

ELECTION PROMISES — BARNETT GOVERNMENT

“Liberal Plan for the First 100 Days of Government” — Motion

Resumed from 3 December 2008 on the following motion moved by Mr M. McGowan —

That the house condemns the Barnett government for its failure to implement the election promises contained within its first 100 day plan document.

MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot) [6.03 pm]: I had a bit of a chuckle when I came to work this morning and had a look at the pink sheet for today’s sitting. I noticed, under private members’ business, that this motion was back on the agenda for debate. I recalled that I was the last speaker on this motion on 3 December last year. I wondered who was the brains trust in the office of the Leader of the Opposition, who thought it might be appropriate to bring on this motion on the first anniversary of the formation of the Barnett government. I wondered what else the opposition could have spoken about today. I looked down the list in the notice paper at all the things that were less important to the opposition than this motion: the Perth Theatre Trust Amendment Bill 2009; the local government amalgamation policy; or the independent mental health and wellbeing commissioner. The opposition could have chosen any of those items. It could have brought on the Weapons (Supply to Minors and Enhanced Police Powers) Amendment Bill 2008; regional projects and programs; the Towards Zero road safety strategy, which I suggest would have been far more important to debate than this issue; recreational fishing fees; renewable energy; job losses and cuts to core services; the Acts Amendment (Safety and Human Rights of Persons in Custody) Bill 2009; and something else I thought might have been more important, the Butane Products Control Bill 2009. But no, the opposition decided to bring this motion back onto the agenda for today. I got out the calendar. This is such an important issue for the opposition that it has not raised it for how many days? I did a count. The opposition has not raised this motion for 295 days. It has not brought this motion on for 51 sitting days. It is so high on the opposition’s agenda that the opposition waited until our first anniversary—doing us the biggest favour of our political lives—to raise this issue.

I will go back and recap what my previous remarks were on 3 December last year. I think we had worked out that 3 December was the seventy-third day since the formation of the Barnett government. I think we also worked out that when the previous Labor government was first elected it did not sit in Parliament until day 76. I think I was up to about 2005 in the history of the achievements of the Labor Party in government in this state. I think my last remarks were along the lines of how the then Premier waited until Mark Latham had resigned from the federal Labor leadership before calling an election in Western Australia, because he was quite frankly too gutless to go to the polls while Mark Latham was the federal leader. What else happened in 2005? We worked out that the number of assaults in Western Australia increased by 15.3 per cent in the preceding 12 months. One of the most indicting things, regardless of politics, that had happened in this state was reflected by the statistic that 40 per cent of people in jail in Western Australia in 2005 were Aboriginal; a percentage that has continued to increase, and says to all politicians in this place that we have failed those people. Hospital waiting lists in Western Australia in 2005 were the worst in Australia. Patients were dying while waiting for treatment. Pole-top fires cut power to 70 000 houses in Perth.

Mr W.J. Johnston: The entire network shut down when the Premier was Minister for Energy.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The member can have his turn next.

The Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union secretary, Kevin Reynolds, organised strikes. I remember that the industrial relations court ruled them illegal, and the Labor government was silent on the issue.

The next year, 2006, was really the year for some of the friends of the former Premier Brian Burke. We know that the former Premier was putting his fingers into the pie of the Labor leadership. We know that even the member for Willagee, who was then the Premier, threatened to resign if he could not handle the issue with Brian Burke in the Labor Party. We know that the ALP small business minister at the time, Norm Marlborough, who was the member for Peel, resigned from Parliament after taped phone calls with the former Premier were released. I know that he took \$1.15 million in payments with him when he left. That is actually one of the better things that happened, because I will actually differ from the Premier and say that I think the member for Warnbro, who was elected in the by-election after the resignation of the member for Peel, is an outstanding member of Parliament for the Labor Party. I know his service background, and I have a lot of respect for people who have served in the Navy as seaman officers. We know that in 2006, police were resigning at the net rate of one a day. We could not stem the flow of police out of the police service, and we are still playing catch-up.

This brings me to 2007, which was a great year. The environment minister, Tony McRae, was sacked for misleading the Corruption and Crime Commission. I almost felt sorry for the former Premier, because he had so many issues. We know that police, when they were bashed or injured in the line of duty, were not being anywhere near sufficiently compensated. The member for Murray-Wellington introduced a bill to compensate

police and the then Labor government did absolutely nothing with it. We know that the housing shortage, which has continued to get worse largely due to the global financial crisis, had very quickly created a staggering figure of 7 000 homeless people in the City of Perth in 2007. We know that Western Power advised customers to turn off their air conditioning because it could not provide enough electricity to people in Perth, and we know that the state school system was in shambles due to the lack of teachers and resources.

