

Extract from Hansard

[COUNCIL — Wednesday, 18 September 2019]

p6902e-6915a

Hon Colin Tincknell; Hon Tjorn Sibma; Hon Colin Holt; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Diane Evers; Hon Rick Mazza

**SELECT COMMITTEE INTO THE EFFECT OF RED TAPE
ON THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY**

Establishment — Motion

HON COLIN TINCKNELL (South West) [1.07 pm]: I will not move to appoint members to a select committee into red tape today. I will postpone it until after 20 February.

The PRESIDENT: Member, are you seeking to withdraw your motion?

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: No.

The PRESIDENT: Member, I think you need to move the motion listed for today and then you can speak to it and it will be up to the house, I imagine, to determine whether you eventually appoint or not appoint people to a committee.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: Thank you, Madam President. I have had advice on that, and thank you. To start off today —

The PRESIDENT: No, member. Do you want to move the motion in your name? Can you do that first?

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: Madam President, I will move the motion in my name. I just want everyone to be aware that I was not —

The PRESIDENT: Member, you are moving the motion in your name. I will then read it out and then I will give you the call.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: Thank you. I move —

- (1) A Select Committee into the Effect of Red Tape on the Western Australian Economy be established.
- (2) The select committee is to inquire into the effect of legislation, regulation and red tape on the Western Australian economy, with particular reference to —
 - (a) the impact of red tape on resources, mining, oil and gas, manufacturing, agriculture, tourism and small business sectors in Western Australia;
 - (b) the economy-wide impact of red tape in terms of compliance costs, forgone economic output, employment, government revenue and business investment;
 - (c) any specific examples of egregious red tape that are particularly burdensome, complex, redundant or duplicated across jurisdictions;
 - (d) the impact of the Streamline WA program to date, and how this program can be built upon;
 - (e) the effectiveness of previous governments'—federal, state and local—and committees' efforts to reduce red tape;
 - (f) the adequacy of current institutional structures for achieving genuine and permanent reductions to red tape;
 - (g) identifying alternative institutional arrangements and settings to reduce red tape, including providing subsidies or tax concessions to businesses to achieve outcomes currently achieved through regulation;
 - (h) how different jurisdictions within Australia and internationally have attempted to reduce red tape; and
 - (i) any other relevant matter.
- (3) The select committee shall consist of five members.
- (4) The select committee is to report by no later than 12 months after the committee has been established.

I want to give notice to everyone that I will not be looking at appointing a select committee on red tape, and I would like to postpone that until February 2020.

There has been a lot of discussion on this motion, and it does not surprise me that there has been a lot of discussion. I understand that this motion could create many problems for both the current government and any future government. Many members are currently members of committees—I am on quite a few committees myself—and I am aware of the time constraints on members. In my discussions with various members about whether they would like to sit on this committee, that was the regular comment that was made: yes, they would like to sit on the committee, but they would have problems doing so because of the committees they were already members of. As

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we know, some of these committees will finish up by Christmas, and in February members will have a little more time to devote to such an important matter.

I know that a lot of people will think that this matter will go away after I have talked about it today. I have done the numbers and it is likely that this motion will not have success; I am fully aware of that. I am also aware that this motion will probably be amended somewhere along the line. I have seen that practice happen fairly regularly in this house, so I am aware that that is a tactic that could be used by a fellow member of this house. However, just like family law, this debate will not go away. This debate is very important to the state of Western Australia and to Australia, because Western Australia is the engine room of Australia. It is very important that we do not water this motion down or ignore it, and that we tackle the very difficult matters that it brings up. The only way of rectifying some of these issues is by tackling them head-on and looking into them fully.

Many similar inquiries have been held in the past and, unfortunately, state governments have not acted on their recommendations. Various members in this place may talk about that today, and various members may also talk about the current state government's attempt to look at red tape through Streamline WA. I welcome those comments.

Madam President, the reasons for this motion were clear when you read out subparagraphs (a) through to (i). Yes, it is a big ask; yes, it will take a long time; and yes, it will be difficult. However, I could be talking about a number of things that are vital to the people of Australia, and especially Western Australia, and this is one of them. Red tape affects many industries: mining, oil and gas, manufacturing, agriculture, tourism, and small business. It also affects compliance costs, economic output, employment, government revenue and business investment. I could stop there and say that that is a good enough reason to look into this thoroughly to do something about reducing regulation, compliance costs and duplication, because those have all hamstrung small and large businesses alike.

When I gave notice of this motion, I got a lot of letters of support from industry. I never discussed this with industry; I never discussed that I was going to bring on this motion. Obviously, I have been talking to industry since I have been a member of Parliament, and it is quite obvious to me that this is a major problem in Western Australia. If that is because this government and previous governments have not done enough to change it—I know it is not easy—then so be it.

Duplication across jurisdictions is also an issue. I look forward to hearing from the government about Streamline WA. If we want to talk about the effectiveness of previous governments, I remind members that this is not a witch-hunt. This is about moving forward and finding out why we did not follow the recommendations of the Baston inquiry back in 2011. Why did we not follow some of those recommendations? That was an expensive inquiry and I believe it was very well done, yet those issues still exist today. Are some of our institutions capable of handling this in the current climate? Are the structures right, or do we need major changes in the way in which we operate to achieve genuine, permanent reductions in red tape?

I also want to identify alternatives. As I said, this is not about going back; it is about looking forward and saying, "Well, what are we going to do about it? What are our alternatives?" That is what the inquiry will be about, and if it takes six months, 12 months or two years, as long as it results in great recommendations that this Parliament can get behind, and then implement as many as possible, it will be worthwhile. Many other jurisdictions around Australia and internationally have the same problem, but they have made major efforts to rectify it. We need to look at that as well. Is there someone out there doing a better job than we are? If there is, let us do something about it. The most important thing I will say today is these few words: let us unshackle the Western Australian economy, because right now, we are not successful in that respect

At the moment, red tape costs the Australian economy about \$176 billion per annum. If anyone wants to know where I got that figure, it is from a May 2016 article on the website of the Institute of Public Affairs. That represents 10 per cent of gross domestic product. That is massive. That is the effect on the Australian economy. To provide one example, iron ore miner Roy Hill required 5 000 licences or permits in its pre-construction phase alone. Most people would say that that is over the top. The costs are very restrictive. Many companies that are not as big as Roy Hill would not be able to afford that. When we look through all the issues, we see duplication, confusion and excessive regulation. Governments are good at putting regulations in place but they are not good at getting rid of regulations that may not be needed. That is up for debate. I understand that a lot of regulations are needed.

