some of the members talk about some of the social issues. I remember reading in the paper that the previous government was receiving billions of dollars and it did not know what to do with it. The money was just coming from everywhere, yet there are so many problems that members opposite are identifying, and those problems are genuine problems; however, members opposite did nothing about them. They had the opportunity to spend billions of dollars on those problems, not just \$8 million or \$10 million; they could have poured billions

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into some of those areas. They did nothing with it. As I said before, they were a bit like Kevin Rudd—\$20 billion has just been thrown away.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): Order, members! Can we please let the member for Carine finish his presentation without interruption? Thank you.

Several members interjected.

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: I thank members opposite very much for agreeing with a lot of what I have been saying.

Ms J.M. Freeman: No; that is really low. Let *Hansard* show that we do not agree with you.

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: So the member for Nollamara does not agree with me that it is important to spend money on hospitals, on electricity and on water infrastructure?

Ms J.M. Freeman: Yes; I agree it is very important.

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: So the member does agree with me! All the Labor Party did for Fiona Stanley Hospital was to push dirt around. However, I am not going to harp on. I commend this budget. I think it is a fantastic budget. I have no doubt that over the next four years cost savings will be identified and efficiencies will be found and that that money will be invested wisely for the first time in many, many years.

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn) [8.21 pm]: I will start with some local issues arising from the budget and I will deal with them relatively quickly. First, I will congratulate the government on the budget.

Mr R.F. Johnson: You will be the first from your side!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I know; but I will congratulate the government because I am a fair-minded person who gives credit where credit is due.

The Minister for Transport recently announced the addition of 560 new car bays at Cockburn central. Those car bays, as members know, are needed by not just residents of Cockburn and Jandakot, but also residents from as far east as Byford and as far south as Kwinana and Baldivis. Because it takes only 16 minutes by train from Cockburn to the city, people drive to Cockburn to jump on a train rather than catch one on the Armadale line. The problem is that when they get back to Cockburn, they find they have a \$100 parking ticket, because the City of Cockburn has decided to whack people who park on the side of the road. There are no buildings around and the cars are not in the way, but the city has decided to whack them anyway. As the member for Jandakot knows, hundreds of people are being hit with parking tickets issued by both the Public Transport Authority and the City of Cockburn. Both the member for Jandakot and I spoke to officers of the City of Cockburn, although for no result.

Mr J.M. Francis: We are working on it.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: They are not going to do anything about it because they are making money out of it, member for Jandakot. The city let slip the other day that it had raised \$100 000 in parking fines out of this little exercise. However, the minister has announced an extra 560 car bays and for that I am very grateful, as are the thousands of people who have signed petitions calling for an extension to the car park.

Mr J.M. Francis: Member, will you take an interjection?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I will not take interjections because I have a fair bit to get through.

A \$35 million investment in the Australian Marine Complex at Henderson is an example of another local matter announced in the Treasurer's press release. That \$35 million comes from Chevron for the Gorgon load-out port facilities in the Australian Marine Complex. That money was put up by Chevron and not by the state government. I do not know how the state government has accounted for that money. The opposition will be asking why the Treasurer is putting this project forward as a good project to be funded by the state government. It is a good project, but one that is in fact funded by Chevron as part of its Gorgon program. I know that because I am the former minister, and I tried to get another \$25 million from my good friend the then Treasurer and now Leader of the Opposition in order to do some other work associated with that \$35 million Chevron program—albeit I was unsuccessful. Nevertheless, that \$35 million is not state government money but Chevron money, and to announce in the budget that this is actually a part of state government funding is very misleading. The Treasurer should come clean as to where that money comes from.

I will also talk about water. I was accused today in question time by the Minister for Water of stirring up trouble by issuing press releases and for not exactly telling the entire truth, but if I remember rightly, last week I had a

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question raised by the Leader of the Opposition, who put it to the minister that there would be a \$500 million cut to the Water Corporation's budget. That was last Tuesday. What do we find has occurred? We find that there has been a \$560 million cut to the Water Corporation's budget.

Mr D.A. Templeman: You were pretty accurate.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Yes; we were pretty spot on! The Water Corporation's budget has been cut by \$560 million. But in a year-on-year cut—that is, in comparison to the estimated actual expenditure of 2008-09, which ends in June—it is actually a \$620 million reduction in the Water Corporation's capital works program. A \$620 million reduction! The Minister for Water's budget has been whacked, cut and slashed, probably more than the budget of any other minister in this house. It has been absolutely shredded. Last week one item we raised in a matter of public interest was that the budget would indicate that the infill sewerage program would be cut. Of course, the minister responded by saying that he would neither confirm nor deny that that was the case and that the opposition should just wait two more sleeps to find out whether it really had been cut. Of course, we have found out that it has been cut. Volume 3 of the budget papers deals with the Water Corporation, and on page 143 the minister outlines the projects that have been cut—including \$58 million for the waste water overflow risk management project, \$78 million for dam safety and \$85 million for the infill sewerage program. The total estimated value of the infill sewerage program is \$200 million, and this year alone \$85 million has been cut from that program; therefore, 40 per cent of the total budget has been cut. We will try to find out during the budget estimates process why, because we want to know when those programs will begin again, as do the people out there in the community who are waiting to be connected to mains sewerage. This affects not just people in the metropolitan region; plenty of country towns out there are on the infill sewerage list. The program was funded last year to the tune of an extra \$21 million to speed up the program and get it completed by 2013, including in country towns in WA. All of that has gone. There is no time frame in the out years as to when that program will begin again. The excuse that has been given by the Minister for Water is, "Well, this is the result of the global financial crisis. Sorry, but we can't connect your house to mains sewerage because of the global financial crisis." I know that does not wash with members from both sides of this house. As the shadow minister, it certainly does not wash with me. The minister has actually reconfigured the budget. He has reduced it massively by \$620 million and reconfigured the amount of money he will spend on capital works, but to do that he will take all the funding out of the infill sewerage program. He cannot blame that on the global financial crisis. He will still be spending \$1.1 billion. He can choose, if he wishes, to spend some of that money on the infill sewerage program. He has chosen not to. With the Water Corporation he has decided to fund other projects. To say that the global financial crisis has led to the cancellation of the infill sewerage program, which is referred to in a dot point in the *Budget Statements*, is disingenuous and is not believed by the community. I can assure the minister that there will be a backlash from those people whose properties have not been connected to sewerage and who have been campaigning for it for many years. They want infill sewerage for health and environmental reasons. If any member wishes to see the result of the lack of an infill sewerage program, I can take them to houses in Spearwood to show them. Many elderly people who do not have access to large amounts of income find it difficult to meet the cost of pumping out their septic tanks. They end up with sewage pools in their backyard. That is occurring in houses in Spearwood. Those people are extremely angry and they will continue to be angry, because those infill sewerage programs have been deferred in the past. I put my hand up because Labor deferred them, but the previous Liberal government also deferred them.

Another reason people want the infill sewerage program to go ahead is that primarily it applies to older areas and the houses there are on large blocks. As soon as the infill sewerage connection is provided it allows the owners of those houses to put forward proposals to the local authorities to subdivide their properties. These blocks are generally close to the city. The reasons for the pressure on government to complete infill sewerage programs include, firstly, environmental and health issues; and, secondly, a connection to sewerage allows a homeowner to submit an application to subdivide his or her block.

I will come back to capital works in a moment. I would like to refer to water prices. The actual increase in water costs to the household has been glossed over by this government. For example, we have been told there is a 10.01 per cent increase in water charges, which to the average household represents a \$40.15 increase. That is not on my water bill. My bill shows a 4.2 per cent increase in sewerage and a 6.6 per cent increase in drainage costs. The reality is that there has been a 20.87 per cent increase in water costs.

Mr J.M. Francis: You might have to sell the mansion in Swanbourne.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The member for Jandakot likes dogs, because he has a couple of Alsatis. I also like dogs and have a big dog. When I take it to the park there is always a little dog running around yapping and saying,

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“Look at me.” It is just like the member for Jandakot. He runs around this Parliament yapping and saying, “Look at me; I can be a minister.”

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): Members, can we come back to the subject?

Mr D.A. Templeman: He reminds me of the dog in the Foghorn Leghorn cartoon. He runs hard and in the end he is choked by the leash.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That is very good. I will come back to the debate.

The reality for families is a \$65.75 increase in the average household water bill. That is the way it should have been presented. The government should not have said there will be a 10.01 per cent increase in the average household water bill. It should have said that there would be an overall 20 per cent, or \$65.75, increase in the average household water bill. By doing that the government would have been up-front.

