

Hon Ken Baston; Mr Vincent Catania; President; Hon Barry House; Hon Shelley Archer; Hon Paul Llewellyn;
Deputy President; Hon Margaret Rowe; Hon Kim Chance; Hon Norman Moore; Hon Jon Ford

INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AND REGIONAL WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Motion

Resumed from 23 August on the following motion moved by Hon Nigel Hallett -

That this house condemns the state government for its failure to provide adequate funding for vital infrastructure and development in rural and regional Western Australia.

HON KEN BASTON (Mining and Pastoral) [2.04 pm]: Last week when I spoke on this motion moved by Hon Nigel Hallett, I referred to the \$80 million regional infrastructure fund that Hon Jon Ford mentioned in his speech. I said that I did not believe the funds should be distributed through development commissions. I believe that a better method can be found to distribute those funds throughout the regional areas and suggest that it could be done through local government. Since I last mentioned it, I have visited many towns and listed some of the areas in need of infrastructure and development in the north of the state. I travelled through Exmouth, Carnarvon and Broome in the Kimberley. Since I last spoke on this matter I have been provided with some information concerning the Broome Cape Leveque Road, which I have previously said is in bad need of repair. The member for Kimberley has said that the freight services that travel on that road would be discontinued. Notice has now been given by Broome Freightlines, which sent a letter to its valuable customers in the peninsula. The letter states -

Our reasons for withdrawing the service is solely the condition of the Cape Leveque road. The infrastructure of the road is substandard consistent with the damage to our equipment makes the service unviable and unsustainable.

I previously mentioned that the cost of carting freight on the Broome Cape Leveque Road from Broome to One Arm Point was \$247 a tonne and that it costs some \$260 to cart freight from Broome to Perth. The trip from Broome to One Arm Point is 200 kilometres and the trip from Broome to Perth is 2 200 kilometres. That is very expensive. If that company pulls out - it gave notice it will withdraw services from 14 September - perhaps another company will take it over. Obviously those freight rates will be a lot higher. Therefore, it would cost people more to transport goods from Broome to One Arm Point than it would to transport goods from Broome to Perth. Broome Freightlines informs me that if the Broome Cape Leveque Road were sealed, it would cost in the order of \$60 a tonne to cart freight, which is a marked difference.

Unfortunately, Hon Paul Llewellyn's policy is that if the roads are upgraded, it increases the amount of traffic that uses it, which is true. However, the amount of traffic on this road has already increased; therefore, the road must be upgraded. It is a marvellous thing that as the population increases, the number of vehicles increases and the need to provide the infrastructure also increases. As the number of mines that operate - which provide so much wealth for this great nation and this great state - increases, more roads and expenditure on infrastructure are needed.

Hon Ken Travers: Tell that to the federal government.

Hon KEN BASTON: That is a matter of the state government liaising with the federal government.

I turn now to Port Hedland, which brings massive wealth to this state and nation. I attended the Port Hedland Turf Club Cup the weekend before last. I have been to a few bush race meetings. Port Hedland holds six race meetings a year. Members are aware that race meetings are an important part of the social fabric of the people who live and work there. Therefore, I consider racetracks to be an important part of the infrastructure of towns such as Port Hedland. The standard of the Port Hedland facilities is well below the standard of the other facilities I have visited. I visited the shire and toured the town with one of the town's planning officers. I looked at the future plans for Port Hedland, South Hedland, Pretty Pool, etc. If that racecourse is to be moved, it must be moved sooner rather than later so that that infrastructure can be brought up to speed.

During my recent visit to Carnarvon, I raised the issue of the flood mitigation scheme, which has been hanging around for some time. That scheme is contained in town planning scheme 12. I know that funding for this scheme has been allocated and that the project will soon start. Having been involved with the shire in the early 1980s during times of major floods, I know that those funds are badly needed. Every time we put in the levee banks, we alter the flow of the Gascoyne River. The area across from Brown Range has never been completed as planned by the flood mitigation scheme. Although the levee banks have been put in around the town, they were not designed to prevent flooding. Further, the plantations have not been protected. A big problem of which members may not be aware is that it is the water that flows back into the river following a flood that causes all the damage to the plantation area. Some weeks ago I was approached by a very hostile planter from that area who has been put on the spot because the 2000 floodwaters channelled back into the river from a different area and went through his plantation. That resulted in a caveat being placed on his plantation and it is

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now labelled a floodway. I would be very surprised if that gentleman has not visited Hon Vince Catania to express his concerns. If he does not get any answers from me, I am sure he will raise his concerns with Hon Vince Catania.

Hon Ken Travers interjected.

Hon KEN BASTON: He handed out how-to-vote cards last time.

Another issue that I discussed during my travels was the Tom Price road. I note that during the 2001 election campaign the member for Burrup, who is now the member for North West Coastal, stated that if the Labor Party won office and did not seal that road by 2004, he would resign.

Hon Bruce Donaldson: Which member is that?

Hon KEN BASTON: The member for North West Coastal.

Hon Bruce Donaldson: What is his name?

Hon KEN BASTON: Hon Fred Riebeling. I did not think we were allowed to name members of the other house.

The member for North West Coastal said that he would resign if the road was not sealed. The road has not been sealed and, of course, the member for North West Coastal has not resigned. At the zone council meeting I attended recently, Larry Graham, a former member for that area, gave an interesting talk. Hon Shelley Archer also attended that meeting. After the meeting we discussed development commissions and regional funding, and the Tom Price road issue, which is of extreme interest to me, was raised. I believe that work on the road is progressing. Of course, there is always something in the north on which the government can spend money. The demands that have been placed on infrastructure from Halls Creek to Kununurra and Wyndham - Sally Malay Mining Ltd exports through Wyndham - should be considered. The road is an extremely narrow road. It has a lot of one-lane bridges. When I drove on that road, I recorded every one of those bridges. Unfortunately, I do not have the list with me.

Hon Ken Travers: Did you record how many times you passed a car coming the other way on any of those one-lane bridges?

Hon KEN BASTON: I recorded plenty.

Hon Ken Travers: Can you bring in your records to show how many times you passed a car coming the other way on those one-lane bridges?

Hon KEN BASTON: I do not have the records with me. However, I passed heaps of cars. I also passed a number of caravans. The border crossing counts the number of caravans that cross each day, so there are ways of working out how much traffic travels on that road. It is quite considerable. During this year's tourist season, not one bed was available in Kununurra. It was absolutely booked out.

Hon Ken Travers: We have done a great job of promoting and encouraging people to visit that region. I was asking how many cars Hon Ken Baston passed on the single-lane bridges.

Hon KEN BASTON: I think the Northern Territory is trying to top them!

Infrastructure in the regions will always be needed. Members of Parliament will always have to bring the regions' infrastructure needs to the attention of the house. As I have said on numerous occasions, the regions represent 87 per cent of the state, yet only 11 of the 91 members of state Parliament represent rural and regional Western Australia. That is despite the fact that those areas produce some 25 per cent of the nation's income. It is valid that I stand here today and speak to Hon Nigel Hallett's motion. I commend the motion to the house.

HON VINCENT CATANIA (Mining and Pastoral) [2.18 pm]: I am quite amazed by the motion moved by Hon Nigel Hallett. I will touch on some of the comments Hon Jon Ford made early last week about what the government has done for regional Western Australia.

Last Friday, Hon Ken Baston and I were in Yalgoo for the opening of the old Yalgoo train station. The state's regional investment fund contributed more than \$100 000 to that project. The government is putting -

Hon Ken Travers: It is funny that Hon Ken Baston did not mention that in his speech.

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: Of course he would not mention that.

It was a great occasion for Yalgoo. It was important to have that train station fixed and ready for the many tourists who visit Yalgoo to experience its historical sites.

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Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: And the wildflowers.

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: Yes. It is an amazing station.

Hon Paul Llewellyn interjected.

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: It is an old train station that faces towards the racetrack.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members! I was going to give the next call to Hon Barry House. However, I see that Hon Ken Travers and Hon Simon O'Brien are both very keen to speak to this debate. I will make a note of their names and will promptly give them the call soon.

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: In 2001, the Gallop government established the regional investment fund. The \$75 million that has been contributed to the fund has successfully funded 850 projects and leveraged more than \$200 million in additional investment, contributing to the creation of more than 4 100 new jobs in regional Western Australia. In 2006-07, the Carpenter government is committing a further \$21 million to the regional investment fund to ensure that opportunities in regional WA continue to grow. As I mentioned earlier, and as Hon Ken Baston saw on Friday, Yalgoo has profited from the regional investment fund.

Hon Simon O'Brien: I will move to Yalgoo so that I can vote for you! You can sit down now because you've got me convinced!

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: Hon Ken Baston touched on Carnarvon. As members may be aware, my electorate office is now situated in Carnarvon because I believe that a member should live in the area in which he or she represents.