One of the great achievements, from both sides of politics, was that the Perth-Mandurah railway line opened. Unfortunately, there were not enough trains and it was not possible to park at the stations because the demand was much greater than anyone expected, and the government did not build enough car parking.

Mr R.H. Cook: It was very popular, wasn't it?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will give credit where credit is due. It was very popular, but there were not enough trains and there certainly were not enough car parking spaces at the stations. There was an overwhelming difference in policy in my area at the last election between what I stood for and what the Labor Party stood for. We made a black and white election commitment to fund more parking at railway stations, which has happened. We have 160 new bays already open at Murdoch, and we are about to have 560 new bays open at Cockburn Central. At that time, the Labor Party did not want more parking at the train stations. I remember debating the issue with some Labor Party staff at the Cockburn station. They wanted less parking because they wanted to encourage people to ride their bikes to the train station before catching the train to work. I told them to tell the businessmen in a suit, the old ladies with a walking stick or the mothers with a baby and a pram that they should not park at the station but should ride their pushbikes during winter. I was ridiculed for that but the election result justified my position. I am absolutely rapt that the government is proceeding with providing a minimum of 560 new car bays at Cockburn station alone.

In 2008, Dr Neale Fong resigned as the head of the Department of Health following a Corruption and Crime Commission report. At the beginning of last year, we saw 500 fires lit across the state in one week. The Prostitution Amendment Bill passed through the Parliament, which is something that I think the Labor Party will live to regret in the near future. We saw a child sex offender, who did not have any remedial training whatsoever, released from jail early. We still do not know what happened at Varanus Island. However, we know that as soon as it was all over, the then Premier panicked, jumped on a plane to Varanus Island and called an election the next day.

I will talk about some of the government's achievements in its first 100 days in office and about the projects that it has been working on during those 100 days and that it has delivered on in the past 12 months. It is worth noting this because today is the first anniversary of the swearing-in of the Barnett government. I was nice enough to send out a brochure about these things to the people in my electorate. I will touch on some of the good points and the great achievements of this government over the past 12 months. I will begin by talking about how the government has kept the Western Australian economy strong. We have retained the AAA credit rating, we have progressed the \$50 billion Gorgon project, which will deliver a hell of a lot of jobs across Western Australia, and we have signed an agreement for the development of Oakajee. We have started work on —

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I can take as long as I want. Mr Deputy Speaker, I will take this opportunity to request an extension.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Ord stage 2 will expand agricultural production and we have secured funding from our federal government friends for the Northbridge Link to sink the railway line in Northbridge. I will talk about employment in Western Australia. Every single time the issue of employment projects comes up, the sceptics on the other side raise their heads and start to knock it. These projects will deliver real jobs to the people of Western Australia. It just reinforces in the public's opinion that the state Labor Party is anti-jobs and anti-growth. It would rather score political points than help people get real jobs. We have spent \$140 million on measures to help small and medium-sized businesses keep people employed, including a payroll tax holiday and rebates for workers' compensation payments for apprentices and trainees. We are providing free TAFE courses for the unemployed and have established a new dedicated Department of Training and Workforce Development. A rapid response team ensures that employers and apprentices affected by the economic downturn are looked after.

As I have said a number of times in Parliament, law and order was, without doubt, the single biggest issue in the election campaign, and it remains the single biggest issue, certainly in my electorate. I would be very surprised if it was not the single biggest issue in other members' electorates. One of the greatest bills that went through this house in the early days of the past 12 months fixed up the botched truth-in-sentencing legislation that gave automatic discounts to people who pleaded guilty. I could never fathom what the Labor government was thinking when it introduced that Criminal Code Amendment Bill. We have introduced mandatory sentencing

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laws for people who assault police officers. We have reinstated the Graffiti Taskforce that the Labor government abolished in its first 100 days in office. We have provided \$665 million for 1 657 new prison beds in this state. I note that not a single new prison bed was opened in the seven and a half years that the Labor Party was in government, and members opposite wonder why the prisons were overcrowded when we were elected. We brought in more alcohol bans and restrictions in some regional communities where antisocial behaviour was a serious problem. Yesterday I noted in a speech I gave that about eight weeks ago I went to Oombulgurri and paid particular attention to those communities where the alcohol bans were enforced, albeit they were self-enforced some time ago. The people there told me that the alcohol bans had changed their lives for the better. From what I have seen, I cannot say enough in support of alcohol bans in some Aboriginal communities. They are people who need a far greater hand up than others.

Mr R.H. Cook: Who did the first one of those? It was us.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I am not denying that. I am saying that we brought in some more measures.