I come back to the capital works program, which is about being up-front. If members go through the budget papers and identify the capital works projects that are missing from this year's capital works program compared with last year, they will find the Albany waste water treatment plant tree farm expansion, \$21.9 million, and the East Rockingham waste water treatment plant, \$166.6 million. Money had been allocated to these projects. If that money has been allocated to another project or the project has been deferred, the minister will have difficulty getting that money back from the Treasurer. Other capital works programs that are missing from this budget include the Bridgetown regional water supply at a cost of \$34.8 million; the Bullabulling 15 megalitre storage facility, \$13.8 million; and the new water sources, which have been cut back and which I will refer to in estimates, \$555.9 million—I give the minister the heads up on that so he can get the Water Corporation to provide him with the information. Under the Department of Water section of the budget papers it states that new water sources have been cut back. To what extent, we will find out in estimates.

The Gnangara mound sustainability strategy and the Gnangara metering program have disappeared off the radar screen.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I find that amazing because if members read the press release put out by the minister on 4 May following the report on the Gnangara mound, the headline indicates that the government is committed to saving the Gnangara mound. The minister knows that mound is under so much stress. The report is very clear. The minister knows from years of over abstraction by the Water Corporation, agriculture and commercial activities and from the 45 bores that have been monitored that there is a significant drop off in water levels on the Gnangara mound. The minister knows that this year alone has been one of the driest years on record because of a very dry autumn. Why those programs for the Gnangara mound would be cut or disappear altogether is beyond me. The Department of Water, the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Water Corporation are saying that the Gnangara mound is under extreme stress and that we should take significant action to bring it back or at least do whatever we can to stop putting it under that stress. Why is this budget not identifying significant amounts of money to try to rescue the Gnangara mound? It does not; it does the opposite. The rehabilitation or injection program, about which the minister put a press release out in which he said what a great job he was doing, was a program initiated by Geoff Gallop when he was Premier. It was a first in Australia. The trial would take treated waste water from Beenyup and inject it into the Gnangara mound. More money was spent on that project last year than is allocated for this year. That is not to say that the government is not continuing with the program, and I commend the minister for continuing with the program and being committed to it, but if the report says that the Gnangara mound is under so much stress and if the users and the monitors of the Gnangara mound all agree that Perth's number one groundwater supply is in great difficulty, why does this budget not identify a greater amount of money being applied to the Gnangara mound rehabilitation project or injection program? Why is there not a greater amount of money to speed up the process? Why is there not a greater amount of money spent on the sustainability strategy and the monitoring? The minister could not say that the Gnangara mound is all right, because he knows it is in a lot of trouble and he has said that. He said that the government is committed to dealing with it, but the budget papers do not give any —

Dr G.G. Jacobs: Have you read the sustainability strategy?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Forget about reports; let us talk about hard dollars. The only thing that will make the minister look good is if he can get money to fix things, not write reports. It is the only way he will get runs on the board. The money is not there. He knows it is not there. Until it is there he will be under a lot of pressure, not just from me but also from the community and environmental groups.

The minister, in answer to a question that I raised today on the capital works program that is being slashed, gave me a bit of stick about raising the issue of the prevention of falls program. He thought that some people know no

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bounds and that it was outrageous that I should talk about the cutting of the prevention of falls program in the same week that a man fell 4.4 metres to his death at Australind waste water treatment plant. The minister said that it was not true and that I was misleading the house. He said that \$9 million was to be spent on this. That \$9 million is money that we, not this government, allocated last year out of \$36 million, and the Water Corporation has continued to expend it. The minister misled the house.

Dr G.G. Jacobs: That is the advice I got today. You tried to say that it was cut during a week when a man died.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The minister misled this house. The fall-prevention program had \$9 million allocated to it last year and it continues on. It is not new money. It had \$36 million allocated to it of which only \$9 million, which we allocated last year, will be spent.

Dr G.G. Jacobs: You said it would be cut.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Nothing extra will be spent this year. Meanwhile, a worker died at a waste water treatment plant. What from? It was from falling. What is the program that has been cut? It is the fall-prevention program. I have a problem because of raising it! The minister should be raising it. Members of the government should be raising it with the minister. It is a disgrace to have someone die on property for which the minister is responsible. The minister has responsibility at the end of the day. To cut that program and to criticise me for raising the fact is an absolute disgrace. I will continue to raise it publicly.

While we are on the issue of safety, I will talk about something else because I have responsibility for other areas of industrial relations and that section of commerce that deals with safety. I will not go on a great deal about safety in the mining industry, because that section has been taken from the Treasurer and handed back to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum. The budget figures dealing with safety show no greater increase in the allocation for WorkSafe or the Department of Mines and Petroleum allocation of funding for inspectors, particularly those inspectors in the mining industry. We have witnessed five deaths in eight months in one company in the mining industry. The Queensland government's budget allocated a lot more money to employ more WorkSafe inspectors. It doubled the number of mines inspectors that Western Australia has. New South Wales has one-third more mining inspectors, which were allocated for in its budget. Western Australia has not moved at all, yet it has a bigger mining industry than Queensland and New South Wales and it has more mines than both those states. It also has a greater death rate than those states, yet there is no allocation at all.

Of course there is a global financial crisis and of course the Treasurer must ensure that he manages the budget responsibly and carefully and cuts where he thinks it is appropriate. It is not as if the government has no money at all. Billions of dollars have been allocated for expenditure on infrastructure. It does not cost billions of dollars to employ more people to look after workers in the mining industry. It needs a few million dollars to be allocated to those departments so that people who work in mines can go to work in the morning at the beginning of a shift and go home safely in the evening, and that the equipment that they work with is in a safe and proper condition. I know that the ultimate responsibility for that lies with the employers and that the duty of care falls to the employers, in a similar way to the one I mentioned when talking about the Minister for Water. However, because of production schedules and cost cutting in the mining sector, it is always push, push. I worked in the mining industry in the north west, so I know exactly what the industry does. It pushes to get the production out. If it has to cut corners, it cuts them. That is what happens and that is the reality of life on the shop floor. Because of that, things get overlooked, safety gets overlooked and ultimately people get killed. We have seen that with BHP Billiton—five people killed in eight months—yet there is no increase in the state budget for more mining inspectors. Given the money we are talking about here, I believe that is a disgrace.

Finally, I will deal with energy and the 23.2 per cent increase. The Premier made some statements about energy and rewrote history about energy as if our side of politics when in government did not indicate that there would be increases in energy prices. I told people last July, which was at least nine months out from an election, so people knew what they were doing when they voted. I told people that there would be a 72 per cent increase in electricity prices. I told people that the first increase of 10 per cent would be applied in July this year, and that a subsidy would be applied to Verve Energy to make that organisation whole. Why was Verve losing money? It was because of the 300 per cent increase in gas prices. The Premier said, "Oh, we'll have a debate about gas contracts". Let us have a debate about gas contracts! We know who signed off on those contracts!

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: It was because of the increasing fuel costs. The member for Riverton knows nothing about it. He thinks he knows, but he knows nothing about it. The member for Riverton is in government now. He should go and question Verve if he thinks he is so smart. The increasing costs of energy, and increasing costs of materials and labour, have made Verve unsustainable in terms of its profitability. As soon as we start to bring the

Extract from Hansard

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price of electricity up to the real cost of providing electricity, Verve will be back in the black. If we look at the out years of Verve, we see it goes back into the black. It goes back to a \$68 million profit. That is exactly what we said last year. The difference is that we proposed to put up prices by 10 per cent. This government has decided to take a big whack, because the Office of Energy recommended it, and put up prices by just over 23 per cent. Basically, that is the only difference. We were going to put up prices gradually, starting with 10 per cent. The government has whacked consumers with an increase of 23 per cent.

MR A.P. O'GORMAN (Joondalup) [8.51 pm]: I wish to make a contribution to this budget debate. This is normally a time in the parliamentary cycle when I am pretty happy, because I am delivering for my community.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: Yes! Normally you are over here! Now you are over there!

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Does the member want to let me go on, or what?

Since this government has come into power, it has done nothing but slash and burn. The first I saw of that in my electorate was when the funding was axed for Craigie Community House. That was fully funded under our government to the tune of \$890 000. Craigie Community House provides services to disadvantaged people in the northern suburbs, people who need financial counselling and people who need a place to meet. It is a place to which mothers can bring their children for playgroups, and a place to which seniors can go so that they are not locked away and isolated in their homes. As soon as this government came into power, it pulled that funding out of the budget. When I questioned the Minister for Child Protection about that matter, I was told that the money had gone into providing housing for homeless youth. I have looked hard at the budget, and I cannot see one community housing project in my electorate of Joondalup. In fact, there is probably not one community housing project across all the electorates in the City of Joondalup for homeless young people. When I looked into this matter previously, I wrote to the then Minister for Housing and Works and asked him how many community houses I could expect to see built in my electorate of Joondalup. The answer that came back was: not one. People are coming into my office on a weekly basis—young mothers and old ladies—who are basically living in their cars. There is not one public housing development in the electorate of Joondalup for these people—not one. That is a disgrace. The latest person who has come into my electorate office with a complaint is a young mother who has two young girls and is living in her car. What is the response from the government to this situation? There is no response.

