

BARNETT GOVERNMENT — PERFORMANCE

Motion

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [4.30 pm]: On behalf of the member for Mandurah, I move —

That this house condemns the Barnett government for its many failures over the past four years, including in the areas of —

- (i) service delivery;
- (ii) broken promises; and
- (iii) cost-of-living increases.

Before I start, I would like to put on record in *Hansard* that it is the first birthday of my twins, Alessandro and Lucia.

Several members: Happy Birthday!

MS R. SAFFIOTI: Thank you. They are gorgeous little children. Of course, I also mention their sister, Grace, so that when she reads *Hansard*, she has not been missed out.

In my electorate of West Swan, there are clear examples of poor service delivery, broken promises and massive increases in the cost of living. I want to go through each of those components, and other members on this side of the chamber will also speak to the motion. I want to talk first of all about service delivery.

We hear lots about the law and order agenda of this government. As was alluded to by the member for Southern River, people in the state do not feel safe. One of the reasons they do not feel safe is the lack of police on the street. This government closed the police station in Ballajura. I am very glad that one of the first commitments made by the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Rockingham, was to build a new police station in the Ballajura–Malaga area. The closure of police stations throughout the metropolitan area makes people feel less safe. It is as simple as that. The idea that the government should close police stations and not replace them with other effective community policing methods means that people feel less safe. One of the worst decisions—it was another bad decision—by this government was the closure of the Ballajura Police Station. Again, the government did it without any consultation or plan. It just made a decision to close the police station that the people of Ballajura had fought for so long to get. As I said, people feel less safe. Basically, there is less visible policing on the street. That is the feedback that I and many of my colleagues get all the time. Despite the tough talk, the reality on the streets does not match it.

The second point I want to talk about is broken promises. Again, in my electorate of West Swan, the government’s biggest broken promise in this term has been the failure to deliver on the promise to build the Ellenbrook rail line. As the Leader of the Opposition said recently, this broke the hearts of many people in Ellenbrook. Many people moved to the area on the expectation that there would be a rail line. All the feedback that I am getting currently indicates that people dearly want a rail line. It contrasts very clearly with what I heard from the other side in the first few years of this term of government: people do not want a rail service; they are happy with buses. There have been some claims from members opposite that the people in Ellenbrook do not need a car because the public transport is so good. The feedback I get from residents indicates that that is not the case. They are very angry that this government broke that promise. What astounds me about that broken promise is, firstly, that the Premier has never admitted it or apologised to the people of Ellenbrook for it; and, secondly, some of the justifications. The government said that there are not enough people; there may be eventually, but there are not enough people now. It has never tabled its feasibility studies. It has made some ludicrous claims in the paper about population forecasts that do not reflect any of the census data or information that is available in the City of Swan population forecasts. I have said it before and I will say it again: in the north east corridor, there is a significant population now and there will be significant population growth over the next five to 10 years. This information is off the top of my head, so I hope I am right. Within five years, 47 000 people are expected to be living in Ellenbrook, Aveley and The Vines. Another 33 000 people are expected to be living in the Lord Street growth corridor over the next five to 10 years. The north Ellenbrook industrial area and proposed residential estate are on the agenda. I have heard some big numbers in relation to the proposed residential area—possibly another 40 000 people. Depending on the route of a proposed rail line, it would pick up the populations in the Altone Road area and in Beechboro and another 2 000 or 4 000 in Bennett Springs. There is the existing population hub of another 20 000 in Ballajura and of course the Malaga industrial estate and the suburb of Morley. Although the government throws around population forecasts of about 50 000 to 60 000, I get to 130 000 or 140 000 very quickly, excluding the north Ellenbrook area. As I have said, the idea that the population is not large enough is not correct. This government has never tabled any information or proven anything to back up its claim. It is a massive broken promise.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 14 November 2012]

p8596b-8609a

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Tony O'Gorman

The government can spend over \$300 million of taxpayers' money on a project that will allow an investor to have a peppercorn lease for 50 years with very little return to Western Australian taxpayers to show for it, but then it argues about feasibility studies and cost-benefit analyses for the Ellenbrook rail line. It can spend \$500 million on making the Swan River meet the city, instead of making the buildings meet the river, but it argues about the economics of a rail line to Ellenbrook. What are the priorities of this government?

I want to touch on another commitment that was made last year about traffic lights at the intersection of Lord Street and Reid Highway. A commitment was made that those traffic lights would be finished by the end of this year. We are in the middle of November and there are about six weeks to go to the end of the year, yet no work has been undertaken. We got a flyer from the member for Swan Hills saying that the project is underway. I will put that aside for the moment. The commitment made by the Minister for Transport was that the project would be finished by the end of this year, yet there is absolutely no work to show for it. Again, a commitment was made to the people of the area and there is nothing to show for it. There has been no delivery, just false commitments.

The last issue I want to talk about today in relation to this motion is the cost of living. We spoke yesterday about the fact that the cost-of-living assistance payment is not reaching people in submetered properties. In my area hundreds of elderly people are not receiving this new cost-of-living assistance payment. We heard the Treasurer yesterday say that it is an important issue and he is dealing with it. We need to be dealing with it now and we need the solution now. The commitment was made back in April or May. Five or six months on, people are still not receiving that payment. Many of the people who should be receiving this payment, and who are the most deserving, are not receiving this payment. I have examples of other rebates that have been removed from residents of long-stay caravan parks. Another energy subsidy that existed is now not being paid. This time that is a failure of Synergy, I think, to pass on a subsidy under whatever system it has. Again, this government is not fixing it. Not only have people in WA had to endure huge increases in electricity, water and gas prices, but many people are missing out on the allowances that help them pay for those increases. We believe the government should be acting now to ensure that people in WA are getting the relevant allowances they deserve.

Over the past four years in the electorate of West Swan we have seen failures in service delivery, such as the closure of Ballajura Police Station. We have seen significant broken commitments, such as the failure to deliver on the Ellenbrook rail line. We have also seen broken commitments on road priorities. Another road priority on which the government has not delivered is a double right-turn lane from Reid Highway into Malaga Drive. The government announced two years ago that funding was to be dedicated to widen Reid Highway to allow for an extra turning lane from Reid Highway into Malaga Drive. Nothing eventuated. There is no funding there. The funding from 2012-13 in the black spot program evaporated. No work has been undertaken on the intersection of Lord Street and Reid Highway even though that project was meant to be finished by late this year, to use the Minister for Transport's words.

Examples of misplaced priorities can be seen when we compare the electorate of West Swan with the city. An amount of \$500 million will be spent on Elizabeth Quay. The government had the idea to build a stadium on a contaminated site on former swamp land that is basically very difficult to access either through public transport or by road. The government needs to spend between \$400 million and \$500 million extra to build a stadium when it could have delivered a perfect world-class stadium at the Kitchener Park site. The idea that the government should spend that \$400 million just because it wants to is absolutely ridiculous when we can see where that money could be better spent in the suburbs. The electorate of West Swan provides clear examples of the government's failed service delivery, broken promises and massive increases in the cost of living.