The WA government is the number one key driver in putting up red tape, so I can understand why the major parties in this house will not support this motion today. Seventy-nine per cent of the regulations that are required for approval for resources projects in WA are imposed by the government; that is nearly 80 per cent. That is sending companies overseas. How do we employ our young people if they cannot get those jobs because they have gone to Africa or South America or somewhere else? I am not suggesting that we do not need to do environmental studies or have safety measures. I have worked in the resources industry and all of those regulations are required and are important for the people of Western Australia. However, we are talking about reducing duplication and unnecessary regulations. Reporting duties are also very onerous on companies, especially when we look at local, state and federal reporting. That is something that we should be looking at.

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This next figure is disturbing. New private sector business investment in WA has declined by 53 per cent since its peak in 2013. How can we employ young Western Australians, mature Western Australians and educated Western Australians if we allow that to continue?

Hon Darren West interjected.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: No, I did not say “all”; I am saying that red tape has a part in it. The member knows that. I am sure he has been around long enough to know that, so I do not need to explain it to him any further.

New private sector business investment in WA is currently 14.8 per cent of gross state product, which is the lowest it has been since 2005. It is a bad trend. We need to make changes to this. At the national level, new private sector business investment is 11.2 per cent of gross domestic product, which is the lowest it has been since the Whitlam years. I am 66 years old and I voted for Gough Whitlam way back in 1974. There were a few things that were great about Gough and there were a few things that were not. That just shows members how bad new private sector business investment is in Australia at the moment. That is not a good figure. Surely we can do better than this.

I know that business is impacted by red tape and the natural flow-on effect is a deterrent to job creation and our state’s economic productivity. I would like to quote Meg O’Neill, chief operations officer at Woodside. She said that Woodside is —

... pursuing growth plans that will make a major contribution to the economy and energy supply in this state for decades to come.

This includes —

... 4,000 full-time equivalent jobs per annum nationally over a 40-year time-frame, with almost half those jobs located in northern Western Australia.

Total direct tax and the royalties payments over that timeframe are estimated ... to add up to \$82 billion. And the flow-on effects include boosting Australia’s Gross Domestic Product by \$414 billion between now and 2063.

I will paraphrase some of her other comments. Woodside faces stiff competition with LNG projects planned in other areas, such as Qatar, Mozambique, Canada, Russia and the USA. To then have to face regulatory challenges—for example, three district regulators conducting assessments for environmental approval—makes it harder for projects to compete globally, especially with the level of red tape currently being experienced. Meg rightly said that as a developer, Woodside does not get to pick and choose between the state and federal government; government is government, and Woodside cannot proceed with a project until all the approvals are lined up. That is an example of one company, and I have never spoken to or had a meeting with its representatives. Those figures have been quoted to us and I have seen the reports.

It is quite obvious that mining is affected, but another very important part of our economy is greatly affected as well—that is, agriculture. The Labor Party has 13 or 14 members from regional areas, so this should be very important to them and I hope that they are listening to these statistics. The National Farmers’ Federation said that red tape has added the cost of \$24 620 to farmers a year. This equates to 29 lost days, 3.9 per cent of their income, 4.5 per cent of total expenses and 14.7 per cent of net profit. Over 69 per cent of red tape does not distinguish farm scale, so smaller farms suffer proportionately higher costs.

I earlier mentioned duplication at the local, state and federal government level. At times, some of that duplication cannot be avoided and I understand that. I am talking about the times when it can be avoided and not enough effort is going into changing that. We could be looking at environmental protection, farm chemical use or regulations that affect a range of businesses. Of particular concern are water use and temporary labour from overseas. I have been out there talking to farmers, and they talk about this all the time. They are unsure and do not know what is going on; there is confusion. Farmers have major concerns about this area. I would like to use a couple of examples of farmers being a bit unclear about what is going on out there.

There has been grossly inadequate hazard reduction burning on public lands over these last few decades. This has been a big discussion for farmers. We need to have hazard reduction. We live in a state where bushfires can be very dangerous and cause death. However, it is not clear exactly how we should be handling that and it has been a bit haphazard. Possibly, too many levels of bureaucracy have been involved, given that sometimes the answer lies with the local knowledge of farmers and their communities in regional areas. That is why I was so strong on having a regional fire division. That discussion has come and gone and, unfortunately, was defeated.

Another area that has been pointed out to me is the poor and conflicting messages. If we were looking at transport and a heavy vehicle accreditation scheme, we would see that it is not flexible enough. Farmers making short trips with more than four semi-loads of hay to feed their cows have to have the same permit as a heavy transport operator who drives 200 000 kilometres a year. Farmers feel as though there should be some separation; they should have

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fewer restrictions on them than someone who operates heavy transport for a living, all day, every day and is on the road all the time. The permit system is very confusing. It often requires the completion of identical permits, which is when the duplication happens. They may need to use different trailers or vehicle combinations and have a slight adjustment to a normal route to account for a short notice deviation. This system needs to be simplified. The delays caused from this complication and confusion are money to farmers. I understand why the restricted access vehicle system was brought in; however, there is a lot of repetition in this process. There is coordination between Main Roads and local shires and permission from both is required. Moving across shires requires some duplication and changing the configuration, such as the farmer having to use a different trailer, all require a repeat of that process over and over again. The ageing road system in WA is also causing problems and I may come back to that a little bit later.

Although farmers who truck wheat into their bins only at harvest time enjoy some concessions from the harvest mass management scheme, once they deliver that wheat to Perth or backload the fertiliser, the amount of paperwork required to demonstrate compliance with permit conditions can be measured in thousands of pieces of paper. Surely, in this day and age, that is archaic. That needs to change. That is one thing that we should be looking at. With trip sheets, the scheduling of trips, rosters, confidential personnel records, detailing reportable incidents, it goes on and on. In some cases it is thousands of pieces of paper. It is unworkable and costly, and it costs jobs. Farmers do not really want to become accountants or sit at their desks all day long, filling in paperwork.

HON TJORN SIBMA (North Metropolitan) [1.29 pm]: I am just waiting for the red light on the microphone.

The PRESIDENT: Not red tape!

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Yes. The red light, not the red tape!

I am a little confused about which motion I am speaking to because the member who moved it implied he would move an amendment to it, which I do not think has been formally moved. I will address my remarks on behalf of the Parliamentary Liberal Party to the written motion that appears on the notice paper and was read. I think that is all I can do.

I will begin by saying that the member has put an exceptionally ambitious motion before the house. Many of the issues that have been identified merit closer and continued examination, not only by this house, but also by the people who can make a difference—that is, members of the government of the day. Might I say that if there is a fatal flaw with Hon Colin Tincknell's motion, it is its very broad and ambitious scope. I think sometimes that discretion is the better part of valour. An entire select committee could be framed around just paragraph (2)(a), which refers to the impact of red tape on the resources, mining, and oil and gas industries. In fact, going even further, it could focus on just one of the industries identified. I think the member has done this house a service by reminding us all of our duty to ensure that this state reaches its full economic potential. In many respects, that economic potential—our business capacity—is largely inhibited by rules and restrictions that we place on ourselves through local, state or federal governments.