That was my first experience of being in opposition. Yes, I know I am on this side and I cannot expect to enjoy the benefits of being in government. However, government has an obligation to every citizen of this state and to every electorate of this state to provide the services and facilities that they require. The fact that my electorate is a Labor electorate—for the third time—is no excuse for the government to withdraw those services. That is exactly what the government has done with Craigie Community House. It was put to us by the Department for Child Protection that that facility was badly needed. The government has axed it. That is a disgrace.

I turn now to some other issues in my electorate. It is a shame the Minister for Police is not in the chamber, because this issue is not only about my electorate but also about the minister's electorate and the electorate of the member for Kingsley. This issue is school crossing guards. I will talk about this issue first, and I will then, if I may have the indulgence of the house, read from a letter that was sent to the minister praising him for his intervention on behalf of the member for Kingsley to ensure that school crossing guards would remain at a school in her electorate. This was despite the fact that the school crossing committee had already scheduled that crossing to be downgraded from an A-type crossing to a B-type crossing. The minister interceded in that matter. I wonder why? It is because it is a marginal Liberal electorate. That is why the minister decided that he had to look after the member for Kingsley by putting the crossing guards back at that school. I have been involved in parents and citizens associations and organisations such as that for the best part of 20 years. The whole time we were in government, I never saw political interference in a school crossing guard situation. However, the Minister for Police decided that it was appropriate, in the case of a marginal Liberal electorate, to reverse a decision that had been made by the school crossing committee. Meanwhile, Bambara Primary School, which is in the minister's own electorate of Padbury, has lost its school crossing guard. That school is located on a very busy road. However, it falls below the criteria that have been set by that committee. The good parents at that school came to me to complain about that matter and asked whether I could do anything about that, and I said that it is actually not appropriate that I interfere politically in the decisions of the school crossing committee. They then pointed out the situation in the member for Kingsley's electorate and how the minister had intervened, so I thought I would take up this matter with the minister. However, there is also a similar situation in my own electorate at Beldon Primary School. Beldon Primary School was built in 1985. That school has been very successful in the community and in engaging young Indigenous people in the community to attend school on a regular basis, which we all know is quite a feat in some areas. This school has engaged in a healthy lifestyle

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program for its students. It has encouraged parents to walk their young students to school rather than take the car. However, when the school did that, guess what happened? The number of cars and the number of vehicle movements around the school decreased, and that meant that the school fell below the threshold for a school crossing guard. That is similar to the situation at Bambara Primary School in the minister's electorate. When I wrote to the minister and asked him to review that situation, the answer from the minister was basically that no school crossing guards would be provided at that school. That school had its two crossing guards withdrawn on the same day—9 April this year. That left all the children at that school completely unprotected from traffic in the area. It is a disgrace that the minister seeks to involve himself in marginal Liberal electorates but does not worry too much about his own electorate. The minister's electorate is 11 or 12 per cent Liberal—maybe a bit more; I have not checked lately—but when it is a marginal Labor electorate, who cares? The minister is actually putting the process ahead of the lives of children. He is actually putting children at risk by interfering in, and overturning, the decisions of the school crossing committee. I ask the minister to reconsider and hold a standard. If it is good enough for one, it is good enough for all. If it is not good enough for all, he should remove all the crossing guards on crossings that fall below that standard and not pander to, and not pork barrel in, certain electorates. It is disgraceful.

I will now go back a bit and remind some members in this place who have been carping on at us for the past two days about us grizzling or whatever that when members opposite were on this side of the house, they used to do similar things in the most disgraceful way. One of those things that I will talk about is stamp duty. The stamp duty on caravans was removed in the 2007 budget. That was something I lobbied the then Treasurer, now Leader of the Opposition, hard for over a long period, and eventually I got him to see the light. I got the then Treasurer to see that there was a benefit in removing stamp duty on motorised vehicles that were towed as recreational vehicles, and the stamp duty was dropped. Back then, the current Treasurer, the member for Vasse, raised the issue. I was surprised, because he seemed so passionate about this issue that I thought that as soon as he was Treasurer, he would extend the stamp duty exemption to motor homes. In 2007, the current Treasurer stated —

I have a couple of quick questions relating to a topic I raised during my second reading contribution — the self-propelled caravan. The self-propelled caravan, as it has been put to me, is what we might call a recreational vehicle, and what others might call a Winnebago, camper van or motor home. I support the extension of stamp duty exemption to camper trailers and caravans; it brings us into line with what a lot of other states have done for some time. Was any thought given to extending the exemption to those classes of vehicles? I notice that the Treasurer, in his second reading speech, commented about the tremendous impact this will have on intrastate tourism.

It has had a tremendous impact, and members will also notice in the past couple of years since that stamp duty exemption came in that sales of recreational vehicles have gone through the roof. We have a lot more people holidaying at home—I know some of that is due to the global financial crisis—and it helps our regional areas when we get people into caravans and motor homes and out of the city. At the time I was sitting where the member for Jandakot now sits and I raised the issue that people still have to pay stamp duty on their tow vehicle when they are towing a caravan, which is why the exemption should not be extended to motor homes. Since then I have been convinced—I have spoken with the industry quite a bit—that there is a discrepancy. There is a way that we can extend the stamp duty exemption to motor homes while still recognising that those vehicles have a mechanically propelled part—that is, by reducing the amount of stamp duty, which I think is six per cent, to three per cent, which is similar to the duty on heavy haulage vehicles. For heavy haulage vehicles over a certain weight—I think it is 4.5 tonnes—the stamp duty rate drops to 4.5 per cent. The funny thing about this is that if I buy a nice big Winnebago for \$300 000 to \$500 000 and it is over 4.5 tonnes, I pay the lower stamp duty rate. If I am a poor pensioner who buys a much cheaper recreational vehicle for \$30 000 to \$50 000, or if I am a little wealthier and buy a \$160 000 new smaller recreational vehicle or motor home, I will pay the higher stamp duty rate. Where is the justice in that? That is completely wrong. In view of the fact that this Treasurer recognised that this was an issue in 2007 and he raised it in 2007, I expected that it one of the first things he would have said was, “Look, my credibility is on the line here; I raised it. Everybody knows I raised it and I’m going to fix the wrong that I perceive the former Treasurer did.” Therefore, I ask the Treasurer to look at his books and extend that stamp duty exemption to all recreational vehicles, taking into account that motor homes still have a mechanically propelled part, and I ask him to reduce the stamp duty on vehicles under 4.5 tonnes to three per cent, which is in line with the amount that is paid on vehicles that are more than 4.5 tonnes. I know the Treasurer has a tough budget, but this is an issue of fairness and equity, and we have to give it consideration.

I have another issue that I will raise with the Treasurer in his capacity as the Minister for Commerce, and it is about commercial tenancies. Commercial tenancy is one of those areas that has been unjustly dealt with over many, many years and by many, many governments. The anomaly is that small retailers, particularly in shopping centres, are very badly disadvantaged, to the point that they actually support large retailers such as Coles and

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Woolworths, which are considered the base tenants in most of the shopping centres. I am making a qualification in that I am told that Coles and Woolworths can pay as little as \$200 a square metre for retail space in a shopping centre. However, I know for a fact, because I have seen the leases, that some small retailers who may run a kebab shop or a food outlet in the food hall in some of these shopping centres can pay much more. The worst lease I have seen was for \$6 500 a square metre. That is an outrage! A small family business is trying to operate, to turn a profit, to employ some local people and to actually pay its lease of \$6 500 a square metre when we have large national companies, such as Coles, Woolworths, Myer, David Jones and all those, paying as little as \$200 a square metre. We cannot fix it but we can assist in this matter. One thing we can do to help is to make the leasing process more transparent. It is a simple matter because all leases are registered with the Valuer-General, so we could enact some legislation that authorises the Valuer-General to publish a lease register that is accessible to lessees for a small fee. In that way retailers could compare the lease payments a square metre that are being paid across their shopping centre. They could also compare their type of store with others, whether it is a surf shop, newsagency or whatever, to get a fair idea of what sort of rent they should pay under their lease. It is an important thing to simply bring some equity into this matter. A couple of other things can be done, one of which is already partially covered in legislation; that is, retailers should not be required to hand over their turnover figures to the landlord or managing agent, yet many retailers still do. I believe that under the current legislation they do not have to do, but because of a little loophole, agents still manage to do this. If a retailer has over a certain amount of turnover, the agents or landlords add another couple of per cent on top of his lease.