Hon Barry House: You should live in it in the first place.

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: I now have the opportunity to live in the region that I represent.

Hon Ken Travers: Bring some brochures back for the Leader of the Opposition to remind him what his electorate is about!

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: It is important not only that a member's office is located in the electorate that he or she represents; indeed, a member should reside in the electorate that he or she represents. I have been in Carnarvon a little more than a year, and during that time I have had the opportunity to be present at the openings of several infrastructure projects that this government has brought forward. One of those is the Bibbawarra Road Crossing, which took a little over \$7 million to build. It is an important piece of infrastructure and was badly needed. The crossing has reduced the time it takes for those travelling from the north of Carnarvon to the centre of Carnarvon by about 40 minutes. When the Gascoyne River flooded in the past, damage was caused to the crossing. We have built an important piece of infrastructure. I was grateful to have the opportunity to attend the opening with Hon Alannah MacTiernan, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, in the first couple of months that I was elected to represent the area.

Hon Ken Travers: Hon Ken Baston forgot to mention that as well.

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: He forgot to mention a few more things too. We also opened the \$4.25 million Carnarvon land-backed wharf. Hon Ken Baston was at that opening early last year.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Wherever Hon Ken Baston goes, we have progress. I'm glad he gets around so much. He's a fine member.

Hon Ken Travers: It's a shame he can't remember any of it, though.

Hon Simon O'Brien: He remembers it.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members. Hon Vince Catania is going to tell us where he next went to with Hon Ken Baston. Please be patient.

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: I am surprised that Hon Ken Baston has moved away from Carnarvon because it is booming. Turning to Shark Bay, there is an additional \$5.6 million in the 2006-07 budget for the replacement of the Shark Bay Primary School. It is important to update some of the infrastructure along the coast.

Hon Ken Travers: Did Hon Ken Baston mention that in his speech?

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: I do not think he did. The Carpenter government has also committed \$14 million for a flood mitigation program in Carnarvon to aid the prevention of floods similar to those which occurred as a result of cyclone Emma in 2001. We are addressing the issues of flooding.

Hon Ken Travers: Fixing the problems of the last Liberal government. They didn't do anything.

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Hon VINCENT CATANIA: We certainly are. That is why Carnarvon is booming. The Gallop government and now the Carpenter government have put in the infrastructure that Carnarvon needs to blossom.

Hon Ken Travers: I think Hon Nigel Hallett is about to withdraw his motion.

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: I say to the member that there is more. A further \$4.9 million was set aside in the 2006-07 budget for additions and improvements to the Exmouth and Carnarvon high schools. They were quite run down during the term of the previous government. The Minister for Education and Training has visited the schools in Carnarvon. She has seen the improvements and how happy the kids are attending school.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Don't send Peter Collier out there. He'll speak to them. How many schools have you visited? We're still waiting on the answer.

Hon Peter Collier interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Members, Hon Vince Catania will apologise for interjecting! He does not want to address the Chair.

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: There is a lot more happening in the region. I can list some of the achievements in Exmouth. Hon Ken Baston mentioned Exmouth but forgot to mention the achievements in Coral Bay and Exmouth. We have put \$5.8 million into the Coral Bay waste water treatment plant; we put \$2.7 million towards the construction of a new sports hall at Tom Price High School; and \$1.5 million towards the construction of the new Onslow primary school. I gather from reading the motion that the member has obviously not travelled around the region that I represent and seen the level of dedication of this government towards providing infrastructure for the communities to make sure that they blossom, as Carnarvon is at the moment. We will continue to provide this infrastructure. Hon Ken Baston mentioned the new justice complex that has been proposed for Carnarvon. Hopefully, we can soon make an announcement on the construction of that complex, which represents an investment of up to \$40 million and between 50 and 100 jobs for Carnarvon. We are improving Carnarvon.

Hon Nigel Hallett: Which site?

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: The most important thing is that we are investing \$40 million in Carnarvon and providing more jobs for its residents.

Hon Ken Travers: Listen to the whingers. You offer them more money and they just want to whinge about it.

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: It is quite a contentious issue in Carnarvon.

Hon Nigel Hallett: Can't you decide?

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: It is not about not deciding. The people of Carnarvon know of my support and where the site should go. They also know that it is important to have that \$40 million invested in Carnarvon and to provide between 50 and 100 jobs over the next five to six years. They know it is very important to have that development to increase Carnarvon's tourism potential. I invite Hon Nigel Hallett to come to Carnarvon and see how it is moving forward.

Hon Nigel Hallett: I was there about three weeks ago.

Hon Ken Baston: He's already seen the site.

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: If he has seen the site, I do not know why he moved this motion. All these things are happening in Carnarvon and there is a lot more to come, including the redevelopment of Babbage Island, so that we can increase tourist numbers in Carnarvon. It is important for the members to note that.

Hon Paul Llewellyn: There are no beds in Carnarvon.

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: I agree. It is going gang busters. We are trying to provide the land - Babbage Island is one area - to redevelop so that there will be more accommodation in Carnarvon.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: You have to admit that the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has done a fantastic job in Carnarvon.

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: We must thank the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. We call her Mrs Carnarvon because of the amount of support she has given to the locals. She will be in Carnarvon for the Carnarvon Cup. I am sure Hon Ken Baston will be there on 16 September. He can look at Carnarvon again and see what is happening, because it is moving forward.

Hon Bruce Donaldson: He lived there for most of his life.

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: I was at the races on Sunday and I did not see him there. I am sure he will be there for the Carnarvon Cup.

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Hon Ken Travers interjected.

Hon Ljiljana Ravlich: You must be hanging around with Mr Collier if he says he is somewhere but he's not actually there.

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: The minister is correct; we must thank the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members. One interjection at a time.

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: They are some of the future plans for Carnarvon. As I said, it is moving forward. The level of investment that this government has put into Carnarvon and will continue to put into Carnarvon will see it reach its potential. In the past people have said that Carnarvon has the potential to really blossom. I think it started in 2001. We have to thank the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

I would like to bring the attention of members to Shark Bay and Denham, where there is a critical situation. The state government has set aside some funding to provide a fly in, fly out general practitioner service for Carnarvon. The shire has put its hand in its pocket as well to provide a fly in, fly out GP service. It is disappointing to hear that the federal government has reneged on its promise to provide funding to keep this service going. It has now collapsed. It cannot be said that we do not provide any infrastructure or any support to regional WA. I have shown that the government is doing what it can, and it is doing a lot. It is unfortunate that we do not get the support of the opposition's federal colleagues, in particular, for this very important GP service to Shark Bay.

Hon Nigel Hallett interjected.

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: We are not talking about a lot of money; it is about \$45 000, the lack of which is hurting regional Western Australia. I urge Hon Ken Baston, the member for the Mining and Pastoral Region, to lobby his federal counterparts with the aim of salvaging this fly in, fly out service. I am shocked that Hon Nigel Hallett has moved this motion. I urge him to come up and see for himself what is happening in the Mining and Pastoral Region. I will even offer him a bed at my place.

HON BARRY HOUSE (South West) [2.30 pm]: I support the motion moved by Hon Nigel Hallett. I understand the reference in the motion to infrastructure, as I am sure do most other members, to be capital and service infrastructure not just bricks and mortar. In that sense, regional WA should sometimes attract a bit of positive discrimination. As members will know, services provided by the government are not always economically viable. In the metropolitan area, much funding is directed to public transport. Given the economic viability of public transport, the hard-nosed economists would have closed it down if they had had their way. However, we all know that closing it down is simply not an option. The same principle should be applied to services in regional areas of Western Australia.

Hon Paul Llewellyn: What about the *Australind*?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I am getting to the *Australind*; I am pleased that Hon Paul Llewellyn mentioned it. As other speakers on this issue have indicated, the lack of adequate funding for infrastructure in rural and regional Western Australia will be manifested by representation in the next Parliament. Six Legislative Assembly country or regional seats will disappear, and eight new city seats will be added. The electoral boundaries for this house will be readjusted to provide six regions with six members each. That all boils down to the fact that the South West Region - by implication it has been denigrated in some aspects of this debate - will be the major casualty of these new boundaries. The South West Region will lose three or four lower house members and an upper house member. The Agricultural Region will lose a couple of lower house members but gain an extra member. The Mining and Pastoral Region -

Hon Vincent Catania: It will gain an extra member.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I do not begrudge the Mining and Pastoral Region that, but we must keep some perspective around this issue. The big loser out of the whole scenario will be the South West Region. As I think I mentioned during debate on the One Vote One Value Bill, that does not go down very well with me; I am still trying to digest it. As I said, it has been implied that parts of the south west do not now qualify as regional WA. The subject of some of the roads into the south west was referred to almost dismissively, as though all the money has been targeted at them and they do not deserve any more. Obviously, anyone with that view has not travelled south from the city for quite a long time.