We have introduced a new emergency warning system to boost public safety during emergencies such as bushfires. I must proclaim that I am a volunteer firefighter with the Jandakot volunteer bush fire brigade. I stayed out of the debate on the Bush Fires Amendment Bill 2009.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Why? You don't get paid for it.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I am a volunteer; I do not get paid for it. I stayed out of it because I know that there are a few sides to all stories. I congratulate the Minister for Emergency Services for doing something, because the bushfire management in this state has always involved a conflict between the Fire and Emergency Services Authority and the Department of Environment and Conservation. Members need only cast their mind back to what happened on the road from Coolgardie to Perth a couple of years back to realise that leaderless armies do not work. A single point is needed to administer situations such as bushfire control.

I will touch quickly on health. We saved Royal Perth Hospital. That was another black and white difference between us and the Labor Party.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Not yet you have haven't.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I am looking forward to the support of opposition members on that because it was a black and white difference between us and the Labor Party at the last election. We stood up and saved Royal Perth Hospital. We said that we would do it. I am looking forward to the Labor Party helping the government honour that commitment.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Is the Deputy Leader of the Opposition saying that he will not save Royal Perth Hospital? It is a black and white issue. It is a yes or no answer. The Labor Party still does not know. The Labor Party is still a policy free zone.

We committed to build a new children's hospital on the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre site. Construction has finally started on Fiona Stanley Hospital, which must be the most re-announced public building project in the world's history. How often did I see another press release saying that the Labor government was going to do it! This government has finally done it and construction is underway. The people of my electorate cannot wait for that to open. We have boosted funding for elective surgery by \$30 million, we have employed more nurses, and we have provided extra support for the Royal Flying Doctor Service, which is also based in the great electorate of Jandakot. We have also boosted support to the patient assisted travel scheme.

I am not fortunate enough to have had children yet—if ever—and I certainly do envy people who have children.

Ms J.M. Freeman: I will send you my 13-year-old!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: We can swap hostages for a couple of days!

Mr R.H. Cook: Does that mean she gets a couple of cats in return?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The member for Nollamara will get a couple of German shepherds—Sasha and Rex. I have got them in *Hansard* again. I must stop naming my dogs!

In education, one of our great achievements has been something that the Labor government could not do; that is, finalise the teachers' pay dispute. That dispute dragged on for far too long because the Labor government could not negotiate with the State School Teachers' Union of WA. This government has spent a record \$1.1 billion in capital works for new schools, upgrades and maintenance so that children can have the best possible learning environment. We are giving parents and teachers more say in how their school is run, because ultimately the best people to decide on how to run a school are not the bureaucrats in head office in Perth; they are the people who have children at the school and the people who run the school.

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Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: This is one of the philosophical differences between our party and the Labor Party. The Labor Party believes in centralist power and in taking away from communities a say on how things are run. The best people to decide how a school is run are the headmaster and the people involved in that school.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I know it is popular. Therefore, from all those Labor electorates that had an announcement about schools today by the Minister for Education, there will be a press release from those members saying, “This is wrong. We don’t want schools to have this. We want bureaucrats to tell our communities how to run these schools.”

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The Labor Party cannot have it both ways. Labor members cannot walk into this place and criticise us for it but lap it up like Cheshire cats —

Ms J.M. Freeman interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Will the member for Nollamara please quieten down? She is drowning out the member for Jandakot.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Labor members cannot lap it up like Cheshire cats in their local communities and walk into this place and condemn us for what we have done in giving schools a greater say on how their system is run. This government has removed levels to make school reports easy to understand. A few constituents have contacted me on this issue.

Tabling of Document

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I notice that the member for Jandakot has an official document there and I would like it tabled.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I would be delighted to table this document.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Jandakot! The tabling of documents applies only to ministers. Proceed, member for Jandakot.

Debate Resumed

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I am aware of that but I am happy to provide it to the member when I am finished. In fact, I might even sponsor a mail-out to everyone in her electorate so that they do not get left out!

This government has made the Minister for Education responsible for early childhood development, emphasising the critical importance of the early years in education. I want to mention a few local issues on education in my electorate and some of the great things that have come out of this government in the past 12 months. In my electorate, around the corner from my home, I inherited the work that had started on Atwell College. It is a recently built college and was opened only a couple of years ago. All credit to the former government for what it did. Unfortunately, it built it and funded it only to year 12. Until year 11 was funded and due to be completed by 2011 and year 12 by 2012, we were in the situation of having no continuity in education for the children enrolled in that school, because absolutely zero money was allocated in the forward estimates and no dates were given for the completion of the project. Perhaps one of the biggest campaign mistakes the member for Willagee made when he rocked up at the school around the corner from my house in Atwell during the election campaign was forgetting to make the commitment to finish Atwell College. We therefore made the commitment to finish it and are just about to start work on it. I have even seen the fences go up around where it will start.