An opposition member: That's outrageous.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: It is outrageous, because they are eating into the profit from the extra hard work that that small retailer is doing, and we are seeing many small businesses go bankrupt. We are even seeing suicides in this industry, which is a disgraceful state of affairs. We should be doing something to help prevent that, and I propose that we look at the commercial tenancies legislation very, very carefully to see what we can do to fix this problem.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: I think this is a problem that we really must deal with.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: I will not take an interjection because I still have a lot to say and this is an issue that I am very passionate about, as members will find out.

If smaller retailers have a dispute with their landlord, they must go to the State Administrative Tribunal. The landlords and agents are employing very clever lawyers. I have seen a lease that has been drawn up by Clayton Utz for a shopping centre that is not far from where I live. It is very thick. A person would need a degree just to read it, yet we are expecting small business people, small retailers, whose main focus is to open their shop every morning and get their goods out, to decipher it. It is not written in plain English, and it is very confusing. Those small retailers should be able to go to an appeals agency and have their leases adjudicated on, without the high costs associated with employing lawyers and the like. We also need to have some protection for them, so that if there are costs, they do not bear all the cost. At the moment, even if they opt for a valuer, they bear the costs of the valuer, even though it is the valuer for the shopping centre management. Many issues need to be looked at. I have four or five of them in my head, but time is fairly short, and I have a fair bit to get through.

We need to protect small retailers. They employ well over 50 per cent of the people in the retail industry. People think that Coles and Woolies, because they are big, employ the largest number of retail staff. They do not. The small retailers do. They employ well over 50 per cent of retail staff, and we must look after them.

I want to talk about a couple of other issues. The first one is directed to the Minister for Education, and it is about the half cohort. Next year we will get the full effect of the half cohort that started school in 2001. This was approved by the now Premier in 1997 or 1998, I think, when there was a half-cohort intake. That is now manifesting itself, and it will affect some of the schools in my area. It will also affect one of the schools in the member for Hillarys' area. I hope that he will join the fight on this issue to see whether we can have a moratorium for five years on the staffing formula that is used in schools. In my electorate, the 2009 year 8 group in one high school comprises 127 students. Next year, 2010, because of the half cohort, the school is expecting to have only 40 students in year 8. In the member for Hillarys' electorate, at the moment Padbury Senior High School has an enrolment in year 8 of eight students. A class cannot run with eight students, especially if the staffing formula stays as it is now. It is manifesting itself now, but it will keep rolling on for the next five years.

I will quickly go through the numbers, and, hopefully, when people hear them, they will understand the situation. In 2009, there are 127 students in year 8, and in 2010 there will be 40. In 2009, there are 126 students in year 9,

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and in 2010 there will be 121. In 2009, there are 152 students in year 10, and in 2010 it will drop to 126. In 2009, there are 141 students in year 11, and in 2010 there will be 140. In 2009, there are 100 students in year 12, and in 2010 there will be 110. In 2009, the school about which I am talking has 640 students. In 2010, because of the half-cohort issue, it will have a total of 537 students. If we applied the staffing formula as it is now, without a moratorium, that school would lose teachers. The 40 students whom the school will take will not be able to be split into two classes of 20 students, because only 1.3 teachers will be allocated to the school, and the school cannot put 0.3 of a teacher in front of a class and tell that person to teach 20 kids. Therefore, we will lose teachers from other areas. I know that the education department is saying that no teachers will lose their positions because of this, but it actually qualifies that by saying that no permanent teachers will lose their positions. Many teachers are on contract, and they could lose their jobs. We will need them in five years, because we will then go back to a proper cohort.

This issue has been around since 1998. No-one has come up with an answer to it as yet. These schools have been writing to the Minister for Education and to the education department, and in reply they are getting what they call motherhood statements. They are not getting a direct answer. That is not good enough for these schools, and it is not good enough for these students.

I have a block of ice in my mouth. I should not have drunk that water. That cooled me down, did it not?

Mr R.F. Johnson: I always said you were a cool dude.

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: I am very cool. This is an important issue for every single member in this chamber. For any members who have schools in their electorates that are at the lower end in numbers, it will be an issue. For some of the schools that are at the higher end, it may not be so much of an issue.

I will now move on to a couple of other things that I was not able to find in the budget. A couple of years ago I had an unhappy task. In the 2005 election campaign, we promised that there would be a special events rail station for Arena Joondalup. When the government went out to tender for that project, the tender prices that came in were far above the \$7 million that we had allocated to the project. I think they were \$11.5 million or close to \$12 million to do that project. Because of the amount of use that the station would have, the minister at the time decided, following a lot of consultation, that we would shelve that project. Taxpayers’ money could not be wasted on a project that at that stage was probably not viable. That \$7 million was redirected in the budget. Some of it was redirected to provide an additional CAT bus service to go through the business area of Joondalup and on to Arena Joondalup. That was funded for a year on a trial basis. That bus service has some reasonable numbers. I think the two CAT bus services are averaging about 45 000 or 55 000 trips a month; that is, the CAT bus service that goes around the Joondalup central business district and the one that goes through the business park and on to the Arena. Having four buses on the route means that the buses run on time. There is a 15-minute interval between pick-ups. So that works.

Mr R.F. Johnson: How many passengers?

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: Between the lot of them, they are averaging between 45 000 and 55 000 trips a month.

The other part of that money was directed to upgrades at Edgewater train station. People ask why that needs an upgrade, because it was built in only 1992 or 1993 when the northern line was put in. It was one of those stations that was not anticipated to have a very high patronage. However, over the years the patronage has grown, and I think that at the moment there are 1 600 boardings each morning at that train station. A lot of seniors use the Edgewater train station. There is no escalator and there is no lift at that station. People who are frail or in a wheelchair or who use a walking frame have to go down a long ramp from the overpass to get on to the platform. We have been asking for a lift and for an upgrade to the shade and weather protection at that station. Part of the \$7 million for the Arena train station—it was not diverted away from Joondalup altogether—was geared towards the Edgewater station upgrade, so that there would be proper weather cover and a lift, particularly to get the seniors down to the platform. I have not been able to find that amount in the budget because it is a global figure. I think there is \$30 million for train stations in the budget, but I do not know whether \$6 million has been geared for Edgewater train station. I ask that the Minister for Transport give me an answer on that. I will ask the question in estimates also, because I need to know the answer.

There are a couple of other issues about which we have had concerns. One of the major issues was the Edgewater train station. Another issue that I want to talk about briefly is the freeway. The freeway extension was opened in November last year, after the election. There have been some issues with noise walls. Under the original contract, there was to be a follow-up noise study conducted this month, I think. However, I have had reports from residents in Joondalup whose properties back on to Burns Beach Road—we have surveyed them—

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that the noise level is ridiculous and that the noise walls on the freeway need to be extended further along Burns Beach Road. Also, some mature plantings need to be added to try to kill the noise for those residents. There are also some issues with noise walls further down the line. In Curran Court, there is a Mr Ward. Since the noise walls have gone up, he has lost his back fence. He puts it down to the wind that the noise wall has created. He was looking for some compensation or a replacement wall. A little bit further along to Moore Drive, the people who are on a corner similar to Mr Ward—a mirror image of his block but further down—have noise walls along the side and the back of their properties, so they are covered. The same is the case on the Currambine side, where the noise walls extend around properties. This gentleman is a little further back, so he is not right on the freeway and he has missed out. He has no fences at the moment, and he needs that looked after.

I was disappointed about quite a few things in this budget. This budget will come back to bite the government in the long run. It has a lot of black holes that we are not sure about. We are told it is because the federal government did not commit to giving Western Australia the funds from its budget until two days before the state budget was brought down. However, I would have expected the government to have included in the forward estimates money for Oakajee, because that was a priority of the current government, and money for the Northbridge Link, regardless of whether the federal government came to the party.

Today the Premier told us about the port of Esperance and the \$100 million that was supposed to be put in. The first part is underway and \$35 million has been spent, and a further \$85 million of work remains unaccounted for. At the moment, that is not in the budget. These are the sorts of black holes that the public needs to know about, especially the people of Esperance as they have had a hard time. They need some surety about what is happening. It is incumbent on this government to go back and do the books and put those dollar figures in to cover the Oakajee port, the Northbridge Link and the shortfall in the upgrade to the Esperance port. It is vitally important to the people down there, and for all of us here, to understand where that money is coming from.