Before I get to some of the issues that have been fleshed out, I will deal with the elephant in the room—that is, this house's capacity to resource another select committee, irrespective of when the member might seek for that committee to be established, whether it is a consequence of today or something that will be timed to be triggered in February of next year. I say that for two reasons. About three or four select committees are on the go at the moment, in addition to the standing committees. Obviously, the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges also has its work cut out for it in an extensive way, which will limit the resources and the capacity available to give these issues the kind of attention they deserve. I am also saying that there are select committees, notwithstanding the Select Committee into Local Government, that may well traverse some of the issues the member's motion seeks to address. Although Hon Colin Tincknell mentioned during his address that for certain industries it is the state government that imposes by far and away the biggest regulatory load, it is also clearly apparent that local governments throughout Western Australia play a role in inhibiting and restricting, either by intention, design or unintended design, the economic potential of small to medium enterprises that operate in jurisdictions inside and outside the CBD and throughout regional Western Australia.

I think I might be partly distinguished in this chamber by having worked through the regulatory system from the perspective of a user. I did that, very briefly, in the mining sector and in the property and land assembly sector. Might I say that the key, as with any strategy or policy, is in the implementation. I can say, having worked through state and federal governments—Labor and Liberal—that oftentimes the rhetoric expressed by ministers, executive government, directors general or departmental secretaries of various departments does not correspond with the experience of the user. Usefully, Hon Colin Tincknell prompted my memory of the Roy Hill project. Very briefly, a long time ago I worked on that project and I was deeply familiar with the approval system. The member made a remark that was partly right, but potentially slightly misleading. I do not recall that company ever having to comply with 5 000 regulations. It was attempting very complicated port, mine and pit operations in the Pilbara

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simultaneously, and approvals or licences came with a number of conditions. That did not necessarily mean that 5 000 approvals were being complied with simultaneously. In aggregate, it appeared that the regulatory burden was larger than was experienced. It did not impede project milestones from being achieved all the time. Nevertheless, it is a case in point, and I thank the member for bringing it up.

To be effective in this domain there needs to be coordination between local, state and federal governments. I will use this opportunity to refer to the commonwealth government's Deregulation Taskforce, as announced by the Treasurer, Josh Frydenberg, and Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Ben Morton. I have a document that I will table later, if I am able to. I think it provides a very good and useful guide for how to identify the regulatory burden that applies across all Australian industries, but target efforts to get some short-term results. Again, I refer to the very broad scope of Hon Colin Tincknell's motion. I take the member as a genuine person and know that he is committed to this issue, but if we are to be effective in this domain, I suggest that he focus on a particular industry or industry sector rather than going across the board. Frankly, if it is his intent to move a motion such as this, any committee that is established would not have the capacity to deliver on the task he has set for it. I say that to be constructive and helpful, and as somebody who shares, very deeply, the sentiment he is expressing, as does the Liberal Party.

I also wish to correct the record slightly. Hon Ken Baston and Hon Liza Harvey did some signal work with a report of the Red Tape Reduction Group called "Reducing the Burden". I do not wish to embarrass Hon Ken Baston, but I think the report was tabled in 2009. It is not true to say that that report's recommendations were not actioned—that is not correct. Every single minister in the Barnett government took that report seriously and, where they could, implemented regulatory change to unleash the beast, so to speak, of Western Australian industry. It was not always easy. Not every regulatory burden is as easy to untangle as others are. It reinforced that a sharp focus on reducing the regulatory burden, however it is described, is a continuous improvement project. The people responsible for implementing it are the members of the government of the day.

I am very intrigued, as is the member, to understand in a little more detail how the Streamline WA initiative is proposed to operate. I sometimes fear that schemes such as this sound very good when the media statement is drafted, but the implementation of what is proposed takes a lot longer to provide dividends. I have seen other governments attempt to do this in different ways. My helpful suggestion would be that the government does not need to brand something as Streamline WA; it needs better coordination between directors general of departments in particular, and leaders or CEOs of government trading enterprises, so they work with some common purpose and agree on the state's economic priorities. I have to say that at the moment there is not that degree of clarity. From time to time, we hear the government congratulate sections of various industry sectors on their good work and, obviously, we share in that. However, although the mining and petroleum industries are doing well, and although agriculture is doing particularly well at the moment, irrespective of the regulatory burden put on them, there are other segments of this economy that are not doing very well. The retail sector is disastrous at the moment, frankly. The residential construction sector is not healthy. It would be useful to clarify precisely what regulation we wish to diminish that would give us the best economic opportunity as we proceed as a state.

There is not much more that I wish to contribute to this motion in a sustained manner, because its broad scope means that I would have to be selective about which term of reference I address. That also underscores the fatal flaw in the motion that has been moved today. I say this: if the member had moved this motion perhaps 12 months ago, when there was not a great flowering, or proliferation, of select committees and the house's attention was otherwise distracted, the member would probably have had greater unanimity of support, albeit for a sharper, more tightly focused review, which could have delivered something that was actionable and established a precedent for continuous regulatory review and reduction where appropriate.

With that said, the Parliamentary Liberal Party absolutely supports the sentiment behind the motion, but notes, and cannot help but note, the very clear and practical impediment to what the member is intending to move. For that reason, we cannot support the establishment of a select committee into red tape.

HON COLIN HOLT (South West) [1.41 pm]: I rise on behalf of the Nationals WA to add to the debate. As Hon Tjorn Sibma outlined, the intent of the motion is well founded. We need to get the regulatory framework right in Western Australia to attract investment, build industries, build businesses and employ people. I think the intent of the motion is right. However, the challenge for this house is the broad scope of the terms of reference and what the committee would look into. It is certainly an all-encompassing motion, which seeks to establish a select committee to look far and wide and to identify opportunities to improve red-tape reduction—probably, in that sense, green-tape reduction too. Although the intent of the motion is right, the motion is difficult to support because of its wideranging terms of reference. As someone who has been on a few select and standing committees, it is a pretty frightening thought that a committee would have to deliver a report on these terms of reference within 12 months, given the resourcing challenges of the Legislative Council—although that is less of a concern. If the house thought it important to inquire into something, it would do it, and that should be a part of the resourcing of

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the Council and its committees when it decides to look into a matter. But these broad-ranging terms of reference would be a real challenge for any committee. It would be a real challenge to inquire into term of reference 2(a) only, let alone breaking it down into small chunks. There is no doubt that some of these things need to be looked at.