Ms J.M. Freeman interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: No, this is state funding of \$33 million to finish stage 2 of Atwell College, which is years 11 and 12. I note that the Minister for Education has just walked into the chamber. All I can say is that the people of Jandakot absolutely thank the Minister for Education for finishing it. Down the road in one of the greatest growth suburbs —

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Has the member for Cannington finished?

Mr W.J. Johnston: No.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: He is yapping on like a little poodle.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, sit down please!

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I thank you very much for calling me, Mr Deputy Speaker. I rise to say that the member should be honest and admit to the fact that his government has cut expenditure.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order, member for Cannington.

Debate Resumed

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: One of the fastest growing suburbs in my electorate and perhaps Perth is the suburb of Aubin Grove. We know that 4 000 people, hopefully Liberal voters, will be moving into that electorate in the next couple of years. There is overwhelming demand for new school infrastructure there. The nearest school is Harmony Primary School at Harvest Lakes, and it is already bursting at the seams. One of the other great commitments that the people of Jandakot have got out of this government is the announcement of \$15 million for the construction of a new primary school at Aubin Grove. It will be completed by 2011 and is one of the much needed pieces of infrastructure there. That is another project that we inherited from the previous government with absolutely no money in the forward estimates for it.

Also, the City of Cockburn got \$51.6 million for emergency services headquarters at Cockburn central, and \$24 million has been allocated for an additional police helicopter to be based at Jandakot. There was only one police helicopter there. It was old, worn out and in pieces, and the police air wing had serious problems using it to respond to emergencies. Now it will have the old one, which is being repaired, and a new helicopter, so that at any given time Western Australia Police can, if required, have at least one helicopter in the air.

Public transport, as I mentioned, got \$49.5 million for 3 000 extra parking spaces at train stations on the Mandurah-Joondalup line. The first bays, as I have said, have already been delivered in my electorate at Murdoch train station.

This government is increasing the number of trains to boost capacity. Here is an issue, like the deregulation of trading hours, that has absolutely slipped underneath the opposition's radar. If members opposite believe that the people who catch that train every single day are not angry with the Labor Party for not putting in enough parking bays at that railway line, they are sadly mistaken. People will thank us for enhancing that railway system and they will thank us for putting in car parking at the train station.

The member for Willagee is looking at me. He knows that I am right. He knows that this is one of the biggest local issues in my electorate. We have watched the member for Cockburn try to take ownership of the car parking issue in a lame attempt to get people in his electorate to petition the government to honour an election commitment that this government has already honoured and commenced work on.

Another issue that has touched a nerve in the community is security for bus drivers. The government has worked very well to address that issue.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will give credit where it is due, but it is absolutely appalling to see bus drivers getting bashed just doing their job driving people around the community.

Another commitment that was honoured that was extremely popular, which the polls reflect, was free public transport for seniors. It was very popular in my electorate, certainly with seniors who can now, between 9.00 am and 3.30 pm on weekdays, all day Saturday and Sunday and on public holidays, get access to free public transport.

Another thing that this government has done—I am sure this will attract roars of interjection—was complete the great road that was opened last Saturday. I will give credit where it is due, as long as the Labor Party in this house gives credit to the former Prime Minister, John Howard, for providing funding for that project.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [6.28 pm]: Members, what a complete and utter mess! The member for Jandakot was on his feet for about 25 minutes, essentially enunciating the rollout of the Labor agenda. I made the observation that the leaflet that he quoted from at length must have been authorised by the Labor Party because it was essentially an exercise in listing the achievements of the former Labor government. Of course, while he was busily working back to 2005-06 trying to find some opportunity to criticise the previous government, he forgot to mention that we had doubled the size of the economy. The Labor government took the economy, doubled it in size and had some of the greatest economic achievements in the early 2000s. We are in this place today to try to deduce and list the achievements of the Barnett government in its first 100 days. The crux of the matter is that the Liberal Party presented itself to the people of Western Australia saying, "We have a plan about what we are going to do in the first 100 days, so trust us—we are ready

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to govern.” The Liberal Party went through a range of issues to try to justify its position to the public. The Liberal Party was going to introduce fixed terms, a lobbyists’ register and related legislation, cannabis legislation—a range of things, all of which have simply been forgotten and pushed aside. The government says, “Let’s not talk about that. Let’s talk about how we have locked more people up in prisons and how we’ve tweaked legislation.” I think that if the government were so busy legislating and getting on with the job, we would not have had our friends in the upper house take a pupil-free day last week as a result of a lack of legislation for them to consider.