We should not have to rely on the Premier's word. I know his word is good, but it is not good enough for accountability in this place or in this state.

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie-Preston) [9.22 pm]: I will start straight off and talk to the Minister for Road Safety about something that is dear to my heart. I know he will come back and say that some of my questions do not point that way, but I am passionate about funding for road safety. It is my understanding from looking at the budget that there have been shortfalls in that area and some projects have not been funded.

For quite some time, Collie has had a disastrous run of road accidents. It was tragic that that run of traffic accidents resulted in deaths and serious injuries and in people becoming paraplegics. That is a huge cost not only to the community and to families, but also to the state. Therefore, I cannot understand why the Towards Zero program was not one of the government's top priorities. I am sure my colleague the member for Girrawheen, who sits next to me in this place, will make further statements on that issue as we go through the estimates debates.

Let us look at how this budget deals with Coalfields Highway, one of the major roads in my electorate. It is a double blow for my electorate as \$20 million has disappeared out of the funding for the Coalfields Highway. Even though it was part of the forward estimates, that item now has a big dash through the columns until 2013, and even that column is blank. When I think back to my younger days and my indiscretions at that time, I ask myself why I played up when I was young. It is because I did not fear being caught. We have major problems with road safety in this state because there are fewer police on the streets and the roads. I plead with the minister to find that money for road safety somewhere. I know that things are a bit tight and it is easy to knock out some of those publicity campaigns, but we have to measure the value of road safety to the community as a whole.

We do not see only one person ending up in hospital for a week; some people are wheelchair-bound forever and ever, and they may be in hospital for a long time. I still have friends who are residents of Shenton Park Rehabilitation Hospital, so I am very close to that issue.

Minister, it beggars belief that a program that was working towards a successful outcome—both sides of politics will always argue whether it was good or bad—can be dropped without a replacement program being found. That is of great concern to me.

Mr R.F. Johnson: What program is this?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Towards Zero.

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Mr R.F. Johnson: We have not dropped that at all. That is a 12-year strategy, and I am 100 per cent committed to that strategy. I swear to the member for Collie-Preston that I am.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I thank the minister for his assurance. I understand budget pressures and all of that; I am not blind to that.

I have seen in my electorate that the problem has moved from Collie to Donnybrook. I am not sure what the reason is, but recently the major crash scenes have been in Donnybrook, which is only 45 kilometres away. It is the same problem, but it has moved further away, and young women have been involved in these accidents. Road safety programs tend to focus on the hairy-chested young blokes with the V8s, but for some reason a number of young women have been involved in these accidents. Another factor is motorcycles, when older males have been involved. We tend to put all our efforts into the hoons, but it is the over-45 motorcycle riders who are getting killed. I was involved with motorbikes in my younger days as well, and I understand that what has happened is that the old BSA or whatever we had to ride around on —

Mr R.F. Johnson: I had a BSA gold star racer.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: A collectors item.

Mr R.F. Johnson: It would be now.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: In those days we could ride around on those motorbikes and do what we liked, and we could not go that fast. Today, off the shelf, people can buy a motorcycle that can do nearly 300 kilometres an hour. Sure, there is a two-year 250CC riding licence before someone can graduate to the larger bikes. However, the older riders, who got their licences when bikes were slower, are now getting onto fast bikes and getting themselves into trouble. Because they are going so fast, even some of the world champions would not be able to get out of trouble.

The road safety focus has to be changed slightly. While I was critical of some programs when I was on that side of house, we have to get back in there and make sure that we target those areas to reduce all the things that go with traffic accidents.

Mr R.F. Johnson: I will give the member a commitment and I assure him that is an area I am looking at.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: That leads to the roads themselves, and the \$20 million that has been deleted from the budget for the Coalfields Highway. I said it earlier tonight, and I will say it again for the sake of this speech: I take my hat off to Worsley Alumina, which has put work into Coalfields Highway, both at the turn-off to its factory and also on Coast Road as it turns onto Raymond Road and heads towards Collie. Along with a couple of other companies, Verve Energy and Wesfarmers Coal, the company conducted TV promotions before Easter. I take my hat off to the efforts of those companies. However, it does not remove the fact that the government has withdrawn \$20 million to upgrade that road.

This week, one of the concerned residents in my electorate went out and on one day from 3.00 pm to 6.00 pm counted 1 800 cars, 38 buses and 150 trucks on that road. The minister can compare that with traffic on our freeways. One of the reasons we do not have major traumas on the freeways is that when there are huge traffic loads on the freeways, they can achieve speeds of only 40 to 50 kilometres an hour. However, on Coalfields Highway, guys are doing 110 kays, and there are kangaroos, cattle—you name it—or the bloke who is running late for work and wants to overtake on that road. There is a problem there when it is dark. It takes only one truck to slow the traffic flow down. Again, I acknowledge that the major companies have done the right thing and put curfews on their trucks between six and seven o'clock so that these hold-ups do not occur, especially coming from Roelands. If that one small section was upgraded, it could alleviate many of the traffic problems—that is, where the hill starts and there is no double lane. When the trucks are grinding up the hill and they are fully loaded, 200 or 300 cars can be lined up behind them, and when the road opens up to the double lane, they all go mad to get past. It is a major disappointment to me that this upgrade was not funded. Expectations were high. People had pegged the road. I suppose the old political trick is to put in a few pegs so that people think it will happen sometime, but I am sure that they did not realise that it would happen after 2013. That is probably my major grizzle. It does not matter which side of politics brings down the budget; people will always be disappointed. But at times people have to be a bit positive and be happy with what they get, especially at times like these.

Collie is probably the powerhouse—I do not mean to be smart—of the south west; that is where the majority of construction work has taken place. That is why there are so many cars on that road. That will continue for the next four or five years, so it is not a short-term problem. If the Perdaman Industries urea factory comes on line—I was talking to its representatives today and things are going reasonably well—it will be located east of Collie.

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It is a \$2.5 billion project. It will probably be one of the biggest projects in the world if it takes off this year. We all know that everything else has been wound back. There are one or two gas projects that will be bigger than that project, but it will probably be the biggest project to come on stream in Australia if we can get it moving. We do not have short-term problems that will go away in 12 months; they will be there for another four years. That means that all those people will be travelling through the town, along with a large number of trucks. It is quite ironic that a lot of the people who now work in Collie previously ran it down and said that it was not the nicest place to be, but I love it to death. At the moment Collie is really dominating the economic scene in the south west. In fact, if Collie gets a cold, Bunbury gets the flu, because that is the flow-on effect. It used to be the opposite way around.

A major announcement was made recently by the government about the refurbishment of Muja A and B. It was a great press release but it had no substance. The first two gas turbines will be built in the city areas. The press release was fine. It stated that \$100 million worth of work would be created to refurbish the power station, but when I looked at the budget, I could not find it. I put out a press release and got an instant answer from Verve Energy, which said that it was not putting in any money; it would all be private money. In some ways it is privatisation by stealth. If it happens, it happens. No money has been budgeted by the government for this project. That is another concern when we are thinking about the future and are trying to stimulate the south west with jobs. There is a readymade project in the area, but the government has not budgeted money for it.

As I have said, there are ups and downs in every budget. I congratulate the government for some of the projects it has budgeted for. That money is mainly for schools in my electorate. Although they are not significant amounts of money, the money is much needed for maintenance. An amount of \$100 000 has been allocated to River Valley Primary School, \$500 000 to Wilson Park Primary School and \$500 000 to Dardanup and Boyanup Primary Schools. The major project is the \$5 million upgrade to Donnybrook District High School. Not all my comments are negative. I say thank you very much to the government for that money; I am certainly grateful for it.

The government has touted many sports promises in every newspaper, as all parties do during election campaigns. However, we now find out they were not stand-alone promises; there was a tie-up with those promises. That is hugely disappointing. It is like the tie-up with the drag strip at the Collie Motorplex, for which \$1.6 million was promised. There was a great photo of the Premier. But the devil is in the detail, because we then found out that the community will have to contribute \$1.6 million and so will the shire. That is just impossible in today's economic conditions, yet the Premier made no comment about that when he first made the statement. Not one comment was made about that, and it has certainly disappointed a lot of people along the line.