MR A.J. WADDELL (Forrestfield) [4.44 pm]: We are now more than four years into this government and I can honestly say disappointment is probably its theme. It was elected on a great lie. The great lie was that it would deliver lower electricity prices. That was one of the key things it promised. What did it deliver? It delivered 62 per cent in increases. That has cost a lot of people a lot of money. That has sucked dry the discretionary spend of many people within my electorate. That has meant those people are unable to go out to dinners. They are unable to spend in the local stores. It is causing a contraction of our economy. That is the big lie on which this government was elected. That is the big lie that it has perpetrated on the people of Forrestfield and the people of Western Australia.

The government will tell us that it is a good government. It will tell us that it get things done. It will tell us it builds things and makes decisions. It advertises its great achievements about moving WA forward. But really what do we have to show for it? What exactly will the people of Western Australia be able to point to as the Barnett government's primary achievement? Without any question whatsoever the biggest achievement of this government is its debt—\$18 billion. That debt will stand as a memorial to this government for a decade or so as

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successive governments try to get back in control of the state’s finances. The government is strangling the future. It is strangling the ability of the state to respond to things that occur in the future. It is strangling our ability to invest in future projects. It is holding us back. It has spent like the proverbial drunken sailor, but it has very little to show for it. The government brought out a public transport plan that was a vision of public transport within the metropolitan area to take us through the next 20 years. Do members know what the government scheduled for change in my seat of Forrestfield? Absolutely zero. It completely missed us off the map. Nothing will be delivered to us there. The only things the government has delivered to us are pain and a higher cost of living.

I turn to road transport. Our roads are congested and clogged. Has the government delivered anything to improve that? Nothing whatsoever. Not one iota. This government is convinced that it is right in trying to close down the tier 3 grain freight rail, which will see more trucks on the road tearing through my electorate, further adding to congestion and further pushing other trucks and other traffic on to suburban streets and further being a problem for the people of Forrestfield and the surrounding suburbs. What else did members opposite do to get elected? One thing they did not do was tell us that they would be sending the services of the new Midland Health Campus to the private sector. Members opposite never told us anything about that, because I can tell members that had my electorate been aware of that, I would not have been sitting on the kind of margin I was sitting on. Every day people come to me and say that they are concerned about the quality of services that will be delivered to them and that they want our hospitals to be in public hands. The government did not tell us about that. That was another deception. The government told us it would bring 500 more police onto our streets. Did it do that at all? The government told us that it would fix hooning. Has the government fixed hooning? Does anyone in this place have a happy story to tell about hooning in their streets? Have those great laws that members opposite said would fix the problem made one iota of a difference?

Mr P. Abetz: There is 25 per cent less reports in my electorate.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Yes, probably because no-one is answering the phone when people ring the call centre! That is another complaint that I get.

One of the things that this government tried to do in my electorate was deliver a detention centre into Kenwick for intellectually handicapped people with violent histories. Hon Helen Morton announced one day that she would construct this detention centre on a residential street. We are not talking about down the road from residents. We are talking about five metres from the nearest house where a three-year-old could be playing in the front yard. Did the government consult with the community? No. Did it intend to consult with the community? Yes. The minister told me she intended to consult with the community. She was going talk to them about what colour the fence should be because that was the only thing that was up for negotiation.

Ms R. Saffioti: It would increase house prices!

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Yes, it was going to improve the value of property on that street having a detention centre for intellectually disabled dangerous criminals! The minister said, “We’re not going to compromise. The decision has been made and we are not going to back down.” The community was not going to have that. The community came out in numbers and said, “We’re not going to put up with this.” We got people out signing petitions. There was a lot of chitchat going around, and we got the minister to do a full 180-degree backflip in absolute record time. Why? It was because this government thought it could dump its trash into Kenwick. This government thought that those of us who live in the eastern suburbs do not matter—out of sight, out of mind—and that we will take whatever is dished up because this government does not have to deliver services out to us; it just delivers us its problems. But the government was absolutely wrong. The community stood up and said, “No; we are not taking it.” Before we knew it, the minister had to back down or else she was going to crush the dreams of her nephew.

Elizabeth Quay, Elizabeth Quay, Elizabeth Quay—again, those of us who live in the eastern suburbs understand what traffic congestion is about. We understand how difficult it is to get from one side of this city to the other. It might not seem like an important issue to those members who live on the western side of the city. It might seem that those members do not have to come over to the eastern side other than to go to their new football stadium, if they ever build it. However, it does matter to those of us who live in the east. The idea of closing down that link on Riverside Drive really offends people in the eastern suburbs. We know it will be a disaster. We know that the tunnel will become incredibly congested—it already is—and that 10 to 15 minutes will be added to daily commutes for many people living in the eastern suburbs. It is not so much that this government is wasting money on a fanciful little project simply to build a monument to itself; it is the fact that this government is wasting half a billion dollars and inconveniencing the rest of us for it! Comeuppance is coming on that.

Dr K.D. Hames: Can I ask what your government was going to do when it built that plan that was put forward —

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Mr A.J. WADDELL: Absolutely. The minister is dead right. This is 2008 all over again! The Carpenter government was thrown out because people thought the Premier in that government was arrogant. People thought there was a city-centric focus in development. People thought the boom was being squandered. Does that sound familiar to the minister? If that does not sound familiar to the minister, that is what happened in 2008, that is what will happen in 2013 and that is why the Barnett government will be a one-term government. Frankly, it cannot happen soon enough because we can no longer afford to carry the debt burden that this government continues to deliver. We cannot afford to have housing waiting lists blow out to seven years. What was this government's solution to that issue? It just abolished the waiting list and had only a priority waiting list! Let us stick our heads in the sand and ignore the fact that people are living in their cars and in tents in front yards. What is this government doing about housing affordability? Government members talk about their statistics and whatever, but the reality is that rental property has waiting lines. We are no longer creating the opportunities for young people to move out of the family home. Debt, debt, debt—and what does this government do? It sells off the farm. It is selling off the farm in the Ord. It has sold out our agricultural industry to genetically modified foods; it sent it off to Monsanto. This government has failed to invest in local jobs. We had a great opportunity to create a mandate to ensure local work in our economy. What did the government do? It did not want to go there. This government is not about jobs. It is about selling off the farm, poisoning our food, wasting money, digging holes in the ground, privatising, failing to provide public transport, increasing the cost of living, and basically destroying life in the eastern suburbs. Frankly, 8 March cannot come on soon enough for the people of Forrestfield and the people of Western Australia.

MR F.A. ALBAN (Swan Hills) [4.54 pm]: I have a message for the member for Forrestfield. He should come to Swan Hills because we have none of those problems out there. With or without the train, Ellenbrook is expanding and doing very, very well. I understand a boom is coming. Apparently, 150 000 people will move into West Swan or Ellenbrook—and they will probably live in tents because I am not sure who will build 150 000 houses, but tents will possibly help it to happen!