Hon Paul Llewellyn: What about Mandurah?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Travelling through Mandurah is okay at the right time. During peak hours, Mandurah's traffic comes very close to being a gridlock, yet there has been talk in Mandurah of installing an additional six sets of traffic lights.

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Hon Paul Llewellyn interjected.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Absolutely - Perth with country roads. That would not be tolerated in Perth. The point is that Mandurah is expected to tolerate it. It is not only the Mandurah residents who are affected. We are talking about the need for the Peel deviation to take the traffic around Mandurah. A significant amount of traffic that travels further south is experiencing all sorts of problems just driving through Mandurah.

I have been sidetracking a little. The other implication from some quarters is that sections of the south west electorate -

Hon Ken Travers: Who implied it?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I will get to that. A map is circulating, which I think was initiated by the National Party, indicating that 48 seats, from Mindarie to Margaret River - that is the language being used - will be city seats and 11 seats will be country seats. However, that is only partly right; the map goes a bit too far. Those seats, everywhere south of Mandurah, are described as metropolitan seats. That is not the case. Metropolitan residents are defined by the fact that they can commute to work daily. I live three hours away, and that is hardly a commutable distance. We are talking about five or six seats from Mandurah to Margaret River. Even if those seats are eliminated, 42 out of 59 seats in the Legislative Assembly will be metropolitan-based seats. Representation in Parliament will be city-centric to a greater degree than it is now. The problem with that, of course, is that it will be city focused. We cannot blame the members who will represent those electorates for that approach; it will be their job to focus on the metropolitan area. However, it will mean that they have neither an understanding of nor empathy with regions outside Perth. There will be no imperative, in an electorate or a political sense, for those members to get things done in regional WA. The only time most of those members will encounter problems will be when they spend a weekend in Margaret River or Broome, for example. They might get stropic because they cannot buy a cappuccino at eleven o'clock at night.

Hon Ken Baston: Or a newspaper.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Yes. Regrettably, that is evidence of the level of understanding that is shown now, and I fear that it will get worse.

Hon Paul Llewellyn referred by interjection a minute ago to the *Australind*. The episode surrounding the *Australind* in the past couple of months is a classic illustration of a government that does not have an understanding of or empathy with regional WA. A proposal came from the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure to drastically change the schedule of the *Australind* service to Bunbury via Serpentine, Pinjarra, Waroona, Yarloop, Harvey and Brunswick. That is a classic example of a government that is completely out of touch with both the historical importance of the *Australind* service and the real need to operate that service in that region. It was seen merely as an exercise to gut one train service to prop up another unviable train service that is coming on stream; namely, the southern rail link.

Hon Ken Travers: Do you oppose the Mandurah line?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I do not oppose the Mandurah railway line at all.

Hon Ken Travers: Why are you attacking it?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I oppose a very essential service being gutted for political expediency to prop up the numbers on another line. That is what that was all about.

Hon Paul Llewellyn interjected.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: That is another matter. As Hon Paul Llewellyn knows, it is a single line. If the government is serious about an *Australind* train service, let us look at what is required to not only maintain the existing service but also upgrade it. If a serious approach is to be taken, consideration must be given to making the lines dual lines. There is increased pressure from Alcoa and Worsley for carriage of their freight on those lines, and, as we all know, that extra freight will increasingly impact on those lines. The government must make a decision and put its money where its mouth is.

Hon Ken Travers: The Liberal Party closed railways; it never built them.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Let us look at the current Labor government's record on trains and railways in rural WA.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Barry House is addressing me and I am listening to him. I think members should also pay him that courtesy. I know Hon Barry House enjoys the occasional interjection, but too many members are interjecting at once.

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Hon BARRY HOUSE: The Labor Party is the so-called great champion of rail transport, and we hear its members harking back to “We saved the Fremantle line”. Fair enough, I will grant them that. That was a great political victory, so to speak.

Hon Simon O’Brien: More than a quarter of a century ago.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: That is right.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order, Hon Simon O’Brien, Hon Ken Travers and other members! What I have said about interjections applies to both sides of the house. Hon Barry House has only 35 minutes and eight seconds remaining, and he wants to put his point of view.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Leaving aside the Mandurah railway, which the government is building and which is grossly over budget and at least two years behind schedule, what has the government done? It has closed the Manjimup line.

Hon Adele Farina: You sold it.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: The government closed it.

Hon Adele Farina: Who sold it?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: It does not matter who owned it, the government has closed it.

Hon Adele Farina: You sold it.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: The government shut the Manjimup line. Apparently a proposal is floating around to provide a transit station near Kirup to keep part of it viable. We have seen absolutely nothing to make that work. Here are the great train champions who have closed a railway line. They are putting more trucks, carrying all sorts of freight - principally timber - on the south west -

Hon Adele Farina: You sold it.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Selling has nothing to do with it. The government closed the line.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Adele Farina has delivered the same interjection on at least four occasions. It has been answered and there is no point in repeating it.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Now we have the proposal involving the *Australind*, which, as we have seen, created an enormous public backlash because the Labor Party simply did not understand. It certainly understood after the enormous public outcry about the proposal, which was reflected in the petition I tabled here last week with 7 252 signatures. In the Legislative Assembly, the member for Bunbury, John Castrilli, tabled a petition with more signatures than that. They were collected virtually halfway through the campaign. As we know, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure backflipped and somersaulted very quickly when she saw she was totally on a loser. That proposal has been temporarily put in the bin, but I can assure members that a lot of people will maintain a watching brief on the situation. That was a perfect illustration of the attitude that led my colleague Hon Nigel Hallett to come into this place and propose a motion along these lines.

Hon Ken Travers: What about the *Prospector*, if you want to talk about trains?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: The *Australind* is an interesting exercise because I have some recollections of the *Australind* throughout my parliamentary career. During the campaign leading up to my initial election victory in 1987, glossy brochures were produced about the great *Australind* upgrade. We heard about “the train that flies”. We know that the Premier of the time, Brian Burke, was absolutely furious when there was a delay of about two or three weeks in the launching of that new train. That was scheduled to occur about a week before my by-election, but it did not happen for some reason. There was a glitch and it happened about a month later. If people remember their history, they will recall that a group of Labor parliamentarians took the train to Bunbury and must have enjoyed a celebratory drink or two. One of the members, I think it was the then member for Bunbury, staggered and hit the emergency stop button, so the train that flew screeched to a halt in the middle of nowhere! Nothing much changes in the sense that spin doctoring was alive and well then, as it is now.

Hon Ken Travers: Can you name one railway line that the Liberal Party upgraded or improved in your time in Parliament?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Yes. We set about starting the Mandurah railway line.

Several members interjected.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: We set about getting it under way.

Hon Ken Travers: In your dreams!

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Hon BARRY HOUSE: Then along came Alannah, who complicated the whole exercise by blowing hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money. Mandurah people still have not got their railway line. In the meantime it has caused massive disruption to traffic around Perth and along the freeway and in every other way.

Hon Ken Travers: Can you name a train line your government built or opened?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: The member asked the question. We could go back to the government-initiated train lines that service the massive resource industry that the state conducts through the Pilbara and the north west. They were all Brand and Court government initiatives in the 1960s and 1970s.

Hon Ken Travers: You don't think Bert Hawke had something to do with those before that?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: No.

Hon Ken Travers: Nothing at all, you reckon?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: No. The member asked the question and he got the answer. I want to mention a couple of other matters in support of the motion before the house. In the parliamentary break, when opposition members were busy in their electorates touching base with organisations and individuals, the Minister for Education and Training was, by the sound of it, spying on the shadow Minister for Education and Training and Labor Party members were holidaying, we visited several centres. Briefings were given by various significant organisations. The Mandurah City Council, for instance, explained very clearly its problems with infrastructure. It is very grateful for the growth in the Mandurah area and for the train that will soon link up with the city. It is certainly very grateful to the Court government for all the money poured into the marina development in particular. However, all that growth and development has created some major issues for the council. Of course, the road is the major issue. The council is the strongest advocate for the Peel deviation.

The council is also very concerned about a couple of other things. I think the connection to the freeway is called route A in the structure plan, but it seems to have disappeared from the plan. It will present an enormous problem for Mandurah people and the surrounding Peel region if a major proposed access to the freeway is taken off the plan. Another major problem for the Mandurah City Council is that it has been left with the legacy of a new transit station for trains and buses which is centrally located up to a point but for which there are no obvious connections. The council will have to fund the connections to the city centre and to the major health and education facilities. That is a very significant impost on a local council.