The member for Jandakot was very keen to talk about the Labor government’s achievements. We have the opportunity to now reflect on the past 12 months. Over the past 12 months, as shadow Minister for Health, I have gone to a lot of hospital openings and openings for facilities in the health sector. I notice the Minister for Health is in the room and at this point in my comments today I say that he has never once missed the opportunity to give credit where it is due. The minister has appropriately acknowledged the achievements of the previous government in undertaking the most significant rollout of capital expenditure and growth in the health department. There has been an extraordinary amount of redevelopment of hospital campuses, not least of which is in my own electorate at Rockingham General Hospital, although I must say that “Kwinana” seems to have been knocked off the title while I was not watching at some point in the past 12 months.

Dr K.D. Hames: Don’t blame me; I didn’t do it!

Mr R.H. COOK: But of course the Minister for Health is very good at giving credit to the previous Minister for Health in relation to that.

One of the things that the government promised it would do in the first 100 days, and one of the few things that it has actually achieved, was to introduce legislation to, so-called, protect Royal Perth Hospital. That was something that the member for Jandakot observed in his contribution. I am sure that the member for Jandakot, who is very keen to communicate the achievements of this government to the people in his electorate, will not be remiss in mentioning the exact impact of the Royal Perth Hospital legislation on the Fiona Stanley Hospital facility. Having seen the budget papers presented, we now know that the redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital that the member for Jandakot is keen to trumpet presents a real and present danger to the Fiona Stanley Hospital. We hear from Treasury that the Royal Perth Hospital redevelopment will not only endanger the health budget and create an unsustainable situation, but also threaten Fiona Stanley Hospital, as the commissioning of Fiona Stanley Hospital will happen at the same time as the redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital. The budget papers make no mention of how the government will actually prepare for that expenditure. There is no explanation at any stage, particularly not from the member for Jandakot, about the impact that will have on the people of Jandakot and the southern suburbs as Fiona Stanley Hospital struggles under a government that is singularly obsessed with the Royal Perth Hospital site.

Dr K.D. Hames: Is the member still opposed to keeping Royal Perth Hospital open?

Mr R.H. COOK: As a tertiary campus, I am 100 per cent committed to that, minister.

Dr K.D. Hames: Is that to closing Royal Perth Hospital —

Mr R.H. COOK: As a tertiary hospital, yes.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: The minister was not in the chamber at the time so please can I make it quite clear, as I did for the member for Jandakot, that we are opposed to Royal Perth Hospital being a tertiary campus. Is that clarification enough? The Royal Perth Hospital redevelopment is an anti-Joondalup hospital policy. The Royal Perth Hospital redevelopment will push the redevelopment of Joondalup hospital as the next tertiary campus back a decade. The opposition opposes the redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital because it is anti-Fiona Stanley Hospital and anti-Joondalup Health Campus. The member for Jandakot will wear that around his political neck.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: While we are talking about achievements and funding for hospital projects, look at the poor old non-starter of the hospital campuses redevelopment program—that is, the Swan District Hospital for the Midland health campus. Underfunded, it went begging to the federal Labor government to help save the day to try to maintain any sort of vision or planning and health policy in Western Australia.

Dr K.D. Hames: Good old Nicola gave me half a billion dollars.

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Mr R.H. COOK: She did, but the state government still has not even stumped up for its half. The state government has not even said whether its half will pay for the first part of it or whether it expects the federal Labor government to pay for the first half of the hospital.

Dr K.D. Hames: We are paying only half of the Midland arrangement; the federal government is paying for all of Shenton Park.

Mr R.H. COOK: The other train wreck that is part of the 100-day promise is of course under the control of the hapless Minister for Mental Health. The government got one thing right: it appointed a Minister for Mental Health. The government never said how good that minister would be, and since then we have seen the disillusionment and the smiles slowly disappearing from the faces of people in the mental health sector as they realise what will happen to mental health under this government. Absolutely nothing will happen, particularly in relation to the commissioner for mental health and wellbeing. This Minister for Mental Health was going to get rubber on the road and mental health was his priority. The Minister for Mental Health even said in November last year that the government was almost at the point of appointing the commissioner for mental health and wellbeing. Everyone must have been on the edge of their seats at that point waiting with bated breath—who was it going to be? Who would this decisive Minister for Mental Health pick for this role? Of course, there was no-one. Even though the Minister for Health could not budget for the redevelopment of the Midland campus, the Minister for Mental Health managed to budget for the commissioner for mental health and wellbeing. There sits the cash in the account—\$273 000 for funding the office of the commissioner for mental health and wellbeing—and there is no-one. In some respects, we can say that the lights are on but no-one is home. That says a lot about mental health policy under this government.

Mr F.M. Logan: It says a lot about the Minister for Mental Health.

Mr R.H. COOK: I thank the member for Cockburn!