I need to touch on the train issue as I will probably get “choo choo-ed” at some stage during my speech. It is quite true that the train discussion is the bane of Ellenbrook's history. A rather awful story appeared on the Channel Seven news that literally trashed the whole of Ellenbrook because of the lack of a train. I will cover aspects of the train issue in my speech. The eastern route of the train, which is called the yellow route, will run south from Ellenbrook besides the existing Lord Street, across Reid Highway and into Bassendean train station. At the moment, that is serviced by buses every 10 minutes. Notwithstanding that people claim the train may be more comfortable, the fact is that they would still need to catch a bus to get on the train. Whether a person hops onto a train or a bus in Aveley or Ellenbrook, they would need to make that move. All of that service is provided—notwithstanding that it is not a train. Here we have the Ellenbrook–Bassendean train line. A lot of great stories have been told about the train being the end-all for Ellenbrook. Why is it that 82 per cent of the people of Ellenbrook surveyed would not use that train? Why do members think that is the case? Does the train go west? No, it does not. Does the train go east? No, it does not. It goes to Bassendean. Does it go north, south, east or west? It goes in only one direction; it goes only to Bassendean. For this privilege, the four-year preliminary cost of this great expenditure is somewhere between \$630 million or \$920 million. I expect after four years we will be looking at the higher end of \$950 million. I do sums in a very, I suppose, country style. I think to myself that the \$950 million would buy me perhaps 40 secondary schools. Why on earth would I, as the member for Ellenbrook, prefer a train to Bassendean to connect up the rest of the rail system, when that trip is already being serviced by brand-new buses that we provided? What did we have before that? We had a couple of really old rattlers doing the service every half an hour. Our service now runs every 10 minutes.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: The member for West Swan has made a very compelling case. Based on her figures, she will win the seat of West Swan, and all she has to do is stand by her word that this train is the most-needed project for the whole of West Swan. The member may have forgotten this: the only problem is that the train, unless she is going for the western route, which is the orange route that will go to Bayswater, will cost \$1.1 billion—but she has lots of money so perhaps she can do that one—and has she thought of what the train will do running through —

Point of Order

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member for Swan Hills is referring to an official document and I ask him to table it.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: There is no official document. Actually, it was tabled in Parliament last week. I have all my scribbling's over the top. However, if you, Mr Acting Speaker, would like me to get an original version —

Extract from Hansard

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p8596b-8609a

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Tony O’Gorman

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.P. O’Gorman): Member, just continue with your speech. I did not rule there was a point of order. There was no point of order.

Debate Resumed

Mr F.A. ALBAN: Thank you.

There is a problem. The member said to me just a minute ago that 30 000 people will be living in West Swan lining both sides of Lord Street—in tents, of course, because nobody will build 150 000 houses in five years! I have heard this before: West Swan, Ellenbrook and Swan Hills will be so full that people will not be able to get out of their car because the doors will be jammed. I heard this story as a councillor of the City of Swan for six years, and I have heard the same story as a member of Parliament for four years. These stories about this huge expanse of people in West Swan have been going around. Tell me—why does the opposition think Ellenbrook was excised from Swan Hills and put into West Swan? Is it because West Swan had grown so big that it had to have more people or is it because West Swan had not grown at all in a term? I think it is the latter. There is not all this huge expansion.

I now go into positive. I say to the Labor government that if it thinks —

Several members interjected.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: I say to the alternative government, that if it thinks that the Ellenbrook train is such a big deal and a winner for the member for West Swan, come out and put the people of Ellenbrook out of their misery. I will applaud the Labor Party for that; I have no problem. I would be very happy for the people of Ellenbrook for the Labor Party do so. The Labor Party should not do this promise thing—campaigning and saying that it will do it when in actual fact it will not. That is the end of my Ellenbrook train discussion.

I will now talk about things that are happening that the people of Ellenbrook and Swan Hills would prefer instead of the train for the same amount of money—that is, the Perth–Darwin highway. I will refer to committed state government projects. I will say this very slowly, so it is painful. Perth–Darwin highway will open, as the member said, a huge tract of land.

Mr P. Papalia: Where’s the money coming from?

Mr F.A. ALBAN: It is a federal road—where does the opposition think the money will come from? Santa Claus? It is a federal road; have a think. Where does the opposition think it is coming from? Santa perhaps? Christmas is coming, so there we go. The Perth–Darwin highway has \$8 million of state government funding committed to it for planning and design into 2014. It will be federally funded through the Nation Building program. The opposition has heard the minister speak on this matter more than once. Members opposite do not need to take my word on this. It is committed to by the state government. It is a state government priority. In Midland recently the Premier said this is a state government priority. That has come from the top man, not from me; the opposition does not have to listen to me.

The member for West Swan complained about the Reid Highway–Lord Street intersection. The Labor government certainly did not do it in its time, did it? Now the opposition hopes we do not —

An opposition member interjected.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: It is on our list, member; sometimes contractors take a bit of extra time and design takes a bit of time. Member for West Swan, the cheque for the roundabout for West Swan Road and Gngara Road has been handed to the City of Swan. Did the member for West Swan not see the article about the cheque being handed to the City of Swan in the paper? I know she looks at the paper, of course.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: Does she claim there is a problem with that one? So here we are. There is a state government list —

Ms R. Saffioti: Do you really think I care about what you’re saying? I mean, seriously —

Mr F.A. ALBAN: I am enjoying it.

AECOM has been awarded a \$630 000 tender for design work for the bus rapid transit system between Ellenbrook and the Bassendean train station. That is a commitment and it is underway.

The other thing the member for West Swan would see if she went into her electorate often enough—that does not mean sending one of her staff members in her car to park in the main street, but coming herself—are the flashing warning lights that have just been installed. That was never going to happen before. It was said it could not be done, it would not be done and it was complicated. But they are up and working.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 14 November 2012]

p8596b-8609a

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Tony O'Gorman

Also, in the other part of my electorate—Ellenbrook is not all of Swan Hills—the work on Great Eastern Highway through the main street of Mundaring has been done. The state government provided \$770 000 to the Shire of Mundaring to upgrade pedestrian crossings and to address safety issues in Mundaring. My next announcement is about a very small thing, but a very important one. For years Swan Christian College on Great Northern Highway practically begged previous governments to do something about safety. There will be LED flashing lights opposite the school, and the Minister for Transport will come to visit us shortly—he has just walked in—to see what other alternatives are available on Great Northern Highway. What a project! There are 1 500 students at that school; no-one has ever looked after them before. The Liberal–National government is doing it.

Mr P. Papalia: Well done; you're a good local member.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: Good local member.

That is just the beginning of some of the wonderful things we have done. The LED flashing lights—the LED lights—have been a great success throughout the state. Not only will we have them on Great Northern Highway, we will also install them at Sawyers Valley Primary School in Sawyers Valley.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members.