The Bunbury City Council and surrounding councils have a host of issues relating to infrastructure, some of it centred on roads and some on other matters. To focus on roads, the service corridor into the Bunbury port has been spoken about time and again. There is plenty of rhetoric and absolutely no action. That service corridor is becoming more critical every day as more heavy transport vehicles access the port. The other issue the city is increasingly concerned about is the lack of any commitment or action on the Bunbury ring-road, which has been on the books for many years. The city is starting to experience some of the same traffic problems as Mandurah. I could also mention the South Western Highway, Muirs Highway and Albany Highway, all of which are in need of urgent attention. In my neck of the woods, the Margaret River perimeter road is looming as a priority.

Another issue is boating facilities. I think I have spoken about this before, but I received an e-mail a couple of days ago from a gentleman who was very concerned at the problems encountered with the Canal Rocks boat ramp about two weeks ago, when a young American man was drowned off Torpedo Rocks, just up the road from there. The difficulties of getting any boats into the ocean off the west coast in heavy weather were highlighted, because the boat ramp is quite simply inadequate. Boating facilities right around that stretch of coast are in urgent need of some attention.

Infill sewerage has been mentioned by other members, but I will personalise the issue a little with some examples of how it actually impacts on individuals. These are the stories of constituents who have come into my office and explained their frustration at continual delays in the infill sewerage program. We all know that the program has been cut by massive amounts across the state, and has been delayed at a time when the state government has never before seen such positive receipts. The first example is a lady who lives in Margaret River, in an area called zone 4A, according to the Water Corporation's mapping. I asked a question about this issue the other day. Infill sewerage in this area was meant to have been carried out two years ago, but the government has since postponed the work until 2007, according to a parliamentary question I asked last week. However, my office contacted the Water Corporation recently, and my constituent was told that the project could be delayed even further. This lady has been putting up with an aged inverted leach drain that is no longer fully functional. She has been in constant contact with the Water Corporation and the plumber who, incidentally, is getting great business out of the government's inaction. The plumber visits very frequently, at a cost of \$300 a visit, to pump out her septic tank. She is now looking at the necessity of constructing a new leach drain and retaining wall at a cost of at least \$5 000. That is a cost that she had not anticipated, and which she will find very hard to bear. Had the government stuck to the schedule, the lady would not have had to pay this cost, which is

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basically dead money when it is considered that it will ultimately be replaced at some time by infill sewerage, at a cost of another \$2 500. The government provides no compensation in situations like that. People are entitled to take the government at its word when they hear a commitment that they are included in the program of infill sewerage, but then the project is delayed by two years, and then another two years and so on. In the meantime they encounter all these problems.

The second example relates to a number of people who live within the town boundary of Margaret River, where there is an unfortunate combination of a high watertable and clay-based soil. Almost everyone in this locality has problems with the rising watertable in winter, and as a result there is no soakage for sewage at all. Every three to four years the pumps that are used to pump the effluent to a leach drain on the properties in the street have to be replaced or repaired at a cost of \$300 or \$400. There is no prospect of using the land where the leach drain is located for building purposes. It is effectively useless under the current scenario, but it is still outside the infill sewerage area. We have seen the schedules up to 2018, and this area does not even rank at this stage. The third example is a commercial property two minutes drive from the centre of Margaret River, so it is not exactly in the country. Six weeks before the business operators' lease is due to expire, they are having major problems with their septic system. The effluent is overflowing due to too much use, a problem that is not uncommon for a septic system that is more than 10 years old. Fortunately, the people who are leasing this business will only have to pay \$1 000 to keep the system operational for the next six weeks, and then they have the luxury of moving somewhere else. Unfortunately, the owners of the property are looking at a cost of \$6 000 to \$8 000 to install an above-ground septic system. Of course, they cannot wait for infill sewerage. The beneficiary of all this, of course, is the plumber and septic tank cleaner-outer, or whatever he is called, in this town. I am sure that that situation is duplicated in many regional towns around Western Australia.

I know Hon Adele Farina is personally involved in this next issue. Proposals are floating around to increase the size of the coastal town of Gracetown and adopt an innovative approach to providing infrastructure for water, sewerage and power. I have nothing against that; I fully support it. This may apply to other areas around Western Australia. In carrying out such a project, it must be ensured that there are ample supplies of water. In a place such as Gracetown, it is okay to theorise that enough water can be collected off the roofs of the buildings and recycled, but there must also be adequate water for fire safety, for the coastal community does not have very good access to those facilities. A second access road is also needed. The government must also make sure that there is enough electricity. If wind power is used, there must still be enough core power to service the area. I have not heard a proposal yet that contains an infill sewerage project. I hope that the proposal, when it comes forward, will contain that, because it does not have to be one of the Water Corporation's mainstream processes; that is, it does not have to be pumped back to the Margaret River plant. It could be serviced by a stand-alone plant. I know that there are very adequate plants to do this job; for example, at a similar coastal community called Sunrise, in Queensland, there is a modular plant that serves the purpose very well.

During the parliamentary recess I took a couple of days to attend the Growing Regions Conference in Brisbane. This was basically a regional development conference, organised by the federal government Department of Transport and Regional Services. There were attendees from all around Australia and overseas. The focus was on the federal government's administrative structure through area consultative committees. I was interested in the attendees from Western Australia. Only one representative, whom I did not get the opportunity to meet, had any connection at all to the state government. I believe that person was from the Pilbara Development Commission. I do not know whether an edict had been put out about non-attendance of any state government representatives from Western Australia. State government representatives from other states certainly attended. I would have thought that at least people from some of the development commissions would attend this very worthwhile and informative conference. I do not know whether that indicates a lack of interest or a bit of petty jealousy between different levels of government. I thought it was rather poor because the conference was well organised and very comprehensive. There were also many examples and models of regions, both in Australia and overseas, in which regional communities had reinvented themselves with the aid of innovative government assistance as well as through the efforts and the finance of private enterprise. I know the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development will take that on board and I hope that, at some stage, he might explain to me why there was not a better representation from Western Australian state government people.

This brings me back to my original point that governments will not have to take any notice of regional WA if there is no strong numerical representation in the Parliament of Western Australia to advocate their needs. Unfortunately, we are seeing a continual decline in the emphasis on regional WA in thinking in government channels, both the elected and the bureaucratic levels of government, which I sincerely hope will be arrested and reversed.

HON SHELLEY ARCHER (Mining and Pastoral) [3.02 pm]: I would like to take a differing view from Hon Nigel Hallett, and would like to congratulate the Carpenter government for providing what I believe is very

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adequate funding for the remote, regional and rural areas of the state, especially in the north of the state, where I work mostly; that is, the Kimberley and the Pilbara. I will refer to a comment that Hon Nigel Hallett made in his speech in this house. He stated -

Although the government has allocated some, but certainly nowhere near enough, money to regional areas, a close inspection of the finances of the regional development commissions shows that it ultimately amounts to little more than window-dressing, . . .

Let us look at this so-called window dressing. I will deal with only the Kimberley and Pilbara Development Commissions. The regional infrastructure funding program, which I understand Hon Jon Ford tabled, shows that there were 25 separate successful applications for 2005-06. That is definitely not window dressing. That number addresses only a very small part of what this government spends on the region. I am not sure where Hon Nigel Hallett intended to go with his attack on the state government. He stated that the government does not spend enough on the regions and then attacked the government for providing more funding in the budget for those commissions. Hon Nigel Hallett seems to misunderstand the purpose of the development commissions, because he attacked the fact that the money spent is not spent on essential services such as sewerage, schools, medical services and housing. The commissions' role is to promote development in regional Western Australia to assist in the formulation of policy proposals on development issues affecting the regions, and also to facilitate, liaise and coordinate with local, state and commonwealth bodies on regional issues. I cannot find anything in the commissions' mission statements that states that they are responsible for the funding of all infrastructure for the rural and remote regions. The funding priorities for health, education and other areas quite rightly lie with the government departments responsible for those areas and not with the development commissions.

I want to deal specifically with the Kimberley and the Pilbara, where the resources boom is driving the demand for our land and other resources and for other vital forms of development and infrastructure. This has placed an enormous amount of pressure on our government and on our services, land, housing, education and various other structures. This boom and unprecedented demand on Western Australia's resources has resulted in a 33 per cent increase in the population of the Kimberley and a nine per cent increase in the population of the Pilbara over the past decade. In addition, we need to take into account the fly in, fly out component and the impact that this has on our regions. The Kimberley's population growth rate is expected to outstrip the general state growth rate at nearly three per cent a year. The bulk of the state's natural resources are located in these regional areas, and if the government is to partner successfully with industry and the community to anticipate and resolve our capabilities and restraints, we must first understand industry requirements. We need to coordinate highly complex infrastructure delivery in some of our most pristine natural environments, which are often fragile and sometimes of particular significance to our indigenous people. Due to all these factors, any changes and movements can take quite a long time to achieve. A further consideration is the management of our pastoral lands, which now operate in an increasingly complex environment. The pastoralists in particular face significant challenges in today's society, including a shift to multiple land use. There has been a move to purchase pastoral leases for non-pastoral purposes such as private conservation land and tourism and as lifestyle blocks. Other issues with pastoral leases which have arisen and which have been raised with me include matters such as the inappropriate form of land tenure and noncompliance with lease conditions. The pastoralists face a huge challenge over the next 10 to 20 years as to how their leases are dealt with.