Mr C.J. Barnett: We will honour the commitment we gave on the day.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: The Liberal Party criticised our government for that, and now it has done the same thing but does not expect the same criticism. Exactly the same thing has happened in Balingup. It is a very small community. An amount of \$130 000 was promised for a bowling green in Balingup. Where will that community find that sort of money, when only a couple of hundred people live there? The government has been deceptive about those sorts of issues and is not really being honest with the community. The same thing has happened to Eaton Bowling Club. I thought it was a great bit of political nous from the Premier's department. I went to the bowling club one day and promised \$30 000 and the Premier went there the next day and promised \$120 000. However, when I drilled down into the budget, I could not find that money. There were no strings attached to my promise of \$30 000. Shires will not be able to find matching money in their budgets, which are shrinking in these economic times. I think the Premier should come clean and make a statement about the real terms of those promises, because he did not do so before the election.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I acknowledge the point you make.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I know that we all play games along the line, but sometimes we have to be up-front and honest with people about those sorts of things.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I will not interrupt your speech, but I will just make a comment. You referred to Muja A and B. There is negotiation going on now, but the company that will probably get the contract has the expertise to refurbish the Muja A and B units. It will provide the capital to do that, and it will end up a joint venture between Verve and that company.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: But surely there will be a cost to Verve somewhere.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No.

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Mr M.P. MURRAY: No money has been budgeted, and the government is not going to budget for it. I am just asking the question. Does the Premier expect that the full amount will be paid for by private enterprise?

Mr C.J. Barnett: Yes, and it will share in the revenue stream from the power produced.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Surely there must be some joint planning and those sorts of things, which will cost —

Mr C.J. Barnett: Some internal work will be done by Verve, but nothing great. There is no mystery about it. The equipment is known; it is old. The company will come in and refurbish it; it has the skills to do that. It will fund that and in return it will get a share of the stream of revenue. That is the arrangement.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: When that company asks me to tell the Premier that its budget is a bit short because it had to use it for the refurbishment, I will remind the Premier about that; I assure him that he will hear about it.

I hope that is the case and I hope it moves forward, because it will fill the gap when other construction jobs are lost. I have not been totally negative; the \$85 million for the upgrade of the coal feeds certainly will be welcomed by the shutdown workers. Most of them work for a six-week period without a day off, and then they might be out of work for six weeks. As a matter of fact, my phone has been ringing already with questions about when that shutdown will start and about the changeover from one company to another. It is a different type of work. One time I tried to get them permanent work and they absolutely got stuck into me because they did not want to work every day of the year. They told me that I was totally out of order in trying to find them permanent jobs. They love that work; they do not mind working 12 hours a day, getting as many hours as they can and then having a break and going fishing or whatever they want to do. They are looking forward to that and so am I.

Mr P.B. Watson: They're not after marron!

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Never.

Another disappointment is the way that job losses at Harvey Beef and Pinetec Ltd in the south west have been handled. They certainly were not handled with great effort or aplomb by the government. It was disappointing that I went to Harvey Beef with the minister and was ridiculed when I came back to the house, but I suppose that is politics. There were no ideas, but when I put forward some ideas, they were picked up and we came back with that.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I worked hard with some of the apprentices, especially at Pinetec. I am glad to say that two of the mature-age apprentices have now been placed with other companies. Sixty jobs were lost from Pinetec and approximately 150 from Harvey Beef Western Australia. One thing that the government should jump on is that when Harvey Beef needed extra staff after it put off its workforce it put on 15 permanent workers, including backpackers. That company has no feeling for that town. It did not want to re-employ the people it had put off, even in the short term. Husbands and wives lost their jobs with that company and if one of them had been able to pick up a few weeks' work, it would have eased their situation. However, to use migrant people or itinerants, such as backpackers, is a slap in the face for all Australians. I have no problems whatsoever with migrant workers, but when 150 people in a town as small as Harvey lose their jobs, the impact is huge. The government should have been telling that company to pull its head in and look after those people on a short-term basis. Surely not all the 150 workers could have been so bad that it had to get rid of them. I do not think that is the case. Sometimes when people are reinstated they become loyal workers.

I have already referred today to another industry that is in trouble; that is, the plantation industry. This government needs to show great leadership on this issue. It is not directly a state government issue. It will affect the state government and local authorities in that area, particularly from Boyup Brook to Kojonup and to Albany. I plead with the government to look at what funding is needed to allow that business to carry on for a while. Truck drivers who have left the hardwood industry have invested in the plantation industry and now they have huge overdrafts. We do not want them to go to the wall. There must be some way to on-sell the timber or move it elsewhere to be chipped and exported. The expected loss as outlined in today's *The West Australian* is about \$1.8 billion and that will be felt in the regions.

In addition, the shires in that area that have invested in the plantation industry will feel the pinch. I reiterate my earlier criticisms of royalties for regions whereby the government asked for a list of what needed to be fixed. That money should have been held to be used wisely when something went wrong. In this instance, the shires could be assisted so that they are not put under pressure. The Shire of Boyup Brook is probably the local authority that will feel it the most. The local councils will still be asked to do the work that is required around

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that town. The rates will not come in from the thousands of hectares that are covered in blue gums and the company will not be paying rates because it does not have any money. It will create a major problem.

Mr P.B. Watson: None of it is insured and if a bushfire goes through the plantation, the company will lose the lot.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: That is right. If nobody is looking after it, there will be no firebreaks. It will cause problems that we know come from any sort of downturn.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Did you say that the shires had invested in the project or their problem is the loss of rate revenue? I thought you said that the shires had invested directly in some of those projects.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: They have tried to encourage people there and have invested in the bottom end. They have not actually become involved in it, but investing —

Mr C.J. Barnett: In community infrastructure.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Yes. Some of them wish they had not done that. When the company moved in it knocked down the farmhouses and the people left. If the farmhouses and 20 hectares around them had been left, lifestyle farmers would have moved in and they would have been paying council rates. The local councils need the income from that area. I plead with all ministers to look at this problem to see whether the government as a whole can do something about it.

I will not have time to raise all the issues I intended to raise. I refer to the \$20 million in the agriculture budget that has been rolled out and treated as though it is new money. It is deceptive. Why was the money not used to keep people in land care jobs in Geraldton and Manjimup? I cannot think of the names off the top of my head. Jobs were created for land care and salinity issues, but they were not signed off. It makes the budget look good. We will be raising questions in the estimates debate about where the money has gone and what has been rolled over. We want to know what the true cost is.

Biosecurity has been split into five parts. It is not in a single line item and it is hard to consider.

A mere \$50 000 has been dropped off the pig-trapping program. I have a photograph that was sent to me by email of 20 pigs in a paddock outside Collie. That surprises me because there are so many kids with dogs around there and I wonder how they got away. That funding has now ceased, but the problems will reappear and the government will end up paying for it somewhere down the line.

I spoke to the Premier the other day about the coal industry futures fund. I know of some projects that could assist the coal industry to change its image and work through the greenhouse problems. I know the Premier has not been a fan of the coal industry since before he could walk.

Mr C.J. Barnett: They will put a statue of me in Collie one day. Maybe you will throw rotten eggs at it all day. I keep building power stations and refurbishing them.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Only because the Premier has to. We all know what happened when Varanus Island went to the wall. We know that if that pipeline blows up again, the Premier will come to me in Collie saying, "Come on, Mick, get those blokes to work." Perhaps they would say no so that the state would stop. They would not do that. The coal industry futures fund is more than \$600 million and presents opportunities for biofuels—one through the use of CO₂ and another through the chipping and pelletising of the waste wood from the plantations. It has a huge future. Anyone who looks at the pines that have been cut will find that thousands of tonnes have been burnt and wasted. That does not happen in Europe. In Europe the waste wood is pelletised, for which credits are given because it is renewable energy. Some power stations are using up to 25 per cent of wood pellets. There is a market for it.

Mr C.J. Barnett: What is the pellet like?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: It is a very fine pellet and it is blasted in like coal. Griffin Coal is undertaking studies on that. I believe that further down the track we can have an export market. The waste wood left in blue gum and pine plantations is a sheer waste. A market for it is available in Europe and I will be writing to the Premier and the Treasurer to have something done about it. In a pilot program the timber from Pinetec was being chipped and used at Muja power station, but technical problems arose and the program was stopped. That was one of the causes of Pinetec winding down.

It was pleasing to see the press release from a couple of ministers. The Minister for Agriculture and Food and the Minister for Water have talked about the \$610 000 that will be invested in fuel trials, which are aimed at minimising the effect on highly water soluble phosphorous fertilisers. I raised this previously and was ridiculed for doing so by the Minister for Agriculture and Food. Politics is great. If a member waits long enough, his or

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her idea will come to fruition. The previous minister introduced it and, at the time, the farmers were vocal in their rejection of it. I was pleased about that. The trials will affect the river systems. The Collie River is a drain at the moment and it is disgraceful. I understand that we have had no rainfall. The Blackwood River is in the same state as the Collie River. These rivers are suffering from algal blooms and those sorts of things. I believe we can do something about it, and I am very pleased about that.