Only last night I received an email from someone who is calling for a review of the Biodiversity Conservation Regulations and the way our native plant industries and native plant plantations are managed because anomalies discourage investment into native plant industries and put up unneeded and unwanted barriers that just make no sense. A select committee could be established just to look at that. It could focus on good outcomes and give pointers to any sitting government about ways to improve that situation for that particular small sector of our community.

Hon Stephen Dawson: Are you going to write to me on that?

Hon COLIN HOLT: I am going to talk to the minister about this.

Hon Stephen Dawson: I would welcome some interaction on that.

Hon COLIN HOLT: I only got the email last night so I will delve a bit further into the matter, but I would really like to get the person who wrote to me into the Minister for Environment's office to talk about it. There are some anomalies in that industry. I give one example. This person grows native plants for a whole range of purposes, including sandalwood, but other native plants too. He cultivates for seed collection, oils, and even fodder. Even native plant food industries get caught up in this. He says —

It ridiculous that when cultivated in WA you don't need a licence to cultivate and distil oils from *Eucalyptus polybractea*, *Melaleuca alternifolia* and eastern states *Leptospermum* species.

He grows these species but he does not need a licence to grow them or distil their oils. He goes on —

Yet individuals and businesses doing the same, with locally native species —

Which are cultivated —

are penalised by ridiculous green tape and high compliance costs.

If he were to stop cultivating *Eucalyptus polybractea* and shift to one of the native eucalyptus species, there would be a whole range of red tape around that. We know the reasons why, especially in the sandalwood industry, but somewhere, somehow, we could sort it out and work out how to promote these businesses while we protect some of the potentially illegal trade in others. We should not penalise a whole industry that wants to get going just because we need to protect another side that does not work. That is a really small example of how red tape and green tape needs to be addressed to get better outcomes for the community, manufacturers and potentially burgeoning industries.

I was interested to hear the mover of the motion say that he did not want this committee established until February.

Hon Colin Tincknell: There's a lot of committees and people are very busy.

Hon COLIN HOLT: I completely agree. As a potential way forward for the mover of the motion, I suggest that he think about moving a similar motion early in the new year. He should tighten the terms of reference so that that committee would have a real focus and could deliver in 12 months something that would be well worthwhile. He would not need to expand it into a catch-all, which any select committee finds very difficult to deliver on. The other thing the mover of the motion should consider is whether an existing standing committee could work on sections of these terms of reference. That might be a better way of achieving what he is trying to achieve in this motion.

I applaud the sentiment of the motion, but it is very difficult to support it. I encourage Hon Colin Tincknell to think about how he will progress this into the future. As I said, I think there are definitely some things that need improvement. We want our state to be competitive across Australia and the world and we do not want unnecessary regulations that interfere with our competitiveness and ability to build industries and to employ people.

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Environment) [1.47 pm]: It is my pleasure to rise on behalf of the government to contribute to this debate this afternoon. I say at the outset that I appreciate Hon Colin Tincknell bringing this issue before the house. Although I will not be supporting this motion this afternoon, red-tape reduction is an issue that we would all be interested in. I acknowledge Hon Ken Baston, who is with us this afternoon. In 2009, he and Liza Harvey co-chaired the Red Tape Reduction Group, which did some work on behalf of the former government on red-tape reduction. This is certainly an issue that I have spoken about previously in this place.

I agree with previous speakers that the honourable member's motion is far, far too broad. Any committee, whether a select or standing committee, would probably spend the life of a Parliament or indeed two Parliaments solely dealing with the issues that are listed in the motion. Were the member to come back with a similar motion in the

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future—I acknowledge that he said he might do something early next year—I encourage him to limit the scope of that motion.

I echo the previous comments about the work that is being done by the various committees at the moment. A significant number of select committees and standing committees are undertaking significant inquiries at the moment. It is absolutely the wrong time to do this. In his motion, Hon Colin Tincknell touched on Streamline WA and paid particular attention to its impact to date. Streamline WA was announced in December last year, so we are not 12 months into it yet. I am uneasy about Hon Colin Tincknell analysing something that is still in its infancy, albeit that it is delivering, and I will be happy to put some of those results on the record in a second. If Streamline WA staff had to present before a committee, that would take their focus from the job that Streamline WA has been established to do, which is to streamline. If we were to set up a select committee, Streamline WA staff would be focused on providing submissions and would take their eye off the prize, which is red-tape reduction.

Red-tape reduction is important. In 2014, Deloitte Australia undertook a study of federal, state and local government regulations across Australia. It found that the regulations of those three tiers of government cost \$27 billion a year to administer and \$87 billion to comply with, which is significant. I am certainly not a supporter of regulation for the sake of regulation. It is important to undertake analysis and work in this space.

Streamline WA is a whole-of-government initiative designed to make it easier to do business in Western Australia. It aims to do this by improving both regulations and regulatory practice, so how regulators apply regulation. It goes beyond the traditional red-tape reduction approach by focusing on all aspects of regulatory reform, including legislative reform, regulatory process culture and practice reform. Quite simply, it is about making it easier to do business in Western Australia, if I can put it that way. Streamline WA is already undertaking a number of the functions that Hon Colin Tincknell proposed a select committee should undertake. For example, the Streamline WA steering committee has been formed for people from industry, business, community and government to work collaboratively on reform ideas sourced from public submissions. Streamline WA is conducting a project that examines environmental approvals for mining projects with cross-sector engagement with industry and community representatives to collectively identify and prioritise reform proposals. It is conducting a project to reduce regulatory barriers to tourist attractions.

I acknowledge the fine work of the Tourism Council of Western Australia, which conducted a regional conference in Karratha yesterday, which both Hon Jacqui Boydell and I attended. The Tourism Council and indeed the Western Australian tourism sector have an interest in this issue. We want to make it easier for tourism businesses to operate in WA, and where we can reduce regulations, we will do so. Streamline WA has undertaken a project on the barriers associated with tourist attractions. It is also considering regulation and regulatory burden from a whole-of-sector perspective and has examined efforts, including lessons learnt, to reduce regulatory burden in other jurisdictions. Again, many of those things are referred to in the nine paragraphs of the member's motion. That work is already happening. I encourage the member to do some analysis of that work before moving another motion in the future.

The McGowan government has also successfully introduced a number of reforms that improve regulatory processes. Examples include a business intelligence portal to allow managers in the Western Australian mining industry to view the compliance and health and safety performance of their operations in real time and to see trends in their performance and compare their performance with similar mines. This will help industry manage and improve compliance and proactively improve performance. Another example is the introduction of an integrated electronic system for interactions between plumbers and the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, which reduces administrative burden and results in timesaving for both industry and government. This is a good place to pause. There are benefits for not only industry and small business but also government and government departments if we look at this stuff seriously. It is a win-win when we do this stuff properly. Another example of reform has been an export services portal, which provides an essential source of information to better equip Western Australian agrifood and fisheries exporters to develop their business.