Point of Order

Mr P.T. MILES: The members on this side of the house heard not only the member for West Swan, but the member for Forrestfield, in silence.

Mr A.J. Waddell: No, you didn't.

Mr P.T. MILES: Yes, we did. We listened to them speaking earlier in this debate, yet while the member for Swan Hills has been on his feet, there has been constant interjection from the other side. Mr Acting Speaker might like to bring the house to order.

Several members interjected.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Mr Acting Speaker —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.M. Britza): Before I take the point of order from the member for Joondalup, members are not to speak out when a point of order is being taken. I need to hear that point of order in silence.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Further to the point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the fact that I was in the chair since the start of this debate. I allowed a fair amount of latitude for members of both sides, because there was quite an interaction and it seems to be continuing in the same vein. Maybe that is my fault; I should have shut them all down, but the interjection has been coming from both sides and there is no point of order in my view!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Joondalup. First of all, I think the point of order has merit. I want the spirit of debate to carry on, but I do not want the interjections being shouted across the floor. If a member shouts across the floor, I will call them—both sides.

Debate Resumed

Mr F.A. ALBAN: Mr Acting Speaker, I missed out on just one other project —

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean, I call you.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: I missed out on mentioning one other very important project, which did not cost a huge amount of money, if we call \$2 million not a huge amount of money; namely, the upgrade of Toodyay Road, which is interesting and very important to me. Virtually on the day I got elected, the late Tony Trlin came to see me—he was a great Midland builder—and said to me, “Frank, if you can do anything in your time, can you please seek the upgrade of Toodyay Road?” Even though he is not here to see it, Mr Acting Speaker, I am pleased to have been part of it. As I think this is important, I will read what the previous Labor government said about the intersection of Toodyay Road and Lewis Jones Cross. This is from a question asked by Hon Donna Faragher to Hon Sally Talbot on Thursday, 21 February 2008. It states —

The intersection of Toodyay Road and Lewis Jones Cross is currently ranked 704th in the state on a crash frequency basis, which means that 703 sites have a higher priority for improvement works ... Motorists have a good level of sight distance on all approaches. Main Roads currently has no plans to widen that section of Toodyay Road. However, it will continue to be monitored and consideration for

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p8596b-8609a

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any improvements will be given together with other priority projects across the state as part of the normal budget development processes.

That means that that was a bit of a fob-off. Therefore, I am particularly happy that this is one of the infrastructure projects.

Just a minute ago I mentioned what a great success the LED lights have been throughout the state, and I know that government members are very happy with them. I just mentioned a second ago that Swan Christian College will get LED lights, as will Sawyers Valley —

Ms M.M. Quirk: That is LED not “leadlights”.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: LED lights.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Those windows are leadlights.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: L-E-D lights—sorry; my apologies.

Not only will we get them at Swan Christian College and the Sawyers Valley school, but they are at Bullsbrook District High School on Chittering Road. These lights are also at Upper Swan Primary School opposite Great Northern Highway, where we not only have LED lights, but we managed to restrict speed of the traffic, which supposedly could not be done on a national highway, to 60 kilometres an hour, so that has been done as well. There are also LED lights at Gidgegannup Primary School to add to the list of achievements in the Swan Hills electorate. On top of that, they were such a success that the same LED lights are now in the Mundaring town centre to stop the trucks on Great Eastern Highway from speeding through Mundaring. That is just the beginning.

I like to compare achievements. Members cannot say, “I’m such a hero, and we have done so well,” unless they compare themselves. I thought it was appropriate tonight—I can table this; I have a nice clean copy, although I have scribbled on another one—to present a copy of the official Labor promises and what it said it had achieved in its two terms of government. Mr Acting Speaker, you would know that we have been in government for four years, one term. The previous government was in office for two terms. Listed are maybe eight or 10 achievements delivered by Labor. I am glad the former Minister for Police is here. It says, “Delivered by Labor: the \$4.5 million Ellenbrook Fire Station”. The former minister is not concentrating, but I am pretty sure, unless there are two Ellenbrook fire stations, that I saw it being built during our term. That is just the beginning. I have shaded them in yellow so that members can see them from a distance. It also says, “Labor—Delivering: the \$25 million Stage 2 development of Ellenbrook Secondary College”. Again, I am pretty sure I saw it being built during our term. I am pretty sure that the former Minister for Education opened it. It also says, “Labor—Delivering”—which could mean anything—“\$1.6 million works program at the Upper Swan Primary School”. I am pretty sure that I was there during it. It was a great project: we managed to not only put in the LED lights that I mentioned a minute ago but also upgrade the whole of the entry and exit to the schools to make that school safer. That is just the start. I have mentioned one secondary school. We have totally upgraded Bullsbrook secondary school as well. That makes two secondary schools in four years.

We have also built two new primary schools, one in Malvern Springs and one in Aveley. A story that probably not all members know is that the campaign for air conditioning in schools in the state where they were not provided started at the Ellen Stirling Primary School. We were the first school to contact the minister. We finally got air conditioners for all of Ellenbrook, which now is a standard inclusion. From that campaign we managed to get \$52 million committed so that we would get air conditioners throughout the state.

Mr A.J. Waddell interjected.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: The member did his grievance six months after that.

Mr A.J. Waddell interjected.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: Yes. If the member wants me to check that out, I will get him the initialled copy by the minister to prove that. The other alternative might be that in the first six months, the minister had not done anything.

As I said, the most underrated thing we have done for Ellenbrook is provide a brand-new fleet of buses. Members should not come up with the story that Ellenbrook has trouble with public transport service. At peak times, they go past every 10 minutes; at off-peak times, it is every 15 minutes. Guess which government provided free transport for seniors during off-peak hours and weekends. I do not think it was the previous government. I could go on; I have not started yet.

None of those, I see, as my greatest achievement. The greatest achievement was the most requested thing when I was doorknocking. Like the member said she was doing, I doorknocked some 8 000 houses in Ellenbrook before

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 14 November 2012]

p8596b-8609a

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Tony O’Gorman

the election. Did they ask about the train? No, they did not. They asked me to please get rid of the Ellenbrook covenant that the previous Labor government could not be bothered about. Why? The elderly ladies at the shopping centre said it was costing them between \$50 and \$60 more per weekly shopping basket to shop at Woolworths in Ellenbrook instead of going all the way to Midland. The whole of that electorate was being hijacked by this covenant that stopped any competition. Our government managed to bypass that covenant. We now have 60 new shops. There is competition from Coles and Woolworths. We were also able to allow the Dome complex to bypass that covenant as well. The minister comes often to visit. That complex has 14 shops. The commercial precinct in Ellenbrook was a ghost town. The people bought the land. I might need an extension, Mr Acting Speaker.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr F.A. ALBAN: LWP was selling commercial land. It said, “Commercial land—come to Ellenbrook. It’s a growth place.” When they bought that land, they built premises and got permits from the City of Swan. It was all built there. The covenant stopped them having any tenants whatsoever. So when members of the opposition go to Ellenbrook and tell people what a wonderful government they were, the people there have not forgotten the previous two terms of Labor government, which delivered virtually nothing.