I would like every member of the house, if they can, to send an email about Aung San Suu Kyi to the Burmese military junta. Some people might be surprised about that, but I have followed her career and lack of freedom. I have noted that government's acts of absolute bastardry to that woman. I admire the courage she has shown. She was offered the opportunity to leave the country but never took it. We talk about democracy, we sit in this chamber and we have a go at each other, but what she has done is over and above what most people in the world would do. That is why I ask members of the house to take the time to use the broadcast email that is going around and send a copy of it off to the Burmese military.

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough) [9.51 pm]: I stand in support of the budget today. I am proud to be part of the Liberal-National team, a team that is focused on supporting jobs and small business and delivering service improvements in the core areas of government. The government is to be congratulated for the payroll relief that it is providing to small businesses. I recently surveyed businesses in the Osborne Park business district. Response after response complained about payroll tax and its significant cost and administrative burden on business. Providing \$100 million in payroll tax rebates goes some way to addressing the concerns of these businesses. The rebates will ensure that businesses have the opportunity to expand without being caught up in the payroll tax net or to keep on staff that they may not have been able to afford with rising costs and the effects of the recession. This contrasts quite markedly with Labor's first budget when it came to government in 2001. In that budget the now Leader of the Opposition raised payroll tax significantly, taxing businesses for employing more staff—an abhorrent situation that encourages retrenchment over employment.

I also congratulate the government on the limiting of land value growth for the purpose of land tax calculation to 50 per cent. This cap will provide certainty for small businesses, allowing them to budget for increases and protecting them from excessive land tax growth, such as the excessive increases faced by many Osborne Park businesses in 2008, which has caused and is still causing significant hardship.

As the local member for Scarborough I am pleased that the budget delivers significant investment within my electorate. After many years of neglect by Labor, the Liberal-National government has honoured its \$14.25 million commitment to rebuild Deanmore Primary School. The shocking demise of Deanmore Primary School was first highlighted in this place in May 2005 by my predecessor Katie Hodson-Thomas, the then member for Carine. At that time there were many issues, mainly linked to the poor initial construction of the school in 1962. The issues with the school had to do with various construction issues, with the previous government sinking bucket loads of money into the school to unsuccessfully fix the noxious odour problem that caused health complaints in both teachers and students. In 2007 eight rooms were closed due to the odour and demountables were commissioned. The school community was galvanised into action, with the parents and citizens association embarking on an impressive lobbying effort culminating in a march on Parliament in November 2007, when Hon Peter Collier described the school as looking like a penitentiary and infested with mould and asbestos. With eight classrooms closed and after further remediation attempts at the problem, there were still only three classrooms back in commission by April 2008, yet the previous government, although apparently allocating \$34 million for the provision of new schools, did not commit to building a new school for Deanmore students and teachers until about one hour before last year's snap election was announced on 7 August 2008. The P&C of Deanmore, and indeed the wider Scarborough community, is to be congratulated for its efforts in achieving the new school for Deanmore. Personally, I am delighted that this school was built and opened due to the commitment of this government to providing a better education for students and better conditions for teachers.

Law and order is one of the biggest issues in my electorate. I am very pleased to see that the CCTV expansion of \$250 000 will include Scarborough. This will assist in crime prevention and will also assist the police with prosecutions. Scarborough police have been very successful and have used the CCTV footage in both apprehending petty thieves and prosecuting more serious incidents. This initiative, coupled with the provision of quad bikes to enable police accessibility along the sand dunes, to manage the beaches more effectively, are positive steps towards ensuring the safety of patrons of both Scarborough and Trigg Beaches.

The Osborne Park industrial area is home to a significant number of motor vehicle showrooms and repair shops, so it is with great excitement that these shops are welcoming the initiative of the government to open the new vehicle examination centre on Howe Street. The new centre is to be fitted with vehicle hoists to ensure a more

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comprehensive inspection. A streamlined appointment system will improve efficiency. Limited customer involvement in the examination process will improve customer safety and ensure probity in the system.

I am also thrilled to see that the government has increased the funding allocation to the community sport and recreation facilities fund, or the CSRFF, to \$20 million. This increase has given the government the ability to commit \$400 000 to an upgrade to the Innaloo Sportsmen's Club. The project of the Innaloo Sportsmen's Club was one the previous government refused to fund. This local sporting group was then lied to in an election flyer that declared that the previous government was delivering \$1.49 million in funding to this club. Not surprisingly, it was a significant election issue in that area. I am thrilled to see that this government has committed to assisting with the sun cover and artificial turf project at the Innaloo Sportsmen's Club. I will be working very closely with them to ensure that this election promise is delivered in collaboration with the City of Stirling. Sport and recreation is a vital part of my community, like many other communities.

Train station parking is the next big issue in the electorate of Scarborough. The issue of parking at train stations is indeed an issue across the wider metropolitan area. The better transport system strategy will see a significant increase in parking bays at local train stations. Stirling currently has 588 car spaces. This initiative will see an additional 450 to 500 bays. Glendalough, which is also on the edge of my electorate, will be getting approximately an additional 50 bays. The nearly doubling of the number of bays will provide significant benefits to the residents of the Scarborough electorate.

Another area that I am very passionate about, and an area I have been drawn into advocating for a number of constituents since coming to government in September last year, is the disability services area. The additional funds to disability services are providing much welcome relief and a glimmer of hope to people who access this sector. Additional funding for increased accommodation support, extra respite care and expansion of the alternatives to employment program have been welcomed with open arms by the disability sector and the carers of people who are in this sector. The previous government's performance in dehumanising the system, which has made carers of those with disabilities jump through impossible hoops for a minuscule funding pool, simply had to be improved. I am proud that the Liberal-National government has shown the compassion to improve the quality of life of those living with disabilities and the lives of their carers.

My electorate is pleased with the initiatives of this government. Many seniors have already taken advantage of the cost of living rebates and are very grateful to see the Barnett Liberal-National government has listened to their needs and got on with the job with the implementation of the seniors SmartRider card. There are many other benefits of this budget. However, I feel that I have touched on the main points that have the constituents of my electorate convinced that they made the right decision in the polls in September last year in changing to this new government.

MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton) [10.00 pm]: I wish to speak briefly to express my support for the budget. We are finding ourselves in difficult times, with state revenues dropping, taxes dropping, goods and services tax revenue from Canberra dropping, and royalties from our mining sector dropping. However, there is a bigger problem here. That is what our previous Treasurer used to call the vertical fiscal imbalance. Personally, I would advocate that we increase the goods and services tax rate to 15 or 20 per cent. That would enable us to abolish stupid taxes such as payroll tax, and also to introduce a system in which states such as Western Australia will receive a fixed income from the GST rather than have it adjusted all the time as is the case at the moment.

I thoroughly support the royalties for regions program brought in by the Liberal-National government.

Point of Order

Mr J.E. McGRATH: Mr Speaker, I am very keen to hear what the member for Geraldton has to say, and it is quite inaudible because of the noise from the other side of the chamber.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is an excellent point of order, member for South Perth. I know that members in this place often have other things to talk about, but if they are issues that can be discussed outside the house, I would prefer that it be done in that way.

Debate Resumed

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

There has been a great deal of support in my electorate for the Country Age Pension Fuel Card. I did a bit of work on this matter a while ago, because we seem to have a fairly strong advocate for extending the fuel card to Mandurah. I considered in the first instance that a new railway line has been built to Mandurah at a cost to the

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taxpayers of more than \$1 billion. I assumed that there was not a bus service in the Mandurah area. However, I see that Transperth provides a bus service to the suburbs of Coodanup, Dawesville, Dudley Park, Erskine, Falcon, Furnissdale, Golden Bay, Greenfields, Halls Head, Lakelands, Madora Bay, Meadow Springs, San Remo, Singleton, Silver Sands and Wannanup. I think, therefore, that Mandurah can consider itself reasonably well catered for by public transport.

The government has encountered some criticism about the increase in electricity charges. We do not directly subsidise fuel, so I do not think we have any choice but to increase the price of electricity. The emissions trading scheme that will be introduced sooner or later will further increase the cost of electricity.

I thoroughly support the introduction of an en globo land tax system. This will be very positive. It will make it easier for developers by not imposing a direct tax upon them for bringing forward the development of land.