We have also implemented a number of quick-fire regulatory mapping projects in the areas of ecotourism and aquaculture to identify practical reforms aimed at reducing unnecessary regulatory burden. We are currently undertaking a review of horticulture regulations. A number of reviews are happening right across the sector. We have also made some reforms to liquor licensing, but I will not touch on those now. A number of future initiatives are being worked on at the moment. We are looking to establish a tourism case management framework to ensure that tourism projects do not get bogged down in red tape. We are also developing a work health and safety bill based on the national act to improve consistency with the rest of Australia and provide primary legislation across all Western Australian industries to replace three existing acts. In my own space, we are modernising the Environmental Protection Act 1986 to improve transparency and accountability and address issues that undermine effective and efficient environmental regulation and therefore reduce unnecessary regulatory burden and duplication of processes. We will release a green bill for public comment later in the year.

A great deal of work is happening across the public sector in all portfolios— whether it is environment, agriculture, small business under Paul Papalia or mines safety under Hon Bill Johnston. All this work is happening and much of it is happening under the banner of Streamline WA; and because it is happening, I am confident that we will start to see dividends right across Western Australian industry and government. That is of one of the reasons that I am not in a position to support Hon Colin Tincknell's motion today. Again, I recognise and appreciate Hon Colin Tincknell's interest in red-tape reduction. We should all share that interest. From my perspective, I do not believe in regulation for the sake of regulation. Regulations should exist if they serve a purpose; if they protect the environment or provide safety to people, they are absolutely appropriate. But if they are about ticking a box and people providing reports that sometimes sit in filing cabinets without being checked, it is absolutely appropriate to look at and delve into them to see whether they are needed.

The existing reform activities are already resource intensive. I am concerned that if we establish a select committee, we would add to the burden and that it would do quite the opposite of what the member is trying to do in moving his motion. I am not in a position to support the motion today. Similar to others who have made a contribution, if the member moves a similar motion in the future, I urge him to look at the right vehicle to bring this forward. What is the right committee to look at this issue? Does it need to be a select committee? The motion could be limited and sent to the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, for example. Who is not in the chamber this afternoon? Hon Jim Chown is not here, so potentially it could be sent to his committee or it could be sent to Hon Kyle McGinn's committee—whomever. The right vehicle could already be in place.

Hon Colin Tincknell: I have considered that.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Okay. A vehicle that is already in place could be better able to deal with this issue, but for the moment I cannot support the motion.

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West) [1.57 pm]: I take this opportunity to make a contribution to the motion before the house. I will start with the bit that is missing from the motion—that is, what is red tape and how did it eventuate? The definition of “red tape” is a really interesting topic for discussion. I looked at the history of the process, so here is my contribution to the history of red tape. We use “red tape” because centuries ago official documents were the old-fashioned paper ones that were bound with string and somewhere around the 1800s, probably in the Spanish court, somebody decided to work out the difference between the really important ones and everything else. The important ones—this potentially happened under Charles V, but I am happy to be corrected by any member whose knowledge of history is far better than mine—were tied up with red tape and every other document was tied up with old-fashioned string. Initially, red tape simply identified the important documents; the important stuff that had to be looked at. Over time, “red tape” has developed to become an expression of the problem with government bureaucracy and governance. The question before the house at the start of the process, Hon Colin Tincknell, should have been: what is red tape? I have a personal suspicion that red tape is by definition any legislation or regulation with which a person disagrees.

That makes the discussion about which bits of red tape we should get rid of a bit complicated. Members might know that I spent some time in this Parliament in the place that shall not be named. In the interim, I spent some time working in the federal sphere. A number of times when I was in the federal sphere, governments had a crack at introducing red-tape reduction programs. I remember that a couple of weeks of federal Parliament were dedicated specifically to red-tape reduction. All the government bills in that period were dedicated to removing red tape. However, the question is: did that have a significant impact on the operations and day-to-day workings of Australians? The answer is that it had very little impact. That is because most of the red-tape legislation that was removed was legislation that had not been in use for many years. Red-tape reduction by government is usually the removal of legislation that has zero impact anyway. By all means, unused statutes should be taken off the statute book. That is a worthy cause. However, that should take a very short time. We should be careful about becoming too self-congratulatory about achieving those small steps. I say that because red-tape reduction in conversation is very different from the red-tape reduction legislative process.

What is red tape? For the most part, it is those things through which society functions. Those things become administration when they assist us, and red tape when they do not. I understand that. However, that makes it difficult for red-tape reduction to have a significant impact. The first thing that is missing from the motion is: how do we define red tape? The second thing is: why does red tape exist? I have a theory about red tape that has not yet been tested in the public arena. My theory is that, for the most part, regulations and legislation are put in place in reaction to events or issues. The classic example is that something occurs that some people do not like, and it needs to be controlled; therefore, a regulation or piece of legislation is put in place. That usually has an impact on something.

A good example was given earlier, but I will give another example. In the 1960s and 1970s, there was a particularly good Premier of the state of Western Australia by the name of Sir Charles Court. He was a bit of an icon. If members are not sure who he was, there is a statue of him on St Georges Terrace, and they can get up close and personal

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and see what he looked like. Sir Charles Court recognised that down my way, in the south west, the Collie River catchment was becoming particularly saline. Most people do not understand that Sir Charles Court, like a few others in the Liberal Party, was not an in-the-closet environmentalist. He had some pretty reasonable environmental credentials. He recognised that the salinity in the Collie River catchment was a problem caused by broadscale clearing. Therefore, the Sir Charles Court government put in place regulations to prevent broadscale clearing in the Collie catchment. Is that red tape? I can tell members that it was certainly red tape for the farming community in that catchment. Some of the older members of the community were prepared to hang, draw and quarter Sir Charles Court and his representatives and string them from the nearest tree, if it was still standing upright and had not been chopped down. It was absolutely red tape to that community at the time. The salinity in the Collie River catchment dropped, with some additional work, to the high 900 parts per million, or milligrams per kilogram, whichever way we like to calculate total dissolved salt. It is now back up to about 1 200 parts per million and is slowly rising. That was at a time when broadscale clearing of that catchment was banned. I say that because those regulations have not been changed. In fact, we have also put in place some broadscale replanting. I am not suggesting that pine is necessarily the most ideal tree to plant, but there is a market for it, and it is being planted at that catchment. Is that red tape? It probably is. However, this process needs to be managed. Therefore, we need to be cautious about the way forward.