I do not have time tonight to go through the whole list. Those are just some of the things that have happened in this Swan Hills electorate. If it is all miserable from the member for Forrestfield’s point of view, he should come and join us in Swan Hills because the place is going fantastically. Ellenbrook is growing at the rate of at least 2 000 people a year. I am looking forward to tent city, where 150 000 people will move into Swan Hills and Ellenbrook in the next five years.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [5.15 pm]: I rise to support this motion that this house condemns the Barnett government for its many failures over the past four years. I begin by considering the failure to provide safety and security on our streets. This is an issue that people constantly raise with me. They were led to believe that the Barnett government was going to make some radical legislative and resourcing changes so that they could feel safer on our streets. Unfortunately, that has not been the case at all. Only this afternoon I heard from a hardware store in my electorate in the central area of Gosnells, on Lissiman Street, where there has been a serious problem. A 000 call was put out because somebody was being pursued by a number of people who were attacking them. This person dived into a shop for protection. People outside were throwing rocks at the shop. This happened at 12.55 this afternoon. The shopkeeper naturally phoned 000, and it was not until 4.00 pm that police were able to respond to that 000 call. All that time to respond to a 000 call when clearly there was a serious threat to people’s safety. They were being threatened by rock throwers. It was a very dangerous situation, yet there was such a long delay. I heard that police had other calls as well and were distracted, but this just demonstrates how we do not have the resources to deal with emergencies at this time on a Wednesday afternoon. Clearly, the resourcing for police services in our area is not adequate. That is an example of the failure that this government has brought upon us.

There are other things that this government has let us down on. I begin by quoting one of my constituents, Mr Stan Smith of Colony Court in Thornlie. Recently at a street corner meeting that I held on 30 October, Stan said to me, “I don’t know how Barnett can stand there and not feel the pain of the people. Tell him to come down here to Thornlie and try and live on my pension. He is wasting money on an office when there is a lot to be done in housing and education. That should come before that. Come out of your Hale House, fella.” That is Stan’s comment on this government’s priorities. He is absolutely right. Stan mentioned the housing situation. Look at the people who are desperate for housing and the rents that they are having to pay. It is getting out of control. Look at the queues that people have to go through, the bidding that goes on to get a rental property and the actual quality of that housing that people are having to pay anything from \$350 a week for. It has a housing crisis that is reaching extreme proportions. Clearly something has to be done about that.

Stan also mentioned the issue of education. Schools have done many years’ service. Thornlie Senior High School is coming up to 42 years old. The school is looking tired and worn out. It needs a refurbishment. This is a school of choice in the area. Many people want to send their children to Thornlie Senior High School. There are good courses and good teaching and the place is well run, but the quality of the actual facilities are run down and we need urgent investment. When people read press releases from the Minister for Education about investment in 29 schools, they look to see where those schools are. They see there is huge investment going into Applecross Senior High School and Willetton Senior High School but none at all into Thornlie Senior High School in my electorate. As well, there is an absence of investment to cope with the influx of year 7 students into high school. That is not being properly dealt with. There will be more students, but the response from the Minister for Education is, “Let’s try to shape the enrolments.” The expression “shape” is used. People in my electorate who have one child already at the high school have been told that they are possibly just out of the area; therefore their second child cannot attend the same high school. They cannot send their other child to the school of a sibling

simply because the school wants to constrain the number of enrolments. That is a heartless policy decision. It may be a way of shaping enrolments but it is also a way to break up families. It is a way of forcing people into the difficult situation of dropping off one child at one school and another child at another. It complicates life for parents. They will have two graduation nights or two speech nights to attend. There will be multiple assemblies to attend. That is all totally unfair. There are many other problems with the lack of facilities at Thornlie Senior High School. We need a manual arts centre and the metalwork facilities need to be improved. We need better facilities for the students who want to undertake courses in auto maintenance, plastics, engineering, jewellery crafts and woodwork. There are lathes in the school that are as old as the school—41 years old. Fortunately, we have excellent teachers who know how to get the last bit of life out of that equipment, but it needs to be replaced. We need to program that in. Thornlie Senior High School has been left off this reinvestment.

I fear that we might not get to my motion this evening, which is next on the notice paper, so I have just touched on this issue of the run-down state of Thornlie Senior High School. There is so much momentum building in the electorate that people are meeting regularly in the community to organise getting something done about this. There is clearly a crisis. Thornlie Senior High School has 1 000 students and the student population is projected to be 13 000 in 2015, so there is not enough classroom space. The plan is to make sure that there is a solid middle school, which is the best way to look after year 7s in a high school situation, but there are not enough classrooms available for those students. It is an untenable situation. People want these things resolved, and resolved quickly.

I have outlined a list of failures that have upset people in my electorate. People are aware of other things such as the failure of government to commit to any significant transport upgrade before 2031. We are still to see the final version of the transport minister’s master plan. The draft, though, which projected that the Thornlie rail line will not be extended until after 2031, was absolutely dispiriting. We know about the rises in fees and charges. I have tabled petitions in this place with hundreds of signatures about the rising fees and charges, including electricity prices, and the cost of living in general. People are feeling let down. I support this motion. People are desperately disappointed and will be looking to a future government to resolve their concerns. They will see that a Labor government is the only way to deliver the future they want.

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [5.23 pm]: I would like to look at 2012 and ask some questions about what is happening underneath the slice of our state’s economy that is amassing enormous profits from the mining sector. I would like to find the truth about what the Premier’s policies have meant for the average family living in the Maylands electorate. I will refer to some statistics. The Premier has presided over a 62 per cent increase in the cost of living. He will continue to drive increases in the cost of electricity. Water prices are up by more than 17 per cent and gas prices were up by 47 per cent since the last time I looked. I get a bit depressed when I look at the increases, so I try not to see them very often.

By September 2011, 56 families a day were forced to ask for help to pay utility bills. That is scurrilous. The number of people applying under the hardship utility grant scheme quadrupled in the first two years. There were 475 approved applications in 2009, when the Barnett government first took office, and 1 683 last year. The Premier’s policies have forced tens of thousands of people to seek help to manage their bills. I remember sitting here earlier this year listening to the then Treasurer, the member for Bateman as he is known in this house now, talk about the hardship efficiency program that he was axing. He was going to put the huge savings from axing that program, which might have cost the government about \$1 million, into the cost-of-living allowance. He said that would be all okay and people would be able to cope. What a load of nonsense. The hardship efficiency program was sometimes the only thing stopping people from going into a poverty spiral and never being able to manage their electricity bills and understand how to better manage the costs in their homes. That program offered people a lifeline about how to manage their bills. It taught people how to read power bills, how to assess where their biggest powers costs were coming from and how to manage that better. I listened to the member for Bateman, the Treasurer as he was then, joke about it and say that in the Treasury briefings, “Nobody had ever heard of it anyway!”, or words to that effect. As I said at the time, one of the major deliverers of that program was a not-for-profit organisation in my electorate called Environment House. It hired 27 energy auditors to work with people. That program does not exist anymore and those people no longer have a job. Where do all those families, who were working their way towards managing their power bills more effectively, go now?