Therefore, we sit at—what did the member for Jandakot say—day 290-something or other and the 12-month anniversary of this government looking for those 100-day promises and the Minister for Mental Health says, “We will legislate soon. Trust me; we have some legislation waiting in the wings somewhere. We will do something one day.” The problem is that this was a 100-day promise. This was, to use another Liberal Party euphemism, “a core promise” that was made by the Liberal Party to demonstrate that it is fit to govern. The Minister for Mental Health has since become the “Minister for Reconfigurations”. We do not have cuts in mental health anymore. We have reconfigurations. That is happening at the same time as the government parks FTEs after FTEs in the sidelines, in the in-tray of the director general, and as it slowly tries to count the shekels that it will need to pay for the government’s 13 per cent blow-out in expenditure, largely because of the need to pay for the royalties for regions program.

There is a range of measures that the Liberal Party brought to the people of Western Australia and to the Parliament of Western Australia during the election campaign to demonstrate that it was ready for government. That is all in the Liberal Party’s 100-day plan. There is a long list of items. Those items are long forgotten by a government that is unable, unwilling or incapable of bringing legislation or ideas to bear to fulfil the promises that it made to the people of Western Australia at the election. Those items include cannabis law reform, fixed parliamentary terms and legislation to monitor political lobbyists. We have seen nothing but a dismissive response from the government to those promises. Frankly, I think the people of Western Australia would share the same disappointment and despair that many members of this place share—that this government is so quick to promise, but so slow to deliver.

The now Premier said before the election that a Liberal government would be a paragon of virtue. A Liberal government would reinvent accountability in government. A Liberal government would be open. It would be a new government. It would fulfil its promises. It would not have a litany of dorothy dixers, which ministers would take minutes in the double digits to answer. It would introduce fixed parliamentary terms. It would fix up the problems that we are having with lobbyists in this state by bringing in legislation within its first 100 days in office. We have nothing. This government has failed to deliver to the people of Western Australia. It has failed to live up to its promises. It has failed to live up to its aspirations. I join with every member on this side of the house in condemning the government for misleading the people of Western Australia in such a cruel and heartless fashion.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [6.43 pm]: I rise to support the motion. I want to take up one of the challenges that was put by the member for Jandakot. He was right when he said that there are many other things that we could have condemned this government for. We could have condemned this government on local government amalgamations. We could have condemned this government on the appointment of an independent mental health and wellbeing commissioner. We could have condemned this government on many different issues. He is right when he says that. He is right when he draws our attention to all the failures of the

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government. One example is the fact that this Parliament was originally scheduled to sit for only 17 weeks this year. That has now been extended to 19 weeks. That is after the government found that it was not able to get even its limited legislative agenda through in 17 weeks of Parliament. I have to make it clear what that means. It means that there will be fewer opportunities for accountability. There will be fewer question times. There will be fewer times for some of the incompetent ministers, one of whom is in the chamber, to be held accountable for their failure to properly administer their portfolios.

Mr R.F. Johnson: You should not talk about my colleague like that! I will not stand for it!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No; the minister is going to sit down for it!

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The member for Jandakot is right. We could have condemned the Minister for Community Services, Hon Robyn McSweeney, for her outrageous comments yesterday when she said, "My view was that I needed to put money into living children to give them a future; I didn't need to put it into people who wouldn't have a future." That is what the minister said in respect to the callous cuts to the funeral expenses program. That was a back-down that the Premier had forced on Minister McSweeney. We could have condemned the government for that, because there is absolutely no defence. The member for Jandakot is right when he says that there is no defence for the government in that area. That decision was a disgrace. The minister's comments yesterday are callous, heartless and despicable. We could have, of course, condemned the government about recreational fishing fees. The government has stabbed its supporters in the back. Before the election, the Liberal Party engaged in a whispering campaign alleging that the Labor Party was going to introduce fees for recreational fishing. The Liberal Party stabbed its supporters in the back and introduced that fishing tax. That is an outrageous breach of faith by the Liberal Party. We could have condemned the government for its outrageous position in respect of breastfeeding. We are very pleased that members like the member for Scarborough did not get their way and oppose that legislation. We are very pleased that the government did a back-flip and backed down on that issue and supported the member for Midland's bill in this place. We now challenge the government to provide time in the upper house for debate on that legislation so that that important legislation will pass through the upper house. The member for Jandakot is right. That is another issue that we could have raised with the people of Western Australia. We could have talked about the callous and heartless decision by this government to reduce the payments for Redress WA. I cannot understand that decision of the government. The government has said—whether it is true or not we will never know—that the former government under-allocated funding for this program to provide some payments to these people who were so callously abused when they were in state care. The government could have said, "Well, the former government was incompetent", or whatever. However, instead of punishing the Labor Party and attacking us, the government has taken out its frustration on these people who were so callously abused. I have not been able to understand, and I still am not able to understand, why the government has done that, and why it continues to treat these so dreadfully disadvantaged people in this way.