Red tape that interrupts industry is immensely problematic and needs to be looked at. Therefore, the intent of Hon Colin Tincknell's motion that red tape should not unnecessarily burden industry and individuals is a philosophy that I agree with. However, it is too easy just to say I hate red tape, without understanding what red tape is and what we might do about it. I therefore suggest that the member rewords the motion and defines what he believes red tape is, and what he wants the motion to achieve, so that we can measure any success in reducing red tape. Subparagraph (e) refers to the effectiveness of the efforts by previous governments and committees to reduce red tape. I suggest that in moving the motion, the member has answered the question before he has even asked it. If the member is suggesting that red tape is a problem that we need to investigate, it will be pretty hard to say that jurisdictions have been particularly good at reducing red tape. The reason they have not been particularly good at reducing red tape may be because red tape is pretty difficult to reduce. That has become part of the problem. To some degree, we are all part of the problem as well. That is because when things do not go our way, the first thing we do is demand that government changes the rules.

I gave the example of the Collie River catchment. That was a good action by a very environmentally sound Premier in Sir Charles Court, a path leader in his time. I add that for some years, I studied in Brisbane. It took the state of Queensland decades to enact similar land-clearing legislation. The Queensland legislation was introduced in around 2000, when it had been introduced in this state some 30 years earlier. Queensland landowners were outraged. How dare the government bring in legislation to tell landowners what they could do on their own land. Is that red tape? Absolutely. Are we proposing to reverse that onus? In both Western Australia and Queensland, the capacity to clear land remains a contentious issue. That might be an extreme example. However, at a time when the rest of Australia was clearing 5 000 to 10 000 hectares a year broadscale, Queensland was clearing 100 000 hectares. Queensland is the stand-out state. It remains a state in which there is a fair bit of kick-back to government controlling what people are allowed to do on their own property.

We need to be careful about which bits of red tape we remove. We as parliamentarians and political parties play a role. The community and the media also play a role. When an issue arises, the first thing I usually see is a news article expressing outrage, with comments from the community that this can never be allowed to happen again, and somebody needs to do something about it. The opposition of the day then makes sure that it gets its point across that it is all the fault of the government of the day, and action is required. I have a philosophy that what an opposition calls red tape, a government calls legislation and regulation. It is too easy for an opposition to say that anything that is implemented by the government is problematic, but anything that its government introduced was required. Members on all sides of Parliament throw rocks at each other if the legislative program is not robust enough. I remember that when I was in the house that shall not be named, I went home early a few times because there was not enough legislation to debate. If the government of the day cannot present us with enough legislation to debate, it is a disaster. Maybe that is a good thing. Maybe not having a lot of legislation and regulation to occupy the Parliament is a pretty useful tool. We are all very good at making a bit of noise about this particular topic.

Hon Colin Tincknell: Should we not be discussing red tape?

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: We absolutely should be discussing red tape, but there is a problem. I think the honourable member's intention is absolutely honourable and good. I am hearing that the member wants to reduce the impost of regulation and legislation on business and individuals in Western Australia. I think that is an absolutely worthy cause. The problem we face is that this broad labelling of red tape suggests that somehow, as part of the process, the process is wrong. None of us normally has a problem with good legislation and good regulation. We put it in place because most of us are trying to make the world a better place—there are probably

exceptions to that. I have a problem with legislation and regulation designed to save people from themselves. I do not think that is a proper use of Parliament, but that is my personal opinion. I sit here on the far right wing of the Liberal Party espousing my economic views; that is fine. We are a broad Parliament so that we can get a range of opinions on that. The problem with an investigation that just says, “All red tape is bad” is that we do not define what red tape is. If we do not define what red tape is and how it gets there, it is very hard to do anything about it. The worst thing we could do would be to have another investigation into so-called red tape and deliver no change. When I worked at a federal level, I have to say that that was a pretty common outcome. We have to be able to elicit change. I apportion blame to all of us as a part of the process, and the media and everybody else.

In my remaining time, I will discuss the people who I think have the greatest impact and make it the most difficult. That, if they are not careful, is the public service. I will try very hard not to reference *Yes Minister* too often in my last six minutes! The reality is that we put legislation in place because we think a change is required. Often, as a Parliament, we are a little clumsy about it. We do it with good intent, but we do not always get it right. The process that we put in place has to be interpreted and applied by a public service. In my view, the public service is significantly further away from the needs of business and community than members of Parliament frequently are. It is very hard for people to get through to the public service and have an equal conversation. It is natural that this happens. If a public servant works in a department in which they have to say no a lot, they will become quite insular. It happens to members of Parliament as well. It is a natural outcome as a part of this process. It is also something that we have to try to minimise and break down as much as we possibly can.

I will use an example of agriculture, which was mentioned before. An issue will come up in the next little while that is worthy of members being aware of. Those who have been around the agricultural industry long enough will know that under the last Labor government—I apologise; I do not remember whether it was under Premier Carpenter or Premier Geoff Gallop—WorkSafe seemed to get a little empowered. In the last Labor government, there was a push on safety on tractors, squirrels and farm equipment —

Hon Darren West: Sorry, member.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Yes.

Hon Darren West: Are you suggesting it becomes less empowered when the coalition comes to power? Is that what I heard?

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: No. I am saying that it goes from a good standard level —

Hon Darren West: I think that’s what I heard. I think I heard that it is less —

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: No, no. The member needed to be awake during the process.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Adele Farina): Order, members! The member with the call has only a few minutes left.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Thank you, Madam Acting President. I am talking about the farming community, but particularly a lot of small farms and orchardists where margins are particularly tight. We all have an agenda—Labor, Liberal and everybody else—that we want people to be safe on their own farms and we want workers to be safe on those farms; we absolutely do. If we apply that piece of policy to the nth degree, most farms would become uneconomic because the requirements to guarantee absolute safety on some of those bits of farm equipment are probably beyond the capacity of most of those farms. I raise this issue, and it will be a bit topical, so I do not mind Hon Darren West’s interjection. The reality is that there is a new conversation, particularly about squirrels in the orchard industry. In my view, a compromise will have to be made between absolute bureaucratic control on the one hand and farm survival on the other. I raise this issue and I hope the Minister for Agriculture and Food takes a fairly sensible and pragmatic approach to it because it is not the workplace. I remember in the first round, the then head of WorkSafe WA, Mr Bartholomeus, was not a popular figure amongst farming communities in the south west land division. He may have had every good intent, but that is the difference between red tape and intent. We need to make sure that a pragmatic process goes on to get a pragmatic outcome. I raise this issue because I hope the minister for primary industries takes a look at this and accepts that safety is paramount, but it will impact on viability if it is made too difficult to get through the system.