I put together a program to provide free advice to my constituents on how to do that very thing. I am working with one of the auditors from that now de-funded and ridiculed program, who is providing a free service to my constituents. I put out a call in my electorate to people who would like to know how to manage their power bills more effectively, how to read their power bills so they know what is going on, and how to come out of this overcharging from government sane and at least not in dire poverty. We are running that program from my office. It is working, but it does not replace the statewide program that this government glibly cut. Not only that,

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 14 November 2012]

p8596b-8609a

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Tony O'Gorman

when the government said it would introduce a cost-of-living allowance of \$200 for all constituents, the problem was—I am sure the Treasurer has caught onto this by now—residents in retirement villages with a centralised power meter were stuffed; they did not receive that rebate. How many premises does the Treasurer think there are in my inner city, long-established electorate? We have many, many retirement villages. There are more and more retirement villages popping up all over Western Australia. All constituents will be suffering from not being able to access that power —

Mr P. Abetz: All the new ones have independent meters, so it only affects the older ones.

Ms L.L. BAKER: A good correction; sorry. The member is quite right, they do. Where there is a centralised meter, they do not. Most retirement villages in my electorate are established. A lot of the pensioners in my electorate do not get that so-called big handout that the government so generously offered. The government increased power by 62 per cent, which put up the cost of living and household bills by at least \$1 000 a year. They do not get that \$200 back. Where is the benefit this government has delivered for my constituents? I do not know.

Let us talk about housing in Maylands. Figures reveal that 15 per cent of households in the Maylands electorate, including Bayswater, Maylands, Embleton, Inglewood and Morley, are experiencing housing stress. Thirty per cent of my constituents have a mortgage and about 34.5 per cent of them are in private rental properties. It seems that 13 per cent of those mortgage holders are experiencing mortgage stress. That is about 1 149 families. A further 33 per cent are experiencing rental stress, so more than 30 per cent of their income is going to pay their rent. Again, that is not okay.

I will start by asking questions about why that might have happened. Let us start by looking at land supply, which has decreased by almost half under this government, and that has contributed to the increased cost of housing. In the 2007–08 financial year, 18 135 residential lots achieved final approval. In comparison, in 2009–10, there were only 10 915. We know what has happened to the number of residential lots approved since that absolutely dreadful action created by amendments to the Building Act. That was a dreadful failure of the Barnett government. The government produced a piece of legislation, albeit a big and complex piece of legislation, but it really managed to stuff that one up, and that has added to the increased housing pressures that my constituents are feeling every day. As I have said, there is already more than \$1 000 extra required for household bills under this government. That is where the failures are.

What about the issue that we hear referred to many times in this place about child health nurses? The government started off well and funded some positions, but there are huge and gaping holes in the level of service that we are delivering to new mums and babies in this state. This government is failing badly, and that is because there are not enough child health nurses. We could employ at least 135 across the state immediately, but where is the money to do that? Where are the suicide prevention programs, which we know are so desperately needed in the diverse sexuality and gender community—a community that has six times the rate of suicide of the remainder of the community? No programs have been funded. The government funded a bit of research out of the suicide prevention strategy, but we all know what is happening with that strategy. It was \$13 million underspent in its first year. So—hello—what is happening to suicide prevention in the state in one of the worst affected groups, the diverse sexuality and gender community?

If we want to look at another failure, this government has hopelessly compromised animal protection in Western Australia by moving the protection of animals under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture and Food—a department that has as its mission on its web page the maximisation of the economic profitability of agribusiness, and that is how it should be, because that is what a department of agriculture and food should be all about. It is not, however, about the protection and wellbeing of animals, and that is the incredible conflict of interest that this government has presided over. It is a dreadful failure in the protection of the most vulnerable and voiceless creatures that we share this planet with.

In my electorate, one of the big gaps I see every day when I drive over bridges that cross the river is the failure of the Premier to fund extra riverbank restoration. There simply has not been the increased funding that is required. What happened to the Burswood Casino levy? Members might recall that back in the early days of this government it started to pay Department of Environment and Conservation officers with that, if I remember correctly, or the Swan River Trust officers. That money was siphoned off. Extra money did not go into river restoration programs.

I also remember tax cuts being promised for families. I am not sure where they are. I would be happy if the government could point me to them, but I have not seen families get tax cuts since this government has been in office. We know that there is no possibility that the government will deliver the extra 500 police. It has made a start at it; yes, it has brought in some auxiliary officers and some pseudo police, but where are the extra 500

police? There is no way that the government can meet those targets now. 'Fess up; admit it. The government has failed on that front as well.

From my perspective, the biggest failure of this government is its failure to deliver on transport solutions in a timely way. The Minister for Transport is in the house and he has heard me say on many occasions that the government did not order enough new rail carriages and it did not order them quickly enough. That is why we have huge congestion problems at the railway stations. Not only has congestion on the roads increased at an unprecedented rate; the government has seen fit to now cut the bus and train services through my electorate. The route 44 bus service closed last Sunday. Congratulations! A good response to a traffic crisis, a good response to a congestion crisis and a great response to no public transport—cut the bus route. Eighty commuters who signed my petition last week now do not have that bus to catch to work. The number of carriages on the 8.08 am train has been halved. Eight o'clock in the morning is a good time really to halve the number of carriages on a train, when the greatest number of people are standing on the platform trying to get to work; that is a really sensible move! That is another failure. The number of carriages has been halved, so instead of having four carriages, it has gone to two carriages—at 8.08 am. That has left up to 70 people standing on the platform, watching as the train whizzes by and cannot stop because—do members know what?—the government halved the number of carriages in a peak-hour train. That helps a lot when we tell the people left standing on the side of the road because the government has cut route 44 that they must walk to the station to catch the train if they need to get to school or work. I am sorry; there is not any room on the train. If there is no room at the inn, bad luck; there is no room.

There was the promise of extra car parking bays. They have not been opened yet. The government has built some—I think about 200 of the 700 that it promised. However, it has locked them up. They are behind a cyclone fence. They have plastic on them. They are all wrapped up nicely so they never get damaged and never get parked on. They are just left there. I assume that the government will open them the week before the election to make itself look good or to promote the Liberal candidate. Is that a good strategy? I do not think so. My commuters are left without trains and without buses and with no parking, even if they get there. Public transport in my electorate is a complete disaster, and that is on the government's watch; it is all of its doing.