Let us look at what the Carpenter government has done for the regions of the Kimberley and the Pilbara.

Point of Order

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: Is there a standing order about reading speeches in this house?

THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Graham Giffard): There is a standing order about reading speeches. I have been watching Hon Shelley Archer. I do not think she is reading from a speech. I ask her to continue.

Debate Resumed

Hon SHELLEY ARCHER: I have quite a number of notes in front of me.

Let us look at what the Carpenter government has actually done for the regions of the Kimberley and the Pilbara. For the Kimberley, we have provided a \$7.69 million upgrade to the Wyndham water supply. Construction is scheduled to begin in October, but most of the work on this project will be done after the wet season and completed, we hope, by the end of 2006. A further \$1.8 million will be spent on upgrading the Lake Argyle treatment plant for Kununurra. Other developments in the Kimberley include the replacement of Fitzroy Crossing District High School; \$1 million for improvements and extensions to Kununurra District High School; ongoing works at Kimberley College of TAFE in Broome, which the Minister for Education and Training, Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich, spoke about yesterday; and \$10 million for the Broome Regional Resource Centre to help us improve the health facilities in that town. The government has provided nearly \$5 million to continue the works

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on the redevelopment of Kununurra District Hospital and the dental clinic. I visited the hospital in the past couple of weeks and saw that the works are going well. The government has allocated \$2 million to continue the work on the development of a multipurpose centre in Wyndham, and further work is continuing on Derby Police Station. An allocation of \$7.2 million was provided for the district police office for the Kimberley, which is located in Broome.

I could go on and on about the infrastructure projects of that nature for which this government has allocated moneys in the Kimberley region. However, I will speak about the allocation of the regional infrastructure funding through the regional investment fund, from which \$2.5 million has been allocated to complete the extension on the Broome wharf. That is a huge extension. I attended the opening of it with Hon Alannah MacTiernan and my colleague on the other side of the chamber. That is an absolutely fantastic investment for not only Broome, but also the region. It will provide facilities for the mining companies that are doing a lot of exploration in the Kimberley, especially in the Browse Basin.

The government has allocated \$29 million for the further construction and refurbishment of more than 184 Homeswest homes in the Kimberley. That does not include the money that has been allocated to fix the housing problems in Halls Creek. The government has allocated \$300 000 plus for the Derby wharf enhancement. I have travelled to Derby and seen some of the work being done in that area. It is going very nicely and hopefully it will all be finished before the start of the wet season. A power supply project for Aboriginal and remote communities is worth \$2.7 million. Arising from the Ord stage 2 final agreement is an allocation of \$1 million for six new conservation parks located around Kununurra. That is fantastic because it applies to the indigenous people and the way they will look after the conservation parks. New police stations have been built in Bidadanga, Dampier Peninsula and Kalumburu. Waste water treatment plants have been built in Broome, and sewerage upgrades have been completed.

The Broome planning and steering committee was convened by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, in November 2003. Its initiatives include assisting the shire in the management, growth and development of the shire over the next 10 to 15 years. The Department for Planning and Infrastructure and the Western Australian Planning Commission assisted the committee by developing what we believe is a fantastic land-use framework to provide an effective forum for communication between all the components and community interests in Broome. The final report of the committee was endorsed at a joint meeting of the committee, the shire and the Planning Commission in December last year. Currently the shire is preparing a local planning strategy to build on the work of the committee.

Some people spend a lot of time talking about the roadworks in that area. One of the local community radio stations has a traffic report. That local traffic report is not like the traffic report for Perth that informs people to avoid travelling on the freeway because of traffic jams; it informs motorists of the roadworks being done in the Kimberley and whether they will cause delays. That is an indication of the amount of work the government is doing there. The Derby Highway runs through the town and to the wharf. The road is sealed only on the link between Derby and Great Northern Highway. The Derby Highway forms part of the inter-town route between Broome and Derby. It provides everybody with access to the Derby airport and the RAAF Curtin Air Base, which is an important air defence installation in the north west. The highway will provide improved traffic efficiency and increased road safety. Various types of vehicles, including road trains, cart lead and zinc to the Derby port. The roadworks will also reduce maintenance costs caused by excessive edge wear. Further roadworks are scheduled to commence on this road in June. I understand that the contracts have been completed and that the work will start soon, if it has not started already.

The Broome Cape Leveque Road is an incredibly important road for a substantial number of communities and outstations in the Kimberley. The government completed the construction and sealing of 10.2 kilometres of the Broome Cape Leveque Road in September. This project will improve access to some of those indigenous communities and allow both communities all-weather access to the airstrip near the Lombadina Aboriginal community. Other benefits include a reduction in vehicle damage and travel time, improvement in freight efficiency and the provision of opportunities for economic development on the Dampier peninsula. The economic development involves the financial boom in the price of trochus shells, for example. The Broome Cape Leveque Road is a local government road and is under the care and control of the Shire of Broome. Therefore, the shire is responsible for funding improvements to the 200-kilometre road. However, the state government recognises the significant and ongoing costs of upgrading the road and understands that the Shire of Broome has limited resources. Therefore, the government has been providing significant funding contributions to assist the Shire of Broome to progressively upgrade the road to the standard recommended by the Broome Cape Leveque Road steering committee, which was set up by the government. This committee has done a substantial amount of work on providing advice on where the work could best be done. Main Roads estimates that the overall cost to upgrade the road to seal standard is \$53 million in 2006 prices, provided that the works

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are delivered by direct management. The priority standard upgrade of the road has been determined by the Broome Cape Leveque Road steering committee. The steering committee determined that the most important issue was the 100-kilometre section of the road between Beagle Bay and Cape Leveque. That has been a top priority and substantial work has been done.

In 2001 the state government gave a commitment to contribute \$10 million to the works on this road. At that time the cost was estimated to be \$12.5 million. The Shire of Broome was to provide only \$2.5 million and the state government was to provide the remainder. As members know, the cost of materials and the costs associated with transporting them to the north west have increased dramatically. Currently the government has spent \$10.9 million upgrading this road. Some 46 kilometres of the road has been upgraded to formed gravel sheeted standard, and 32 kilometres of road has been sealed, including the 10-kilometre section to One Arm Point. I have travelled on these roads. They are pretty good and are easy to drive on. In August work commenced on further upgrades. The upgrading of a 20-kilometre section of the road from Bobby's Crossing north of the Lombadina-Djarindjin community access road from gravel road to sealed standard is estimated to cost \$2.3 million. Hopefully, the roadworks will be completed by the end of September when the wet season starts. This will mean that only 51 kilometres of the top 100 kilometres that the committee decided it was important to upgrade to sealed-standard will still need to be upgraded. The estimated cost of this in 2006 dollars is \$8 million. If we wait until 2007, that estimated cost will increase. These works will occur progressively in line with state and Shire of Broome funding availability and the priority that the committee has placed on the work. By 2009-10, the state government will have spent more than \$17 million on upgrading that local government road. It is a local government road. The state government decided that it is an important road and, therefore, supplied a substantial amount of funding. If the Shire of Broome - I have indicated this to the shire president - needs further funding to upgrade this strategic local road, it should seek assistance from the federal government.

Members also mentioned the Gibb River road. In 2001 the Labor government committed to upgrade the Derby Gibb River Road to a gravel-sheeted standard for a total cost of \$18 million. Since that time, 105 kilometres has been upgraded to that standard, while 270 kilometres remains to be upgraded. Due to the many capital and road infrastructure demands on the state - I am not being city-centric; I refer also to those around the state, including the north west - it is not possible for the government to undertake all roadworks at the same time. As at June 2006, the government had spent \$7.5 million on upgrading the Derby Gibb River Road. That should be compared with the coalition government, which spent only \$3 million in a four-year period. That shows that the government has made a huge commitment to upgrading that road.

Hon Anthony Fels interjected.

Hon SHELLEY ARCHER: I am not sure about that. The member will need to look at the budget papers. In excess of \$12.5 million will be spent on upgrading all the strategic roads in our north west. Another road referred to by members was the Gubinge Road in Broome, which is an important road. The government has experienced substantial problems in the construction of this road. During the 2005 election, the government committed \$7.7 million to construct the realignment of Gubinge Road to resolve a number of safety and congestion issues that the Shire of Broome had brought to our attention. This commitment was funded through the proposed LandCorp redevelopment of a proportion of Broome land. Although nearly \$10 million has been allocated through Main Roads for the delivery of this project, the project will now cost \$22 million. That is a huge shortfall of \$13 million.

Hon Simon O'Brien: It is a blow-out.