Rather than another review of general red tape, I think it is incumbent upon us to look at this issue by issue and to ask at what point legislation and regulation are required, particularly to save people from themselves, or whether at a point it becomes paramount that whatever the impost, that impost needs to be applied. If we focus on red tape generally, I think we will be bogged down for years, as governments have been for years, and at the end of it we will not fully understand what the definition of red tape is and what we might do about it. It will become just another review. There are issues that face industry and business. The motion states —

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- (g) identifying alternative institutional arrangements and settings to reduce red tape, including providing subsidies or tax concessions to businesses to achieve outcomes currently achieved through regulation;

I am always nervous about any motion that says we should give handouts of money. The honourable member might want to reword that if he wants to have a real look at this issue. A kind of creeping socialism sneaks in when one says that a process requires handouts. It is creepy creeping socialism.

Hon Stephen Dawson interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: In some cases, let us call it galloping socialism, but I did not want to invoke interjection. It is a concern that if part of this examination is to look at how we might throw money at people, we might as well be the state government going into the next election chucking money hither and yon, because we will be no different. If the member could focus a motion on issues as they come forward that have a direct impact, I think he would have a better chance of getting results that will matter into the future.

HON DIANE EVERS (South West) [2.17 pm]: Like many other members, I have decided that this motion is a nice idea because I have also run into duplicate or outdated regulations and I acknowledge that we need to do something to address this issue, but as others have said, this motion is way too broad. It would take time to cover all that is referenced in the motion. I can just imagine the thousands of submissions that might come in; it would be unmanageable. I appreciate that the member said that he would put off the motion and have another think about how he will bring it forward.

If we are going to look at regulation and the way it emerges and try to solve it, we cannot do that by setting up a group, a committee or whatever to fix red tape. When I went through local government, we had sustainability officers hired by the council to fix sustainability across the council. They would spend a year or two spending some money, doing a report and counting everybody's rubbish. Then their position would end and out they would go, and the council would still be in the same place. Then the council would say, "We have to embed it across all the different departments." I guess that is where I am heading on this motion. It is not something that we can just lay on top of our whole legal system of laws and regulations and try to fix from one perspective. We have to look at how these regulations develop. The public service is part of that, but it is really how the legislation is drafted and then comes to Parliament for us to look at and review. I would be amazed if people in here were not aware of that and were not already trying to reduce the regulatory burden on people when legislation comes into this place. Often with amendments, we are adding to that burden. I have to say that I really understand why these regulations come up. It is not as though they are created to slow people down. In most cases, one person's red tape is another person's regulation that allows them to carry out what they want to do or stops them from being harmed. We need look only at the Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry. Before that inquiry began, we could probably go to just about any bank and be told, "Too much regulation is terrible and stops us from doing the things we are good at." But then an inquiry was held and revealed that maybe we need a few more checks in the system. To just say there is too much regulation does not mean it is wrong or out of place.

To fix this, we have to be willing to change. That involves the slow process I have commented on before. Someone within government needs to look at the issue, but, first, someone has to raise which regulation or legislation people are unhappy with because it causes them an undue burden. Then we need to look at how it can be solved. Is it just a matter of changing the regulation or do we need more legislation for it? The government has to then put that forward. In doing that, government members come into this house and open themselves up to another two to 20 hours of debate on legislation that is probably not needed and the process is slowed. But it is not intended to slow the process; it is intended to get it right, and I recognise that. However, I also see the games that go on in this place, in which, as the member said, within that two-party system, one party tries to stop the other from doing anything that might make it look good.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: We are very collegiate!

Hon DIANE EVERS: If we get closer to the scenario Hon Dr Steve Thomas referred to—he did not quite use the word "collaboration" but I think there was intent behind some of what he said—maybe we can address some of the over-regulation, if some collaborative work occurs in which all sides, including the crossbench, recognise that we need to make some changes but not just use up time doing so. I hope change can come forward in that respect.

Do not get me wrong; I think much regulation is there for a reason and I think a lot of regulation is not there that we need. I refer to planning regulations in local government and sheds and houses that are not built to a standard and deteriorate the neighbourhood amenity. That is a problem and that is why we have planning regulations and why we stick to them. Look at the building regulations and the apartments in Sydney that have been built in just the last 10 years that are not up to standard. For one reason or another, those buildings were approved. I am referring to the cladding with flammable material used in buildings that were destroyed by fire in the UK. How did this happen? It was due to a lack of regulation that allowed people to find a way of doing something that may

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be considered unconscionable. But that did not matter. They had the prospect of making a dollar out of it and that is business, which creates jobs, but when the buildings do not stand up to the test, it costs lives and causes other people financial issues. Those regulations are needed.

Today in the news we heard about bees. We have been talking about farmers and regulations, but when it comes to bees and quarantine issues, I love Australia's quarantine regulations and restrictions because we can say that other than Antarctica, we are the only continent without the varroa mite. Are we not lucky? It is even in New Zealand now. It does not happen easily. Plenty of regulations must be in place to make sure that people do not import things that carry that mite. We are in a very lucky position because we are still free of it. Meanwhile, to meet the pollination needs of many of their crops, the rest of the world must work on breeding a bee that is resistant to the varroa mite. It is not easy; it takes a lot of time and a lot of money. Nonetheless, Australia has been able to stop it.

The list goes on. Good regulation is needed for occupational health and safety. We are still talking about industrial manslaughter issues because deaths still occur in workplaces. My grandfather worked in the steel mills. The information written 50 or 80 years ago indicates how they were pumping away outrageously without many controls whatsoever. Without OHS, employees did their work and if they died on the job, someone else would be employed in their place. I am very pleased that we have moved on from that and have regulations in place. That is not to say that some regulations might not be quite onerous for some people. Some might be duplicated and do not achieve the intended results of the legislation. However, that is no reason to throw out the baby with the bathwater.

We have to work through legislation when it comes into this place and every one of us always has this in mind. Meanwhile, through the Streamline WA process—I hope that goes well—maybe members of both houses of Parliament who hear from constituents who have issues with regulations can make suggestions about some that we need to look at and thereby help the process to make change, rather than trying to hinder it because we do not want the government to look as though it has done something good. We have to work together and move forward in trying to get rid of some of the duplicated or outdated regulations. Possibly errors were made when legislation first went through. Someone might discover an unintended regulatory burden in that legislation, so it has to be revised. I do not think we can manage it by taking a broad spectrum approach to find where there is too much or duplicated regulation. We have to start from the beginning and that means the government bringing it in here as it is found and trying to address it.