The aims of our budget are to protect jobs, prepare for Western Australia's next growth phase and retain the state's AAA credit rating. I also thoroughly support the decision to get rid of the football stadium, the new museum and the swamp to be built on the Perth foreshore. It is good that that money will be going into sensible projects such as the new Fiona Stanley Hospital. It is wonderful that the Royal Perth Hospital Shenton Park campus will be shifted to the Fiona Stanley Hospital site. I commend the federal government for providing funding for that, and also for the new Midland hospital. It is wonderful that the development of the new children's hospital will be brought forward.

On the subject of railways, I support the development, as soon as we can, of the Ellenbrook railway, some form of light rail to the western suburbs, the railway line to the airport and Forrestfield, and the upgrade of rural rail lines. I would even like to see a railway to Geraldton. However, that will come in time.

I applaud the government's decision to increase the size of the Ord River irrigation area. I once had intended to farm on the Ord River, but I never quite got there. Of course, it will not replace the Murray Darling Basin. The Murray Darling Basin is responsible for 57 per cent of Australia's agricultural production. The biggest problem with the Ord River is, of course, its distance from its markets. However, give people water, land and a profit incentive, and they will produce something. I am curious about the supposed problem that the Carnarvon growers have with the expansion of the Carnarvon scheme. I have had quite a good look at that, and it seems to make sense, so I am curious to work out what is going on there.

The decision to expand the patient assisted travel scheme and increase the funding for the Royal Flying Doctor Service was actually announced in Geraldton before the state election was called. The Royal Flying Doctor Service is incredibly useful for people who live in the bush. I, like many other members, was absolutely disgusted when the former Minister for Health described the Royal Flying Doctor Service as an interest group.

The subject of Oakajee port seems to come up in this place quite regularly. I find it somewhat ironic that the conservatives are justifying the expenditure of government money on this infrastructure, and the Labor Party is advocating a totally private development. However, I would point out that the federal government agrees with us. Although a totally private port might have been possible during the boom times that we have had in this state, I have been told unofficially by a reasonably large number of people that during the global financial crisis, the proponents of that project might not be able to get the finance that they need without government involvement.

Within the electorate of Geraldton, comment has been made that the proposed Wandina school has been left on the six-year list. I think it is logical to leave it there and not bring it forward straightaway, because we need to see how the population in Geraldton will increase as a result of the proposed developments in the area. We are not sure how soon those developments will come on stream. However, I would encourage the government to support the building of a new school for the Meekatharra School of the Air. That is badly needed, and I would like to see the government make a commitment to that. Money has been committed by the Liberal Party to improve the closed-circuit television system in Geraldton. That system is being installed now, and I am beginning some work on getting some more funding to increase that system.

The proposed 330-kilovolt powerline has also been raised in this place. I think it is logical to review that decision due to the cost blow-out of that project. There is no doubt that there is a need for that powerline. However, there is a question mark around the fact that the cost of that project has increased by so much in such a short time.

There are 500 people on the Geraldton priority Homeswest waiting list. It is critical that we increase the stock of public housing in Geraldton. That is my first priority.

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Funding has been provided in this budget to continue with the work on Indian Ocean Drive and the southern transport corridor. They are both valuable projects. Another priority in my area is a corridor to connect and service both the Oakajee and Geraldton ports, and the continued improvement of the peripheral roads.

We have had a considerable amount of criticism of the budget. At times there have been calls for an increase in expenditure, and at other times there have been calls for a decrease in expenditure. At times there have been calls for an increase in borrowings, and at other times there have been calls for a reduction in borrowings. Claims have been made that we have radically increased spending, and other claims have been made that we have slashed and burnt too much. It has been a bit like that old line in George Orwell's book *Animal Farm*—that at any tricky point, the sheep used to start bleating "Four legs good; two legs bad". I think what we have been getting is "Rudd spending and taxes good; state spending and taxes bad". I think our budget lays down a good pathway for a sound economic future for Western Australia, and I commend it to the house.

MR P.T. MILES (Wanneroo) [10.08 pm]: I am very pleased to speak on the state budget 2009-10. Firstly, I congratulate the Treasurer, Hon Troy Buswell, on the excellent job that he has done on his first state budget. That is undoubtedly a difficult job in these economic times. The Treasurer has put together a budget that is tough but responsible, and that ensures that the government's record spending on infrastructure will support jobs and economic activity well into the future. He has laid the financial foundation necessary to secure the state's financial future and to improve state service for individuals, families and communities. I am particularly pleased that people in my electorate of Wanneroo will see many positive outcomes from this year's budget. Those outcomes will make big differences in their daily lives, particularly in education, health, transport and law and order.

In the area of education, the people of Wanneroo will benefit greatly from the funding allocated in this budget for the construction and development of multiple schools in the electorate. That includes the construction of the new \$10 million kindergarten to year 2 Tapping Primary School, the \$5 million additional permanent accommodation for Neerabup Primary School, and the \$33.5 million to continue the construction of stage 1 of Ashdale Secondary College. On top of that we are going to start stage 2 of Ashdale Secondary College, which will cost \$31 million, and spend \$1.5 million to establish a preprimary-kindergarten facility at Ashby. In total, some \$81 million has been pledged for new and improved educational facilities in the Wanneroo electorate, which will greatly benefit the families and children of this area.

The Wanneroo electorate will also benefit significantly from transport funding of \$6.8 million towards the upgrade of Wanneroo Road to a dual carriageway between Wallawa Street and Joondalup Drive, which will make this section of Wanneroo Road much safer to drive along. An additional 1 400 parking bays will be constructed along the Joondalup train line, which will indeed greatly increase the capacity of the citizens of my electorate to park there and encourage northern suburbs commuters to use the train, rather than take the car to work in the city. Once these projects are completed, there will be an extra 300 bays at Clarkson station, 170 bays at Edgewater station, 200 bays at Whitfords station, 590 bays at Greenwood station, 500 at Stirling station and a further 50 at Glendalough.

Businesses in Wangara and Neerabup will benefit from the 2009-10 budget as it will help support employment generated by small and medium-sized businesses through a one-off payroll tax rebate worth an estimated \$100 million. This measure is designed to support jobs by reducing the burden on small and medium-sized businesses. The Wanneroo area encompasses approximately 1 500 businesses that employ an even larger number of employees who will all benefit greatly from this budget initiative. I believe this government initiative is vital to the protection of our small businesses and the economy, and will ensure that many jobs are retained through these difficult economic times.

The government will also support the retention of 15 000 apprentices and trainees throughout the state through the rebate for workers' compensation premiums for first-year apprentices and trainees. Additional resources have also been committed to support employers and apprentices who have been affected by the economic downturn.

Law and order has always been an important issue for the local community, and this year's budget has recognised the need to maintain and boost front-line services. I am delighted that the north west metropolitan police district will immediately receive 11 new officers in light of the state government's promise to provide 500 extra officers over the next four years. The Wanneroo Police Station is set to gain four extra police officers, effectively turning the station into a 24-hour patrol station and vastly increasing the safety of the residents of the Wanneroo electorate.

One budget decision that really caught my attention was the decision to cap land tax valuations for any one year at 50 per cent, commencing in the 2009-10 financial year. This will reduce excessive volatility in land tax bills and make these bills easier for businesses and landholders to budget for. Also, the period for the payment of land tax instalments will be extended significantly and the flat charge on the three-installment option will be halved. I

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know that for the very large number of landowners in Wanneroo this is a welcome and overdue relief. Some of these people had increases in excess of 1 000 per cent in their land tax bill last year as a direct result of the previous Labor government's heartless money grab. I believe the Treasurer's decision to cap the valuation tax increases at 50 per cent will restore some decency and commonsense to the system of land tax and will go a long way to easing the fears of landowners.

I am pleased that there will be a significant increase in health services for the people of Wanneroo; namely, the development of the Joondalup Health Campus, which will expand the emergency department and associated support services to provide additional hospital beds. A total of \$58 million has been budgeted for 2009-10 for this \$227 million project.

Seniors in my electorate are already expressing their support for the state government's budget measures for free public transport and the annual cost-of-living rebates. I am sure they will be further delighted with the government's pledge of a \$200 rebate for home security devices.

The government will also provide additional help for people who are most in need by committing an additional \$142 million over five years for increased accommodation support, and respite and disability professional services. The government will add an extra \$15 million for child protection services, including funding for caseworkers. It will boost public housing by building 1 000 new homes to increase the total number of new properties to 2 600, when joint commonwealth and state public housing is factored in.

I believe the 2009-10 state budget has struck the right balance between fiscal responsibility and the need to protect jobs. It has turned the emphasis from Labor's reckless overcommitment to projects such as the Swan River foreshore redevelopment, to responsible core infrastructure spending on schools, hospitals, the environment and police services. This is what the community wants and it is what the Barnett government has delivered in the 2009-10 state budget.

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

House adjourned at 10.16 pm