Hon SHELLEY ARCHER: Absolutely. The blow-out has occurred as a result of the increase in building infrastructure costs.

Due to this funding shortfall, it will be necessary for the state government to deliver this road over an extended period. The government will not commit to completing the road in 2007 or 2008 because it is unsure of the amount of time it will take due to the costs involved. A two-stage delivery is currently proposed. The first stage between Broome Road and the Gubinge Road, Fairway Drive and Jigal Drive intersection - Hon Ken Baston would be well aware of this intersection - will be delivered through a number of minor improvement works commencing in August. We hope to have that finished by the end of this year. When Hon Ken Baston is next in Broome, I will take him down the road and show him the works that have been completed. Subject to funding being made available, the government hopes that the second stage will be completed in between late September and early October 2007, which is before the wet season. This road will enable heavy vehicle trucks to bypass the town centre. The trundling of trucks through major areas has been a big issue. This road will mean that the trucks will bypass the town centre and go straight to the port and the industrial areas. That will create a more friendly environment in the centre of Broome.

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There is a long-held view that the indigenous communities are not keen on a completely sealed road or a road that enables a massive number of tourists to travel along the Gibb River Road or to Cape Leveque. The indigenous people have major concerns about the impact that four-wheel drives, caravans etc will have on their sacred land and the environment. Some tourists do not understand the significance of sacred sites. They pull off of the roads and travel into those areas to go exploring, thereby disrupting the sacred sites. A number of such complaints have come my way. When work is being done on these roads, we must bear in mind the indigenous communities and their sacred sites. The indigenous communities are quite happy with the roads the way they are. Hon Ken Baston and I were involved in a competition to see who would be the best team for the clean-up of the Gibb River Road. I am not quite sure whether Hon Ken Baston has his team; I do. We travel up the road once a year to clean it after the tourists have left. The amount of rubbish collected is quite substantial. We are looking to do the same trip on the Broome Cape Leveque Road in 2007. When work is done on these roads, we must bear in mind the impact that tourists and others will have on this area.

I now turn to the Pilbara region, where the government has made significant infrastructure investments. The government has allocated \$62 million for work on the Karratha-Tom Price link road, which I was pleased to visit with Hon Alannah MacTiernan a couple of weeks ago. In addition, \$7.6 million has been allocated for port work and \$4 million for new works and improvements at Port Hedland. We are spending a substantial amount of money on infrastructure in the Kimberley and the Pilbara. In health, \$92 million has been allocated to improvements and upgrades to the Hedland Health Regional Resource Centre. In education, \$6 million has been allocated to the redevelopment of Karratha Senior High School and more than \$4 million has been allocated for Hedland Senior High School. Nearly \$6 million has been allocated to extend the dual carriageway and build passing lanes on the Dampier road. The list goes on. The government has spent a substantial amount of money on infrastructure in the Kimberley and the Pilbara.

In light of major strategic industrial proposals for Onslow, the government has undertaken a considerable amount of work to provide a strategic framework for the future expansion and development of the town, which will be an important centre because of the mining developments in that area. The redevelopment plan will include the preparation of a land development plan outlining the infrastructure that will be required.

The outcomes of the Port Hedland inquiry-by-design process, which was progressed through LandCorp, the Department of Industry and Resources and the Town of Port Hedland, include investigations into the development of a new industrial area and the resolution of issues about what will happen in the west end precinct. A preliminary program was developed for a coastal strategy for the Pilbara region. Once finalisation of work related to the whole-of-state coastal planning has occurred, progress can be made. We are redeveloping and upgrading the Onslow road.

Our state is experiencing an incredible boom. The state government wants all Western Australians to reap the rewards, not just today but also tomorrow. To make sure that we keep Western Australia vibrant and successful, the government is reinvesting our resources into schools, roads, hospitals and key services. There is one thing that we need to remember: in the 2006-07 budget, we provided a record \$5.2 billion for infrastructure.

HON MARGARET ROWE (Agricultural) [3.31 pm]: In its discussion paper "Infrastructure: Getting on with the Job", the Committee for Economic Development for Australia concluded -

There is strong evidence that investment in infrastructure has a positive and permanent effect on economic output . . . generates higher returns than investment in other sectors of the economy.

That is CEDA's way of expressing the commonsense view heard daily in the community that there is a pressing need for more public infrastructure, but Labor has failed to deliver. Labor has let the regions down. Labor's propaganda about spending big on infrastructure has not translated to dollars delivering infrastructure. In each of its first four years in government, Labor spent less of its budget on infrastructure than was spent in 2000-01, the last year of the Liberal government. Despite a growth in budget revenue of more than \$4 billion in the first four years, capital spending from the budget fell below that spent in the last year of the Court government. That is a terrible financial management record. However, it is even worse for the regions. Tremendous pressure is being placed upon the state's infrastructure to keep pace with the state's economic and population growth. Labor has talked about it, yet as each year passes, more Western Australians awaken to the reality that Labor is failing to deliver.

It is important to note that the matters raised by me and other opposition speakers comprise not a mere wish list but a list of failures by this government. It is a list of Labor's failures, because the massive revenue bonanza enjoyed by Labor since 2001 gave this government the financial capacity to have spent at least \$1 billion more in rural areas on some major projects, with enormous social and economic benefits. Labor's failure to deliver greater infrastructure progress in rural areas is a reflection of its usual financial mismanagement and its historic contempt for the rural communities.

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Growth in our mining sector is creating pressure on our ports. Despite the investment over the past decade, the economy is demanding even more port capacity. Geraldton is a prime example. The re-emergence of mining in the mid-west has created a well recognised need for a new port at Oakajee. It is interesting to recall the persistent criticism from Labor when the last Liberal government was planning and progressing the development of the Oakajee port and industrial area. Today, development of Oakajee is recognised by Labor as a necessity to meet the needs of the new iron ore producers and other miners and serve the broader community. I would like to hear why the government does not offer to put up \$200 million to help finance the Oakajee port development on a commercial basis, as it has done for other government ports, and allow it to be run privately without public sector and union control. A bit of competition amongst regional ports would be a welcome step forward. The government has debt-funded expansion of ports, knowing that there will be a commercial return. There is no reason that it could not assist, if not fund, all of the Oakajee port development. After all, the public interest test is economic development and job creation, not union desire to return to its former glory of roting every port under its control. Alternatively, the government could assist by giving a grant of approximately \$100 million for the private development of the port. It could be a grant such as that given to Alinta and its partners, which probably had less financial need for government assistance to progress major development opportunities than has the mid west.

There is one unmistakable complaint common to regional Western Australia; that is, the lack of investment in roads. One of the key infrastructure projects that should be well under way by now, if not completed, is Indian Ocean Drive - the Lancelin-Cervantes road. It is a 61-kilometre stretch of investment and tourism opportunities that has been stalled by Labor for half a decade, and probably for longer to come if it wins in 2009. It was a \$30 million project. Now it is a more expensive but still readily affordable \$80 million project. It is a project that our boom time revenue would have paid for already if not for Labor's mismanagement in allowing so much to be squandered on unproductive bureaucracy. It was with some alarm that I heard Hon Murray Criddle inform us that Labor's current plan is that a 10-kilometre stretch of road up to Ocean Farm Estate will be completed by 2008. The rest is pencilled in for 2011. However, if Labor wins the 2009 election, it is unlikely that it will rush into that job, so we may have to wait for 2013 to see it happen. That means that we are facing a decade of lost opportunity for development of state tourism, especially in our mid-west, thanks to Labor's mismanagement of public priorities.

The benefits of the road are so widely recognised and so obvious that the Western Australian Tourism Commission regards the building of Indian Ocean Drive as the number one tourist priority for Western Australia. Those of us familiar with the area know that there will be a tourism explosion once that road is built. It will stimulate more tourism along the central coast by decreasing travelling times from Perth and making the region more accessible to tourists. The road will open up a range of job-creating investment opportunities in the regional areas. Places such as Lancelin, Cervantes, Jurien Bay and other coastal towns are waiting to explore opportunities that have been retarded by inadequate infrastructure. A convenient and safe tourism road is at the top of the list. Originally, this Labor government promised to complete the road by 2003, but it obviously failed again. As a consequence of the government's failure to build Indian Ocean Drive and due to the boom in resources, Brand Highway is carrying an increasing amount of heavy haulage traffic as well as tourism traffic.

Last week we heard from members about other road projects that should have been high on the spending priority list, if not under way already, such as the Derby Gibb River Road, Broome Cape Leveque Road, South Western Highway, the Yallingup-Augusta road, Muirs Highway, the Bridgetown-Nannup road, the Karratha-Tom Price road, and the Peel deviation or Perth-Bunbury highway. It is easy to see Labor's infrastructure backlog growing and turning into a problem that the next Liberal government will have to repair again.