Beware—regulations do not just happen. Most often they are put in place to stop people harming each other or themselves. In recent times we have realised that harm to the environment is harm to not only us but also future generations. Regulations are in place to ameliorate environmental concerns. There is a lot of regulation in the mining industry that the industry may not be happy with. Although I do not discount that some regulations might be incorrect, outdated or duplicated, most of the regulations are in place because without them, we would continue to face environmental nightmares across our landscape. From what I understand, there are 60 000 old mineshafts that have yet to be addressed. We need only hope that they do not cause any problems. Some of them are quite small holes because they were created well over 150 years ago. But we have to be aware that if there is unregulated mining activity, the miners will do what they need to do to make a profit. I would like to believe that mine owners and operators are starting to acknowledge that they have some sort of social responsibility to future generations of this state, but I am yet to believe that this is being put in place by their choice. I am yet to believe that they are stepping out of their way to do a better job than the regulations require.

We need to make regulations clear so that public servants can put them in place fairly across the community, particularly the business environment. A public servant should not have to make a decision about how regulations should be applied. We would like that to be clear in regulations so that public servants are not left with that burden of responsibility.

When we talk about red tape, I prefer we talk about regulation. It may be necessary or duplicated regulation, but to use the populist term of red tape, which I believe was originally “red ribbon” on historical documents —

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: It was.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Red ribbon probably does not sound as hard hitting, though.

Hon Colin Tincknell: We could call it red ribbon tape.

Hon DIANE EVERS: There you go.

I think we have to call it out for what it is and make sure that we do not perpetuate the problems by imposing more unnecessary regulatory burdens, but continue to create regulations that we need to protect this landscape and our state for future generations and so that we can protect people from those who may harm them if those regulations are not in place. As we go back over the old ground of what is out there, we see that committees have attempted this before. We have reports. We know what the problems are. Let us try to fix those problems and work with Streamline WA to make it the best that it can be, and actually start to address problems as they come up and are

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delivered to us in new legislation or regulations. Let us make it work so that we address the issues without creating more problems and situations in which unscrupulous people can do things that harm other people, themselves or the planet.

HON RICK MAZZA (Agricultural) [2.30 pm]: I was not going to speak on this motion, but I thought I might contribute a bit to it. A lot has been said about the fact that we need red tape, and I agree with that. Certainly, regulations are in place to protect us from biosecurity breaches or to make sure that the environment is not damaged too severely when development takes place. There has been a lot of discussion around this issue in recent times, with the federal government introducing a program to reduce red tape to make sure that the mining industry and others are able to get their approvals through in a timely fashion. *The West Australian* is also running a bit of a campaign at the moment on red tape reduction.

I appreciate Hon Colin Tincknell bringing this motion to the house. It is about the excessive, unnecessary, frustrating red tape around which a lot of government departments begin to build ivory towers. There is excessive red tape, things become ridiculous and frustrating, and it puts off businesses from being able to effectively and efficiently undertake what they do. We have seen examples of this in the liquor industry. A lot of liquor licence applications have been put in and people have been frustrated for months and months, if not years on end, trying to get their approvals through and stumbling block after stumbling block is thrown in the way.

Do we need red tape and—as often quoted—green tape? Yes, we do. But I think we should be constantly monitoring red tape to see whether it is necessary and effective, and whether there is a streamlined process that could be used to ensure that when people want to undertake business, such as building a new house, or whatever it might be, they are not unnecessarily delayed, put through unnecessary expense, or unnecessarily frustrated so that they are put off the idea altogether.

The motion before us is a very, very wideranging motion that covers a lot of areas. It is probably a pretty big piece to bite off and try to work our way through. Maybe if the member had focused it a little more, it might have been easier for us to support the motion. But I certainly appreciate the sentiment of the motion. The government, the opposition and all members of this place should be watching out for examples of situations in which red tape is unnecessary, excessive and ineffective, and which government departments and others are building empires around unnecessary red tape. That could involve WorkSafe, environmental, biosecurity, building, mining or approval issues. In some situations, it can take years for miners to get environmental and other approvals. In some cases, companies and enterprises are put off altogether, which means that the state loses jobs, revenue and development. Such processes could be managed in a much better way to ensure that they are efficient and effective. With those few words, I will listen to the reply by the mover of the motion.

HON COLIN TINCKNELL (South West) [2.33 pm] — in reply: I really appreciate the contributions made by members today. I am fully aware that I was looking for what would be a very onerous committee. Part of the reason that I did not, in the end, reduce the scope of the inquiry was that when I spoke to various members about reducing it, no-one could really give me any guidance about the areas in which it should be reduced. Even if they could, the information I got was that it was not going to be supported anyway.

I appreciate members' contributions today because they have clearly defined that this is a big and important issue that is very, very difficult to solve. It is an issue that will take years to improve. I am very proud of this institution, and this house in particular, and I am honoured to serve here. But I also feel at times that a cultural change needs to be made—for not only the Labor Party or the Liberal Party, but also the minor parties. I am part of the crossbench, and One Nation prides itself on discussing and bringing up subjects that other parties sometimes just want to avoid because they are unpalatable, too difficult or too hard. I would have reduced the scope of the motion if I had thought I would get support and still get a select committee. I realised, as I talked to the parties, that I was not going to get that support, so I left the motion from subparagraphs (a) to (i) as they were because every part was important. I believed that this house of review and this debate needed to highlight all the areas in which we can improve.

I have spoken to many members, and I have also spoken to other people who have given me fantastic advice. I will be taking note of some of that advice and using my time over the next 15 to 18 months in this Parliament to try to reduce red tape where it is not needed and to cut out duplication. I am on a committee that puts me in a position to ask questions of various departments and organisations to make an effort to reduce red tape where needed, so I will certainly look at that and make use of it when I can. We get a chance to ask questions, and a lot of my questions will be aimed at that area.

I did not get a chance to fully finish off my address at the start. It is a big subject and I will not go back over many things. I just want to talk about that change of culture. Honourable members have pointed out that the red tape is there for good reason, and we all know that; so is the green tape. However, we are very good at adding but very poor at reducing, and that is something that this house needs to take responsibility for, including me and members of the government, the crossbench and the opposition. We need to take responsibility for that. It has been

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Hon Colin Tincknell; Hon Tjorn Sibma; Hon Colin Holt; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Diane Evers; Hon Rick Mazza

too hard, and we have failed in that area. That is shown by the figures that have been quoted today. It is a major encumbrance on industry that costs Western Australian jobs. Hon Diane Evers said that some red tape is very good; so did Hon Dr Steve Thomas, and I totally agree. I am fortunate enough to have worked —

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: I didn't say it was good; I said it was necessary on occasions.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: Yes. I have worked with mining companies and in the last two or three years, I have been speaking to a lot of people in the Agricultural Region and the south west, and this is a subject that comes up every day. I gave one or two examples—I have another 10 here I could read out—of very heavy-handed red tape.

Question put and negatived.