Mr R.H. Cook: It is cruel.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, member for Kwinana. It is absolutely heartless and cruel what the government is doing. I predict that the government will back down on this as well. This is like the government's decision to leave dead people in morgues rather than pay to have them buried. That is just indefensible. There is no logical reason to support the government's position on that matter. I predict that the government will reverse that decision, because it is just unbelievable that the government —

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It has backed down already?

Dr K.D. Hames: Yesterday.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: There we go. We could have condemned the government for the budget black holes that it has left all around the state. For example, an important issue for people in my electorate is that the government is not funding the necessary upgrades for airport roads. This is a major issue for my constituents in Cannington. My constituents in Cannington use the roads around the airport, Tonkin Highway and Roe Highway, frequently. The problems on Leach Highway and Kewdale Road directly impact on the residents of Cannington, even though the roads themselves are in neighbouring electorates. The budget papers show that there is no money for those projects. It is interesting that Perth Airport put out a press release a while back saying that the government is going to commit \$500 million for the upgrade of those roads. Yet when the budget papers came out, we found out that the amount is only, I think, \$42 million. I will need to look at the exact figure. That is a very miserly amount. That amount is for different projects. It is not even for the projects that were talked about earlier this year. The government's position on airport roads is a disgrace, and it needs to be changed.

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We could have also gone on to point out that the government has not funded the Oakajee project, the Northbridge Link and the 330 kilovolt line to Geraldton, and that it provided inadequate funding for Midland Hospital and is relying on our federal Labor colleagues to do this, as it is with Oakajee and the Northbridge Link. The government has inadequately funded the Esperance port upgrade, and because of the cap on exports at Geraldton port, not only is the government holding back the development of the mid-west with that decision, but also it will get fewer payments from Geraldton Port Authority. Then of course there is Members Equity Stadium. The government said that it would redevelop that stadium, but it has not provided any funding in the budget. We could have been attacking the government on all those things. Of course, the previous motion in this house related to the con job by the Liberal Party on the electorate of West Swan. We could have also condemned the con job by the Liberal Party on the electorate of Southern River, when it promised a railway line that the government will not deliver.

Mr P. Abetz: We did not promise it. I said that I would fight for it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: What is the member doing in fighting for it? His fighting is so successful that the project has been delayed forever. That is how hard the member for Southern River is fighting for it.

Mr P. Abetz: You were going to sell it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The member for Southern River is so effective that not a single cabinet minister is listening to him on the issue of the Southern River rail line.

Several members interjected.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr M. McGOWAN: The member for Southern River on three separate occasions has accused another member directly of telling a lie and I ask him to withdraw that statement.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Southern River?

Mr P. ABETZ: I will not withdraw it because it is a fact. I have a photo in my newsletter showing the minister talking to me about it. It is absolutely true.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Southern River, I ask you to withdraw that.

Mr P. ABETZ: I will withdraw.

Debate Resumed

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The member for Southern River has demonstrated the dedication that he brings to his own commitments.

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: This is the new Liberal lie; the new approach to the way that things are done by the Liberals. What occurs is that Liberal Party members go to their electorates and say that they are fighting for something, with no intention of delivering.

Mr R.F. Johnson: I think the member for Southern River was saying that what you said was a Labor lie.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is very nice! The Minister for Police is a minister in the cabinet. How much is the government putting into the Southern River rail line and the Canning Vale rail line? It is not one cent. That is how much the government is putting in.

We then come to the cuts in my electorate—for example, the cuts to the Cannington Community College budget, the withdrawal of a teachers' assistant from Bannister Creek Primary School, and the cuts to the budget of Sevenoaks Senior College. These are all things that we could condemn. There is then the fraud of the Royal Perth Hospital Protection Bill, because I will take up the point of the member for Jandakot, who talked extensively about Royal Perth Hospital in his speech. I draw his attention to page 14 of the notice paper and invite him to vote in favour of the amendment that I will be moving to that bill, which is to insert the words —

For the purpose of maintaining Royal Perth Hospital, future annual appropriations shall not be reduced to levels below the allocation to the hospital as at 6 September 2008.

Let the member put his money where his mouth is. Let him make sure that we do not have this fraud where we keep the building of Royal Perth Hospital but not the activities of the hospital. There are some challenges there for the member for Jandakot.