I refer now to the infill sewerage program. Sadly, the infill sewerage program started by the Court government in 1994 continues to suffer due to Labor's irresponsible and incomprehensible funding cutbacks. Under the Court Liberal government, the infill sewerage program was funded to the tune of around \$90 million per annum. In 2006-07 investment in infill sewerage will be a mere \$30.6 million, barely one-third of that expended annually by the Court government. Is the drastic cut due to financial constraints? Most certainly not, as this government has seen budget revenue increase by \$6 billion, yet capital spending has been cut. Had Labor kept the program on track, the metropolitan area infill sewerage program would be nearing completion, as would the program in a number of country towns. Instead, the whole program stalled five years ago and has remained at a go-slow pace for reasons that this Labor government has not explained. The initial cuts were based on a supposed financial need. The government has been awash with cash since then, yet there has been no recovery in funding for the infill sewerage program. Although the program in many metropolitan suburbs suffers from delays due to Labor's unnecessary funding cuts, it is the lack of progress in rural areas that is particularly noticeable. Perth does not face the reality of effluent pouring down the streets due to the effects of heavy rain, nor does it endure, worse yet, open sewage ponds.

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The house was recently reminded that such experiences are a reality even for substantial towns such as Derby and Hyden. That is Third World stuff and a shame for Western Australia, which is probably one of the world's wealthiest sovereign jurisdictions. The cuts to the infill sewerage funding have also stalled growth in rural towns. For example, it has impeded the ability for Donnybrook to accommodate investment demand for commercial growth and jobs in the town. Decisions to slash funding for infill sewerage when there is no financial imperative to do so are made by an incompetent government that simply does not understand what is required to keep our communities and our state progressing. The government's decisions are contemptuous of the needs of the community in Western Australia, especially in the regions.

Hon Kim Chance: Would you be kind enough to seek leave to continue your comments at a later stage of the sitting?

Hon MARGARET ROWE: I seek leave to continue my remarks at a later stage of the sitting.

[Leave granted for the member's speech to be continued at a later stage of the sitting.]

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Hon Kim Chance (Leader of the House)**.

[Continued next page.]

Sessional Order Suspension

HON KIM CHANCE (Agricultural - Leader of the House) [3.45 pm]: I thank Hon Margaret Rowe for accommodating my request. I have made that unusual request because it is clear that there is some enthusiasm for continuing this debate and I have been requested by members to put a motion to the house to suspend the sessional orders to extend the debate to 4.15 pm today. Behind the Chair, the Leader of the Opposition indicated that he would support that. I therefore move without notice -

That so much of sessional order 6(2) be suspended to enable the house to consider the motion under sessional orders 5(5) and 6 until 4.15 pm today.

Question put and passed with an absolute majority.

Motion

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON MARGARET ROWE (Agricultural) [3.45 pm]: I refer now to railway lines in the mid-west. The pin-up project of the government's capital works program is of course the Perth to Mandurah rail link. According to the government's latest cost estimate, but almost certainly not its last, this project is now some \$500 million above the cost of the former Liberal government's budget for the Perth to Mandurah rail link. What is arguably of far greater economic importance to the state is the need to upgrade existing railway lines in the mid-west region and to build new ones. The minister has set a deadline for iron ore producers to take their ore off the roads by October 2006, a deadline that is not likely to be met. The need to address the inadequacy of railway infrastructure in the mid-west has become pressing. The case for upgrading the rail network in the mid-west with shared or open access has never been stronger. This is where the government should have been making its railway investments for the future.

I refer to the regional development fund. Labor's contempt for the regions is demonstrated by the failure of its regional development fund to deliver on its hype. The \$75 million fund, now called an \$80 million fund, was touted as a way of funding infrastructure development in the regions, beyond the usual government funding for specific development projects or the funding we usually expect for routine service areas such as health and education. The regional development fund has been a bag of cash for distributing benefits for Labor's political purposes, but with little of it resembling infrastructure. Yes, the interpretive centre was built in Shark Bay, but how much else has been spent in the regions from that fund? Where was the \$75 million spent? There is not much infrastructure to show for it. To add insult to injury, the Labor Party has even siphoned some of the regional development fund money into the Perth metropolitan area. Before the last election, Labor decided to allocate some of the regional development funds to outer metropolitan regions to prop up its prospects in suburban Perth. Does the Labor Party really believe that the infrastructure and service needs of rural regions are comparable to those in Wanneroo and Armadale? If so, it must be the only party to do so. These are Perth suburbs, the populations of which have abundant facilities within walking or short driving distances. These are not regional areas, and it is a sham for Labor to siphon money from regional development funds into Labor marginal seats in Perth.

I draw my contribution to a close by reiterating the key points. First, Labor slashed funding on infrastructure that is critical to the regions, despite enjoying what may well be the biggest revenue bonanza in the state's history. It would be interesting to know whether our state's public coffers have ever enjoyed a five-year period

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such as this. Second, cuts to regional infrastructure spending come at a time of unprecedented demand from the resources sector for infrastructure in regional areas as well as demand driven by tourism and population changes. Third, Labor already has an infrastructure backlog, and it will grow. We are already at least \$1 billion behind the infrastructure needs that should have been met with better financial management and priorities. Fourth, Labor is mismanaging the good times and blowing opportunities to progress the state by failing to deliver public infrastructure to the regions, which is a fundamental government role. Fifth, Labor is again showing why the rural majority is right to reject Labor. Hopefully, Perth people will see it more clearly at the next election.

HON PAUL LLEWELLYN (South West) [3.50 pm]: I note that this debate again calls on the house to condemn the state government for its failure to provide adequate funding for vital infrastructure and the development of regional Western Australia. It is so easy to condemn from the other side of the house. What we should be doing is calling on the government to do certain things. It is always easy to say that someone has failed to provide adequately when there has been a genuine effort by any government to meet society's needs. Whenever in our family we say "You never" or "I always", we know we are on the wrong track. Someone says, "You never clean the bathroom. I always clean the bathroom." We know then we are on the wrong track. I will propose a change to this motion, but before I do that I will put the Greens' perspective.

What do we mean by regional infrastructure and development infrastructure? I notice it is tempting for people to say it is this road or that road, this highway or that railway and so on. What are the assets in regional areas? I will start from the top with the one closest to my heart. The first asset in regional areas is our natural capital; that is, the water, land, soil, biological resources and so on. It is the very basis upon which we as a society earn revenue and get services. No-one in this room has spoken about investing in natural capital. No-one has spoken about the recovery of our natural capital asset base in order to move forward so that more services are delivered from those assets. We know our water resources are damaged and depleted, we know land and soil resources are damaged and depleted and we know that our biological assets, which are the fundamental basis of a good economy, have been depleted. I do not hear calls to invest in natural capital infrastructure and assets.

It is impossible to simultaneously solve our natural capital problem - that is, our investment in assets such as our natural capital and infrastructure - and to achieve all the material benefits that other members have been calling for, the shopping list of what we need to do. Another aspect of capital and infrastructure is our built assets - the towns, roads, power stations, communications, hospitals and schools. We tend to think of them in relation to infrastructure programs because they are tangible assets, but we are not looking adequately at the failure of our natural assets. We are running down both our built capital - our roads, schools and so on - and our natural capital. Any business that runs down its capital assets will go broke. That seems to be happening to the Western Australian economy, contrary to the belief that we are actually on a spike. In fact, in terms of economic activity and the flow of income from mining assets and so on, we are running down the natural capital assets and our built assets - the roads and some of the railway lines are deteriorating around us - and we are playing catch-up with our infrastructure.

Of course, there is the human capital. Some ideologically sound people do not like to refer to human beings as capital. No-one talks about investment in infrastructure to develop education, artistic expression and the stuff that brings quality of life and improves natural capital and the capital base of the Western Australian economy.

Another capital asset is the amount of money we have. That is a scarce resource. I reviewed Hon Nigel Hallett's speech and I heard there was tension between town and country. I heard his analogy that development commission funding is a surrogate measure for the whole pattern of infrastructure investment. I think that is a weak argument. Many things in rural Australia need attention, and a lot of things in our cities need attention. We are looking at resolving that tension between city and country by developing meaningful infrastructure that services all aspects of our capital investment program, not just the roads. That is what tends to be meant by infrastructure; I think it is a misconstruction of the real intent of good economic management. We end up building a very expensive railway line in the wrong place if nobody is living alongside the line to make use of it. To all intents and purposes it will become a white elephant for the first 10 years of its existence. As any good economic manager would say, it is not a good investment to build a railway line down a barren strip of coastal plain where hardly anyone lives. Of course, the plan is to build up the population. It will take a long time to get a return on investment and I do not believe that is a sound infrastructure investment strategy, notwithstanding the heartfelt need for rail transport.

Hon Nigel Hallett also talked about achieving appropriate economies of scale and adequate and timely infrastructure. Members called for various things, such as an upgrading of Gibb River Road. I cannot think of a worse thing to do because people like going down that road in their four-wheel-drive vehicles. I wonder whether that would be a good investment.

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Even in this wealthy economy we have a very small amount of capital to invest in infrastructure and we end up with the Vegemite plan; that is, to invest thinly across all sectors. Every now and then there is a patch of thick Vegemite and it does not taste very nice. That is the model we are using - the Vegemite model of regional planning and asset investment.

Hon Murray Criddle interjected.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: I like Vegemite. In fact, I have Vegemite and jam but I do not want to go into that because I know we have a very short -

Several members interjected.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: Vegemite and marmalade is the best thing. Sick, sick, sick! Time is short and I would like to put forward an amendment to the motion that synthesises the intention of both government and opposition to move forward. I will do that in a minute. Of course, I would have liked 45 minutes to expand -

Hon Robyn McSweeney: No!

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: No? I would have liked to expand on these seminal concepts about regional infrastructure and appropriate strategies for investment and good economic management. I will skip over the government's policy, from which I was going to quote judiciously, and look at some regional infrastructure issues. I want to look at the problem of sewerage. Almost everyone has referred to toilets and sewerage.

Hon Simon O'Brien: In the greater Bunbury area, as soon as the one vote, one value legislation went through, it was canned in the south west. The second instalment was promised in March -

THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Graham Giffard): Order!

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: What is the problem with our sewerage and our regional development? There needs to be a change in the laws that govern the kind of sewerage systems that can be placed into a land development, such that a closed system can be used in a subdivision of 200 or 300 houses. Good governance and infrastructure planning is not about throwing good money at a bad solution, but involves inventing new solutions, sometimes technologically based and sometimes planning based. The Donnybrook infill sewerage problems can be solved overnight through a simple legislative change that will allow different kinds of sewage treatment facilities in regional and indeed urban development. Is that an infrastructure problem, or is it a planning and governance decision? I would say that it is a governance decision. We need to look at making small changes to the Health Act and some of the sewerage acts, or whatever the appropriate act is, to resolve that small matter. We would then not have the problem of Bridgetown, Donnybrook or other south west towns faltering because of the lack of infill sewerage. It is a simple problem to solve, and it is not related to the amount that is invested in assets and infrastructure, and technology that has failed us. I suspect that if the water and sewerage regulations were changed, it would resolve a whole series of other regional development issues.

In effect, we need regional strategic directions that create sensible planning and infrastructure decisions that deliver solutions, not necessarily money. What happens when we throw more money at a bad investment? It is still a bad investment, with a lot of capital going down the tube. I know the Greens are not known for economic management, but that is the framework from which the Greens operate - a sensible, rational economic framework. I have another few minutes before I put my alternative motion, which will not take even a couple of minutes.

Hon Simon O'Brien: The suspense is killing us!

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: I know the suspense is killing the honourable member! I will not talk about the renewable energy and the opportunities for regional development, and modernising our electricity system. I will not even mention that.

Hon Bruce Donaldson: They are trying to egg you on.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: I have stopped being egged on. I will not mention the opportunities for rural recovery programs that would result from a very large-scale oil mallee program in the wheatbelt that would deliver not only improvements in our natural capital - water and land - but also energy and jobs in the regions. Nor will I mention the flourishing blue gum industry in the south west, which is producing a range of benefits, in not only woodchips but also novel wood products.

Hon Anthony Fels interjected.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: It was not the baby we wanted; we wanted a different industry. We wanted integrated tree farms, not blue gum plantations, as I have put on the record. There is a capacity for those industries to deliver genuine regional benefits through private investment. This is not a question of whether the government is spending money on this or that shopping list, it is about good governance and good management as a whole.

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The appropriate motion would not seek to condemn. We should say that this house calls on the state government to do more to provide adequate and timely - I am now quoting from Hon Nigel Hallett's speech - funding for vital infrastructure to promote sustainable development; also referred to by the government - in rural and regional Western Australia. It is a new motion. I seek leave to table this new motion, with which no one could possibly disagree, because it is a synthesis. I move to table my new motion. If I carry on like this we will have to negotiate more time. I move -

That this house calls on the state government to do more to provide adequate and timely funding for vital infrastructure to promote sustainable development in rural and regional Western Australia.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Graham Giffard): Hon Paul Llewellyn, if you are not moving an amendment to the motion that is before the house, you are not at liberty to move a new motion. Motions debated during this time are listed on the notice paper and are taken in the order in which they appear on the notice paper, usually at the beginning of the day.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: I could actually move it as an amendment, because I have actually taken it straight out of the original.

Amendment to Motion

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: I move -

To delete all words after "house" and insert instead -

calls on the state government to do more to provide adequate and timely funding for vital infrastructure to promote sustainable development in rural and regional Western Australia.

Point of Order

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I presume that the honourable member has finished speaking to his amendment. I submit that the amendment is a contradiction of the motion itself. The motion condemns the state government, whereas the amendment is some sort of wishy-washy version of being nice to each other, quite contrary to the intent of the motion. I suggest that the amendment is out of order and that we should proceed very shortly to a vote on the original motion, which has been on the notice paper for the past six months. The member is entitled to move a substantive motion whenever he likes. I submit to you, Mr Deputy President, that the amendment is out of order because it contradicts the original motion.

THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Graham Giffard): I rule that it is not out of order. It is not a direct contradiction of the motion. It is a matter for the house to determine whether it supports the amendment. Hon Nigel Hallett has moved a motion to which Hon Paul Llewellyn has moved an amendment, and the amendment is in order.

Debate Resumed

HON NORMAN MOORE (Mining and Pastoral - Leader of the Opposition) [4.10 pm]: This is a very unacceptable way of doing business in this house. The opposition, quite rightly, as any member has the right to do, has put forward a substantive motion that has been on the notice paper since 15 March 2006 and members have prepared to speak on that. Although I do not deny the member's right to move an amendment, the fact that he is moving it five minutes before the debate is to finish is very unsatisfactory. I am the only member in the chamber who has a copy of the amendment. Nobody has had a chance to read it. It talks about sustainable development. What is that? Who knows what it is? The amendment talks about adequate and timely funding of vital infrastructure. What is and what is not vital infrastructure? We have not had a chance to consider the content of this amendment. It is a pity that we are being called upon to consider this amendment at this time. The opposition's problem, aside from the questions we have on the amendment about the definitions of "vital infrastructure" and "sustainable development", is that we cannot vote against it. If we vote for the amendment, that would replace the motion and we would not have a chance to vote on the original motion. That is the sad thing about it. I would have thought that everybody could vote in favour of this wishy-washy amendment, which really says nothing. The opposition clearly wanted to move a motion to condemn the state government in strong terms, and we have done that over the past two weeks. If the amendment is agreed to, we will not have the opportunity to vote on condemning the government's lack of support for infrastructure in Western Australia.

Hon Adele Farina: That is because you have been persuaded by the argument!

Hon NORMAN MOORE: That may well be the case, but I doubt very much whether that will happen. I am sorry that Hon Adele Farina will not get a chance to tell us what she thinks about this. The opposition does not have a lot of choice but to agree to this. If we vote against this, it will look pretty stupid. If the amendment is passed - I am sure the government will prefer Hon Paul Llewellyn's amendment to the original motion - we will end up with a motion that means absolutely nothing. That is the sad thing about a member coming into the

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chamber five minutes before a vote is to be taken and moving this type of amendment. Perhaps we should examine the standing and sessional orders on this matter. We will wait to see what the house decides to do.

HON JON FORD (Mining and Pastoral - Minister for Local Government and Regional Development)
[4.13 pm]: The government opposes the amendment. Although it would be a good substantive motion in its own right - the government encourages the member to move it - we agree with the arguments put by the opposition that it is contrary to the intent of the motion.

Amendment put and negatived.

Motion Resumed

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (13)

Hon Ken Baston	Hon Nigel Hallett	Hon Norman Moore	Hon Bruce Donaldson (<i>Teller</i>)
Hon George Cash	Hon Ray Halligan	Hon Helen Morton	
Hon Murray Criddle	Hon Barry House	Hon Simon O'Brien	
Hon Anthony Fels	Hon Robyn McSweeney	Hon Margaret Rowe	

Noes (12)

Hon Shelley Archer	Hon Kate Doust	Hon Graham Giffard	Hon Sally Talbot
Hon Vincent Catania	Hon Sue Ellery	Hon Sheila Mills	Hon Ken Travers
Hon Kim Chance	Hon Jon Ford	Hon Ljiljana Ravlich	Hon Ed Dermer (<i>Teller</i>)

Pairs

Hon Peter Collier	Hon Louise Pratt
Hon Barbara Scott	Hon Adele Farina
Hon Donna Faragher	Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm

Question thus passed.

Sitting suspended from 4.20 to 4.30 pm