I have spoken before about the government's policies around contracting with the not-for-profit sector. I will quickly repeat the government's failure in that respect. It is not so much a failure at the moment, because it did invest some money—it was a very good investment, in fact—in the not-for-profit sector. However, at the moment the government is changing the relationship between the government and the not-for-profit sector; it has shifted into a far more competitive tendering arrangement. In my seven years of leading the Western Australian Council of Social Service, we worked very hard to pull back competitive tendering in this state. In effect—I can see a quizzical look across the chamber from the member for Alfred Cove—the government is starting to look at —

Ms M.M. Quirk: I think it's the member for Ocean Reef.

Ms L.L. BAKER: I am sorry. He has lost the wig. I am sorry, member.

The government is electing to fund lead contractors in a model that is similar to what it is using with other service delivery. It is asking for companies such as Serco Australia to step up and deliver—I do not know; I will make an assumption, and it is probably not correct—let us say domestic violence services or childcare services. Any one of a number of services could now be contracted to Serco to deliver. That is not Serco's core business. Yes, it is a contracting-out agency; yes, it is a privatisation vehicle; but what it will now do is look for little non-government organisations in the community that are struggling because the government is no longer funding them as it is going with Serco, and it will on-fund those little agencies, but it will be selective in how it does that. So, there will be very little funding. Serco will be drip-feeding these non-government organisations if the government is not careful. Those in the community sector are terrified that this is the outcome of the government's contracting changes. We have not seen that as a failure, but we are on the cusp of it. Let me tell members opposite that they will pay for that, because once that knowledge base in the community has gone and once those little agencies such as the Morley Training Centre and others have gone, there is no way of getting that knowledge base back. When it is lost, it is gone forever. Those people will need to get extra jobs and they will need to go to extra places. Services will be reduced.

It occurs to me that the government has really failed on two other things. I think many members will recall that when I first became a member of this house, one of the things we ran a grievance on was the state trail bike strategy. The member for Darling Range and the Minister for Sport and Recreation, who is not in the chamber at the moment, may remember smiling, promising, nodding their heads and giving the thumbs up across the room, saying, "It's all going to be okay, member for Maylands; it's all going to be fine. Don't you worry about that. Trust us." Where is the state trail bike strategy? Where is the funding? Where is the delivery? There ain't none.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 14 November 2012]

p8596b-8609a

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Tony O’Gorman

The member for Swan Hills came and spoke to the ratepayers association in Glen Forrest. I think he visited with the member for Bateman, and he swore blind that he would implement the state trail bike strategy and that it was all okay—“People, do not fear; there’s no problem”. The government has had four and a half years; I am sorry, but a government does not get into office and stuff about with people’s lives for four and a half years. The member for Darling Range knows this better than I do, because he has argued in this house for the state trail bike strategy for longer than I have. The member has in every way failed the population of Western Australia by not implementing the state trail bike strategy. Lives have been lost and trail bike centres have not been developed; all the member has managed to do is upset communities through clumsy efforts and lack of consultation to try to find recreational trail bike venues. None of this is leading the member anywhere positive; it is another failure in a long line of failures.

[Member’s time extended.]

Ms L.L. BAKER: I will not go on about that, although I could. I think I have made my point, and I think the member has heard it. He knows that I will not let up on his failure in this area because there are too many lives at risk.

In my last 13 minutes I want to talk about the government’s failure to appropriately fund the upgrade of school facilities, specifically in my electorate. I note that government members have funded a couple of beautiful new schools in their own electorates, and that is to be applauded. Is it not interesting that it is in their own electorates? Well, that is their decision, and they are in government, so they can do that; there is no doubt about that. They are in government, so they can fund things where they want to. I could almost have predicted that there would not be a \$30 million school upgrade in the Maylands electorate. I think the government is spending \$30 million on a school upgrade in the southern suburbs, for a school that is 50 years old. John Forrest Secondary College is also 50 years old, and I would like members to know —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Governor Stirling?

Ms L.L. BAKER: No, I think it is in the member for Southern River’s electorate, in Rossmoyne. That was something that we had on the plans; I think the member for Midland might argue that point, but I do not have the facts so I will not argue on her behalf.

The school canteen at John Forrest is in its original condition from when it was built in 1962. We are talking about having to rub two sticks together to light the burners; we are talking about carrying water in buckets, almost. This is a very long time ago; that canteen has been in the same condition for 50 years. Yes, we probably should have funded an upgrade when we were in government, and I would like to think that we will not let it go by again if we are elected in March. But for four and a half years the government has chosen to fund repairs, maintenance and upgrades in other areas, and has ignored the pressing needs of John Forrest Secondary College. It has a pre-vocational training centre that is lined with asbestos; it is a tin shed, lined with asbestos. It is so old that no-one from the school knows when the asbestos was actually put there. Over the last six months, there have been two incidents in which staff and students have been exposed to asbestos fibres as a result of workmen completing maintenance work. I understand that these occupational health and safety incidents are currently being investigated by the Department of Education and Building Management and Works. The woodwork classrooms are also in their original 1962 condition, and are also lined with asbestos. In case members did not hear me the first three times, they are cramped and they are lined with asbestos; \$200 000 would fix most of the asbestos problems to ensure that children, teachers and people visiting the school are not exposed to potential health risks.

The college requires a performing and visual arts centre. Members who have been to John Forrest Secondary College will have seen its gymnasium, which is very old, very tired and much more 1960s than twenty-first century. In fact, I sometimes think it is more eighteenth century than twentieth century. It is in desperate need of an upgrade. The school’s vision for this area is that it wants to have purpose-built teaching rooms for music, drama, media, photography and visual arts. All the teaching and performance areas are standard classrooms, and the school has had to make do with alterations. John Forrest has the distinction of being a specialist music school, yet the practice rooms in the music area smell of mould and have holes in the walls. The visual arts room has only one sink in the wet area, and there are no facilities for teaching photography. The school has a dance studio, but it was built in such a way that the floor floods when there is a heavy downpour. The floor has had to be replaced twice.

I should also say that the federal government delivered a massive contribution for improvements to the four science laboratories through Building the Education Revolution funding. John Forrest has also been the proud recipient of a new trades training centre. What we have is a 1962 building. When it was first built, it burnt down

within the first 18 months and a lot of it had to be immediately rebuilt. It was all a bit of a disaster when it was first built, but it was rebuilt quite quickly, reopened, and has worked very hard as a major high school in this state, taking many children through to their senior years of education with very little input into the upgrading of facilities. We are now well and truly past the time that this school, this graceful old lady in my electorate, was given some care and attention, and at 50 years of age, she needs that attention now and should not have to wait any longer.

I have put on the public record a few of this government’s failures. I hope that, come the March 2013 election, we see a change of government so that we do not have to keep facing these failures, and so that people in my electorate can look forward to a bright future rather than the series of failures, price increases, public transport failures and the like that they have been subjected to over the four and a half years of this government.