We have chosen to go to the heart of the Liberal fraud at the 2008 election. The Liberal plan for the first 100 days of government was a very important document for the Liberal Party, because we all know what was

happening at the time of the 2008 election. What was happening was that nobody believed that the Liberal Party was ready for government, because it was not, and we know that it was not because of the way it has done nothing since it has come into power. Because Liberal Party members knew that the population did not believe they were ready for government, they wanted to show that they had a plan. In Menzies House they came up with the Liberal plan for the first 100 days of government. What did they do? They set out all these action agenda items that they were going to implement because they were an action team. The fact that they had no idea what they were actually going to do was not the issue. They just wanted to get some things out there in the community. It was a very important part of the last week of campaigning. Credit to Ben Morton, the director of the Liberal Party, because it was in the end, with the support of the National Party, a successful campaign.

What happened was that a fraud was committed that the Minister for Police was a part of. I forgot to mention the broken promise of the Minister for Police. He went to the people at the last election promising 500 extra police officers to match the Labor Party's promise. The minister has already broken that promise because he has told us that he will deliver not 500 extra police officers but only 350, and that there will be 150 auxiliary police officers. The minister still cannot tell anybody what that means. What rate of pay will they receive? Nobody knows. Which union will cover them? Nobody knows. This is just another fraud committed by the Liberal Party. It is an auxiliary promise. It used to be the core promise. The Liberal Party invented the core promise and the non-core promise. Now it has the auxiliary promise, which is a promise made when people are not going to deliver, not going to keep their word and come up with auxiliary police officers.

What else did we have? We had a promise about tax reform. This is a very interesting topic, because the now Treasurer, the former Leader of the Opposition, often spoke in this place on issues of taxation and about significant tax reform. The Liberal Party went to the election saying to people that it did not know what it would do about tax but that it would cut tax by \$250 million. That was the promise, yet that promise has been broken because in the 2009 budget the government reversed \$150 million of tax cuts and put it back in as a revenue item.

Mr R.F. Johnson: The opposition blames you for its loss because of the campaign you ran for Labor.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am very interested in the Minister for Police. The Minister for Police made an auxiliary promise and has broken another promise. In cabinet he supported reversing \$150 million of tax cuts. The government will deliver only a modest \$100 million of tax cuts. Let me put that into context. The state collects \$6 billion of taxes a year; in fact, state tax collection will go up over the life of this government. That is what is happening. It is another example of the fraud that the Liberal Party perpetrated on the people of this state at the last election.

I go on to talk about political lobbyists. I read in the *WA Business News* that Paul Everingham is one of the Premier's close and influential people who give him ideas about how to run the state. Paul Everingham is the former state director of the Liberal Party and a friend of mine. He is a person of integrity whom I like; in fact, I will be having lunch with him quite soon. I am not therefore reflecting in any way on Paul Everingham. He is a decent man. However, the question I have is: why has the Premier not delivered on his promise that within 100 days of winning office he would set up a lobbyists register? What is it that prevents him from doing that? What is it that prevents the Liberal Party from being honest with the people of Western Australia and delivering on the promises it made in the 100-days document?

The independent mental health and wellbeing commissioner was also a very important promise from the Liberal Party at the last election. Everybody understands that there are natural strengths of political parties. One of the natural strengths of the Labor Party is that people know we are interested in ordinary folk. We are interested in how people in the suburbs survive. We need only read the inaugural speeches of members on this side of the chamber to see the ordinary things that our members talk about and their interest in the wellbeing of ordinary people in the communities across the state. The reason this promise was so important for the Liberal Party is that it had to undermine our strength. What Liberal Party members did when they were in opposition was to say that they were interested in mental health. Now that they are in government their attitude is that they will worry about it later. What has it cost for a consultant, member for Kwinana? It cost \$1.5 million.

Mr R.H. Cook: It cost \$1.2 million!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It cost \$1.2 million for a consultant to write a policy so that the government knows what to do. But that was its promise. At the time of the election it promised to have an independent mental health and wellbeing commissioner appointed. It promised to fill in the hole, because people know that the Liberal Party is more interested in business and bosses than it is in the ordinary folk of this state. The Labor Party is interested in whether the Liberal Party will ever fulfil that promise. It has already broken its promise and it cannot fulfil the promise it gave to the people of the state. May I have an extension of time, Mr Deputy Speaker?

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY - Wednesday, 23 September 2009]

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Mr Joe Francis; Ms Janine Freeman; Deputy Speaker; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Mark McGowan

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You will not get an extension because we are going to run out of time. You can have the extension!

[Member's time extended.]

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The courts were promised additional powers in an attempt to restrict antisocial behaviour; we are still waiting to see that happen. We are also still waiting to see legislation relating to cannabis. Members opposite say to the Labor Party that we are soft on cannabis laws, when in fact all we did was implement the policies of the Court government.

Mr C.J. Barnett: When did the Court government say you could grow your own cannabis?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The Court government introduced a Drug Court that placed people in diversionary programs, exactly the same as what the Labor Party did.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.