MR A.P. O’GORMAN (Joondalup) [5.47 pm]: I will start by saying I obviously support this motion. I support it because, over the last four and a half years—which is a very long time for a government—we have seen a deterioration in this state. We have heard many members in this place say in their valedictory speeches that we live in the best city, the best state and the best country in the world, and that is true, but over the last four and a half years we have seen an attack on that status from none other than the government. It started in our back pockets, when the government started pushing up the price of electricity to exorbitant amounts, claiming that it wanted to achieve cost reflectivity. That is something that the Labor Party outlined to the electorate before the last election, and the then Barnett-led Liberal opposition went into the election saying that the Liberal Party would not raise electricity prices, but what we have seen over the past four and a half years is a 62 per cent increase in electricity charges, which has put a huge impost on families, young people and old people in this state. Every man, woman and child uses electricity in this state, and they are paying for it at a rate far greater than what they should be paying, and what they would have paid under a Labor government. It is a disgrace that that has happened, but the fact of the matter is that we all knew that electricity prices had to go up. Being a very open and accountable government, the Carpenter government put it out there that, yes, we were going to increase electricity charges by approximately 70 per cent, but that we would do it over a long period of time. That would have given people the opportunity to adjust to that impost on their budget and it would have given people the opportunity to set themselves up so that they could pay for it.

As we lost government and the new government came in, the global financial crisis hit and we saw a downturn in this country and right across the world. Western Australia seemed to weather it very well, and we did so for a variety of reasons. First, we had a resource sector that was running red hot. That managed to cushion us against the worst effects of the GFC. Secondly, the federal government stepped in. The federal government put billions and billions of dollars into projects in Western Australia and right across Australia. It put money in people’s pockets so that they could continue to spend and support the small businesses of this state, which this Liberal–National government does not do. I say that because nearly 12 months ago we passed through this place the Commercial Tenancy (Retail Shops) Agreements Amendment Bill, which put in place certain protections for small business. As recently as last week, I was rung by a number of small retail businesses that are having great difficulty with their landlords on redevelopments and on renegotiating leases. The protections that we in this house put in place in good faith still have not been brought into action, even though that legislation was proclaimed in December last year. This Liberal-led government has not given any priority to putting the regulations into effect. We set it up so that small businesses could take their complaints to the Small Business Commissioner in the first instance and then to the State Administrative Tribunal, but SAT still does not have jurisdiction because those regulations are not in place.

In the short time since the GFC, many small businesses still have not recovered; many are going to the wall. Many business owners are losing their businesses and then losing their houses. I have counted 18 businesses in my electorate alone in the last two to three years that have gone to the wall; those business owners have had to walk away because they could no longer afford the exorbitant rentals they were being charged by landlords. As recently as last week, I was informed of a business that has been put under pressure to accept an increase in rent of 110 per cent on the signing of a new lease. As the regulations have not yet been drafted, that business has no recourse. That business owner can go to the Small Business Commissioner, who can mediate. The increase might be reduced from 110 per cent to 50 or 60 per cent or, if they are lucky, down to 10 or 15 per cent. But if they cannot get that through mediation with the Small Business Commissioner, their option is to go to SAT, but because the regulations have not been put in place, that small business runs the risk of copping the legal fees of the landlord. That is a disgrace. That is why the member for Belmont put forward the notion that we put in place some protections for small business. We asked for a small business lease register. It was rejected by the government, which said that small businesses did not want it. I am yet to meet a small business man—I speak to quite a lot of them—who does not want it. None of them is saying that keeping it hidden will protect them. Big businesses are quite happy to have it hidden, because we all know that they exercise their power. Large landlords

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 14 November 2012]

p8596b-8609a

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Tony O'Gorman

have told me that when they get the large tenants, they are basically told by the large tenants that they will come to their shopping centre but this is what they will pay. Small businesses cannot afford to do that; they do not have that fighting power.

We also put in place legislation that provided that small businesses could form merchants associations. We are yet to see a merchants association in a large shopping centre that is able to wield some power against the landlords and the very large anchor tenants in those centres.

This government says that it is committed to the economy, it is committed to bringing the state forward, and it is committed to small business. It says lots of things, but it does not actually ever prove it with its actions. There is a saying that is often referred to in this place: you cannot just talk the talk; you have to walk the walk. That is a saying that I do not particularly like, but the truth of it is that the government cannot just say it; it has to go out there and show by example that it is protecting small business, protecting our community and making our community better. There is only one role for government, and that is to make our community better by delivering the services that our community so badly needs. Those basic services are health, education and law and order. We all know that, but the government is failing on many fronts.

Transport is one of the major services that government has to provide. The biggest issue in this city at the moment is transport. This morning I got on the freeway at Shenton Avenue, about 27 kilometres from the city. By the time I got to Hodges Drive, I had stopped. That is about a kilometre or a kilometre and a half down the freeway. It is still 26 kilometres from the city, and I had stopped. I got a bit grumpy with a guy in a four-wheel drive similar to mine who cut across in front of me and got off at the Ocean Reef Road off-ramp. I thought, "What are you doing that for, you idiot? You just about cut me off." When I got a couple of hundred metres further down the freeway, I could see why he had done it. He had been in the right-hand lane and he had spotted the traffic jam. Traffic had stopped at Ocean Reef Road—and that was before eight o'clock this morning. I had a committee meeting in this place set up for 9.15 this morning. I got on the freeway just before eight o'clock. I got off the freeway at Ocean Reef Road and came through the suburbs. I got on to Marmion Avenue and came through the back way to make sure that I was on time for the committee meeting. The committee had some people appearing who were victims of last year's bushfires, and I thought that it was only proper that I be there when they arrived. We did not want those people to be dragged in to a committee meeting only for members of the committee not to arrive on time. The only way I could get to the committee meeting on time was to get off the freeway—I have not done that for the best part of 20 years—go along Marmion Avenue and Karrinyup Road and down through Osborne Park and into the city through the back way. I got here at quarter past nine; it took me an hour and a quarter to drive 26 kilometres. That is an average speed of 20 kilometres an hour. The freeway was blocked.

Mr A.P. Jacob: Because of roadworks.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: I have done it time and again. This morning it was because of roadworks; a couple of weeks ago it was because of a lack of maintenance on the train line and the whole train system was down. It does not matter. The government is failing. There are traffic jams up and down the freeway. I drove 26 kilometres at 20 kilometres an hour. I am not particularly fit, but I could get on my bike and cycle here just as quickly as that!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Is that the member's solution—to get people from Wanneroo on their bikes and off the freeway? Is that what he wants to do? Is that his answer? Shall I put that out in the member for Wanneroo's electorate? Is that what he thinks people should do?

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you; member for Joondalup, you have got 30 seconds.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I bet you won't catch the train.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: I could have caught the train, but I cannot get on it. I cannot park at the train stations and there is no public transport to get to the train stations. That is the problem. If I go to Currabine, I cannot get parking. If I go to Edgewater, I cannot get parking.

Mr P.T. Miles interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo!

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: We put the train out there. I have listened to all the arguments today.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 14 November 2012]

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Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Tony
O’Gorman

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm