

WASTE AVOIDANCE AND RESOURCE RECOVERY AMENDMENT BILL 2009

Second Reading

Resumed from 17 November.

HON ROBIN CHAPPLE (Mining and Pastoral) [4.00 pm]: When I concluded my comments on the bill yesterday, I was talking about the regulatory regime. I will now go on to talk about the revenue from the landfill levy. Under the provisions of the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act, revenue generated by the increased levy would normally flow directly to the waste avoidance and resource recovery account, which currently funds waste management operations in Western Australia.

The state government introduced the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Amendment Bill 2009 into the Legislative Assembly on 18 June 2009. The bill, amongst other things, amends the WARR act to require the revenue to go first to an operating account of the Department of Environment and Conservation. The Minister for Environment must then direct that some of the money be transferred to the WARR account. In clause 7 of the amendment bill, proposed subsections (3A) to (3C) of the proposed new WARR act require that “true waste spending”—that is my term—be at least 25 per cent of the projected levy revenue for the relevant financial year. However, it is a little more complex than that for 2009-10. It is likely that the actual revenue from the levy will fall short of the projected amount, widening the funding gap between DEC’s previous 100 per cent consolidated revenue budget and its 2009-10 budget under the proposed new regime.

Waste generation is a function of economic activity, so it will inevitably result in reduced waste to landfill and, therefore, reduced landfill levy revenue. Quite clearly, in the budget papers this was not articulated in the forward years. If the proposed new landfill levy is effective in reducing the amount of waste disposed to landfill, and if, as we hope, people start recycling more, that will result in those people effectively also taking away money from their environmental regulator, which is really a bit of a nonsense. We are slugging the public at a new level for landfill recovery, yet at the same time, if people do their best job, which is to recycle more, DEC’s budget will be eroded. As I said, DEC’s budget will also be eroded if waste contractors and businesses simply start dumping waste in un-gated landfill sites, particularly on the fringes of the metropolitan area and in some of the inner-country areas where there are un-gated tips. In other states, waste has even been trucked across borders to resolve the issue of paying the waste levy. Therefore, it is not beyond the realms of possibility that waste might be trucked out of the metropolitan area into some of the closer regional centres. The enforcement of the levy should stop that, we are told.

The revenue stream that will be redirected to DEC does not provide for increased policing of landfill sites. Indeed, it does not even provide for more funding to local governments to help them police landfill sites. Interestingly enough, with the extra waste generated that might be moved to rural areas to avoid paying the landfill levy, there is no acknowledgement that even in the Perth metropolitan area there would be extra funding for local governments to police their gated tips, and there is no understanding that there will be any further funding for regional or remote shires to police their un-gated tips. It is quite interesting that the Minister for Environment has indicated that fines for illegal dumping will be increased significantly. I suggest that increasing the fines significantly is irrelevant if there is nobody to police illegal dumping. Also, if the fines are increased significantly, all that will do is increase the competency of people who wish to deceitfully bypass paying the waste avoidance levy for dumping, and all sorts of inventive practices will be established to get rid of waste, to the detriment of the community of Western Australia.

The minister has also indicated—this really comes back to the “Draft Policy Statement on the Waste Levy and Strategic Waste Funding”—that Western Australia Police will be among the agencies with a role in monitoring illegal waste to landfill dumping. That was news to police Commissioner Karl O’Callaghan, who said that he was previously unaware of the planned police role in monitoring illegal dumping. As such, it is unlikely that WA Police have allocated resources or made plans to fulfil this role in the medium term. WA Police may therefore resist moves to have police officers monitor dumping. Certainly, there is no indication that the police force will receive any extra funding out of this bucket of money to assist in administering what is inept legislation.

There is no levy on regional sites. Contractors may opt to haul waste to adjacent towns with un-gated tips—for example, Northam. Therefore, we have a major concern that we might find ourselves moving the problem to constituents who have less ability to manage the issues than do those constituents in the metropolitan area. The landfill levy on construction and demolition waste will be increased from \$3 to \$12 a cubic metre. Construction and demolition waste is primarily created by industry and constitutes approximately 50 per cent of all waste generated in Western Australia. Although the increase is substantial in percentage terms, it is still five times cheaper to send inert waste to landfill in WA than it is in metropolitan New South Wales. We question to what extent it will result in diversion from landfill in WA. The couple of contractors I spoke to seemed to have little or

no concern about the increased levy. Indeed, they doubted whether they would modify their practices in any way, shape or form.

It is very important at this stage in the debate to make it clear to this place, to the Parliament in general and to the public that the Greens (WA) are not opposed to a landfill levy or, indeed, the proposed increased landfill levy; at least, we do not have a problem with the level it is being set at. We are opposed to a process of robbing Peter to pay Paul. The benefits of an equitable and well-placed policy with a reasonable flow of revenue to waste reduction issues are manifold. When we are dealing with this sort of legislation that increases the levy, we must ensure that the policing effort is active on the ground as opposed to some notion that we will have a much more rigorous fines regime. This will certainly—we have only to look at examples from other states—need people on the ground to ensure that the practices are carried out in the manner that was intended.

The Greens' vision for the landfill levy is not for a sustainable government income stream but for a disincentive that will contribute to our goal of eliminating the disposal to landfill of household, industrial, municipal, commercial and even hazardous waste within 10 years. We are striving for a zero-waste philosophy. That is not just a monetary goal. It requires the department and those administering the WARR account to act extremely constructively in the process. We aim to achieve this through certain mechanisms, including the provision of government assistance and promotion of home composting programs that prevent kitchen and green waste from entering the domestic household waste stream. We seem to be doing everything at the end of the chain rather than implementing an education process of stopping waste from its production and binning. It is rather interesting to note that people in California are charged for the volume of waste in their bins. The charges are pretty extreme. There is compunction right at the household level to minimise waste, buy in bulk, stop packaging and ensure that people are making the best use of their putrescible waste through household composting. The system seems to work. Here in Western Australia we are continuing the idea that at the end of the day it is somebody else's responsibility, we can continue filling our bins and it will be a revenue stream for the government. That is not the direction that we should be taking for waste. We should be minimising waste and looking at the reduction of income generated from that waste and at the reduction of costs to local government and ensuring that waste to landfill is a minimum activity. Implementing a container deposit scheme for Western Australia is one of the very important things that could have been done with the WARR money. If we were looking at a 300 per cent increase, a container deposit scheme would have been an exceptional benefit to the glass recycling that the minister talked about yesterday and to many other recycling initiatives. That is the sort of thing that we should be doing with the WARR money, not propping up a broke and fiscally inept government.

Another thing we could have been doing with the money is increasing funding for full-time equivalents so that DEC staff can better regulate waste management facilities. Unfortunately, DEC has found itself in a great deal of difficulty. It has a reduction in FTEs and it has budgetary constraints that mean that, because of the increased cost of housing in remote and rural areas, many of the officers cannot carry out their functions because budgets are now being moved into facilitating housing as opposed to programs. We aim to fund comprehensive recycling and recovery infrastructure tailored to regional communities. They are the people who are being left out of this. Regional WA has great difficulty recycling because of costs and distances. Backloading through many of the agencies is one of the options that could be utilised. Funding from the WARR account should be used to get the waste out of the rural areas and into recycling plants.

In summary, the landfill levy should be about creating financial incentives to divert waste from landfill. The way in which this government is increasing the levy, however, amounts to diverting household income to the coffers of an agency that should instead be properly funded from consolidated revenue. The landfill levy will, at least in the case of putrescible waste, simply result in a significant increase in household bills. Households are being billed via a tax to prop up, as I have already stated, a fiscally inept government. Already under pressure from increased power bills, households will again suffer. According to the Conservation Council, this funding diversion will add \$39 million a year to DEC's revenue based on landfill levy predictions for 2009 and the out years. The amount fails to make up for \$50 million worth of annual cuts to DEC elsewhere in the budget. Notwithstanding the loyalty of DEC staff to the minister, I wonder how DEC staff are currently feeling about the state government's lack of concern for this agency. I note that my colleagues have been going after the minister. In this case I think that those who are in charge of Treasury are riding roughshod over just about every department. Because DEC does not fit within the fiscal paradigms of this state government, it is one of the major patsies.

I return to a comment that was made by the Premier of this state not long ago when he commented on Bill Clinton's statement that "it's the economy, stupid". The Premier determined that was wrong and that "it was mining and petroleum, stupid". Unfortunately, the environment does not figure in the Premier's thinking. Therefore, DEC has been the butt of this cruel joke.

The former Court government, of which the current Premier and Deputy Premier, in particular, were key members, had the courage to remove the internal conflict of interest in the former Department of Conservation and Land Management whereby the then CALM was both responsible for conserving forests and benefiting from the revenue associated with chopping them down. This bill introduces the same conflict of interest within DEC. It is DEC, not the Waste Authority, that has the authority for waste regulation in WA and it will still have that responsibility after this bill is passed. DEC will be the regulator tasked with supervising tip sites, but this bill will mean that DEC will have a financial interest in not taking action against poorly managed landfill sites. This bill will mean that DEC will have a financial interest only in whether the landfill levy is collected. That is an appalling situation to put the department into. Many people have said in the past—the Premier was one of them when he separated mines and petroleum from state development—that the regulatory authority should not be the same body that is encouraging development. In this case, we have DEC managing landfill, from which it generates income.

HON HELEN BULLOCK (Mining and Pastoral) [4.20 pm]: I would like to make a contribution to the second reading debate on the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Amendment Bill 2009. As was rightly pointed out in the second reading speech to this amendment bill, both the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007 and the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy Act 2007 came into effect on 1 July 2008. Now, only little more than one year later, the government wants to amend it. This rush to amend these acts so soon after their original passage raises the obvious question: why? In order to understand a bit more of the original bills, I got hold of the second reading speech to the principal 2007 bill and have read it a couple of times. I must admit that I agree with what was pointed out in that second reading speech; namely, that the 2007 bill was developed through extensive consultation with local government, the waste management sector and the community. It was a very well thought through and very well constructed piece of legislation. I believe that, at that time, it also received the then opposition's support in Parliament and no amendments to the bill were moved concerning the hypothecation of the levies to the waste management activities. However, the acts placed certain restrictions on how the levy can be applied. The second reading speech for the 2007 bill states —

Since 1998 a levy has been imposed according to the amount of waste going to landfill. The primary purpose of the establishment of the landfill levy was to provide resources to fund projects for advancing waste reduction and recycling.

It states further on —

Levy funds are to be used only for purposes provided for in the legislation. Specifically, the funds will be applied to programs relating to the management, reduction, reuse, recycling and monitoring of waste. The funds could be used by DEC only for administration of the account and developing or coordinating the implementation of programs consistent with the purposes of the legislation. The levy is not to be used to fund other normal ongoing operations of DEC.

I repeat —

The levy is not to be used to fund other normal ongoing operations of DEC.

The original act makes absolutely clear the purpose for which the funds raised are to be used. The government promised taxpayers that the funds would be used for these purposes and these purposes only—the management, reduction, reuse, recycling and monitoring of the waste—and not for any other purposes, especially not for running the Department of Environment and Conservation. Now, after a very indecent short period, this government proposes to revoke that promise to taxpayers and do directly the opposite from what was promised. It not only proposes quadrupling the levy; it also proposes that three quarters of the money raised be diverted from the admirable and socially responsible purposes that the original act intended, and directed into the administrative purse, which the 2007 act expressly states that the levy should not be used for. The government was not only not satisfied with that misdirection, but also it was not able to resist the temptation to take from the Waste Management Authority the power to recommend changes to the levy and place it in the minister's hands.

These amendments sought in the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Amendment Bill 2009 are reprehensible. The first amendment seeks to amend the 2007 legislation so that the revenue generated through the landfill levy can be used to fund the normal ongoing operations of the Department of Environment and Conservation. The second seeks to transfer the responsibility to recommend changes to the levy amount from the Waste Authority to the minister. Pages 74 and 288 of the 2009-10 *Economic and Fiscal Outlook* relating to the landfill levy contain the government's endorsement of an increase of 300 per cent in landfill levy charges. These pages indicate that the increased revenue is to meet existing environmental and conservation commitments. The word "endorsed" is used; however, the Waste Authority did not make the recommendation that the government is endorsing. It was the government's own decision to raise the taxes. Under the 2007 act, the proper procedure would have been for the Waste Authority to make a recommendation to the Governor for any change to the levy for the minister's endorsement. However, this has clearly not occurred. I have a letter from the environment

minister to Mr Barry Carbon, the Chairman of the Waste Authority, dated 15 May 2009, the date after the budget was tabled on 14 May 2009. In that letter, the minister ordered Mr Carbon to recommend the 300 per cent levy increase. This is not what the law prescribes; it is clearly the act of a government that sees itself as being above the law. In the same letter, the minister also very frankly stated that it was intended that additional revenue derived from the increased levy will be used to offset a reduction in the appropriation from the consolidated account required by DEC. There we go—the truth is out. This amendment bill is nothing to do with waste avoidance and resource recovery; it is nothing to do with waste management; and it is nothing to do with recycling, reuse, reduction and monitoring waste. It is simply a revenue bill in disguise.

This bill really should be introduced as a revenue bill instead of a waste bill. The bill is really a wolf in sheep's clothing as its effect will be to direct or misdirect all levies into the operating account of the Department of Environment and Conservation. Twenty-five per cent of that total will be transferred into the waste avoidance and resource recovery account for the Waste Authority to run its day-to-day business. Every dollar that is generated through that 300 per cent increase, which is exactly 75 per cent of the levy, will be retained by DEC to run its normal business. Not even one dollar generated from that 300 per cent increase will be used for waste management purposes, even though that was the purpose specifically set out in the original act. The revenue will now be generated through the waste management excuse. Not only that, as I have previously pointed out, the bill also transfers responsibility to recommend changes to a levy from the Waste Authority to the minister, and, in doing so, it paves the way for future levy increases. I have received a few letters from different shire councils. I will quote some of them. Although Hon Sally Talbot has already quoted some in her speech, I will quote some of the paragraphs relevant to my speech. The Mayor of the Town of Kwinana pointed out in a letter —

... the levy was introduced in 1998 to support the introduction of resources recovery facilities to significantly reduce waste to landfill as a key platform under the then WA State Government Policy “Zero Waste to Landfill 2020”.

She then goes on to say —

The proposed changes to the levy, for the 2009/2010 State Government Budget, sees a significant departure from the initial principle behind the levy and proposes to significantly raise revenue for the purposes of resourcing the operations of a Government Department.

I now refer to a letter from the shire president of the Shire of Capel. It will be quite obvious to everybody that the statement made by the president makes it very, very clear that nobody can be mistaken as to the real intent of this bill. The letter states —

The levy was never designed to offset State Government administrative costs or fund the running of a government department. Local Government will have to pass these additional costs, effectively government taxes, directly to the end user, the members of the community. The decision to use this levy to provide for anything other than *for advancing waste reduction and recycling*, is not appropriate.

He then goes on to say —

Waste disposal is a critical issue for all levels of government, and if the State Government wishes to extract additional funds from this levy, then the funds collected should be invested back into waste management technologies and practices, as was the agreed basis as to why the levy was first introduced.

The letter further states —

Council as a matter of principle is strongly opposed to local government becoming effectively a tax collection agency for the State Government and for funds raised for a specific purpose being diverted elsewhere to supplement the lack of State allocated resources.

The Department of Environment and Conservation is a government department like any other government department—be it the Department of Regional Development and Lands, the Department for Child Protection, the Department of Education, the Department of Transport or the Department of Fisheries. I ask: why is DEC not allocated funds from the general revenue account to run its day-to-day business? One can only conclude that the Treasurer did not have enough money to appropriate funding for the Minister for Environment to run the Department of Environment and Conservation. There is a big black hole in the Treasurer's budget that he has to fill up. At the same time as the Treasurer conjured up a solution to his problem, he also used his magic pudding of tax increases to absolve the environment minister from finding a three per cent efficiency cut. Why do I say that?

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Because it is true!

Hon HELEN BULLOCK: I thank the member.

As WALGA rightly pointed out —

... the hike in levies detailed in the recent State Budget seemed to have more to do with meeting departmental financial targets than protecting the environment.

The Department of Environment and Conservation is set to reap an extra \$39 million as a result of the increases at the same time as being allocated \$33.3m less funding in the recent State Budget.

“The \$5.7m difference is 3% of the Department’s total budget appropriation which is exactly the same as the Treasurer’s efficiency target for all departments,” ...

“Rather than look at how it can reduce expenditure and find efficiencies, the Department seems to have decided it is easier to impose exorbitant fees and make the community pay for their 3% efficiency target.

I have not only letters from different shire councillors, but also a media release from the City of South Perth. All of these express their concerns about this dramatic increase in landfill levies, and all of them oppose strongly this amendment bill and call for the government to seriously reconsider its current position on the increased levy, with funds being directed away from their original intended purposes.

I mentioned earlier that this bill is seeking to fill a gap in the Treasurer’s inadequate budget. It is necessary to talk about the hole in the Treasurer’s budget, because down the track we will see more bills like this introduced in the name of whatever. The truth is that the Treasurer is trying to raise funds to fill up his inadequate budget.

The state budget presented to Parliament on 14 May 2009 did not contain a number of significant government expenditure commitments. These commitments were made both before and after the state budget was released, either by way of expenditure items or contingent liability. Further, a number of additional spending decisions were made by the government after the budget was tabled. None of these commitments is in the budget, but most likely these commitments will have significant financial impact on the state’s finances.

I will go through some of the commitments that were made by the government before the budget was released but somehow were not included in the budget. For example, the government will receive an additional \$16.4 million a year for the next four years by increasing the city parking levy. That totals \$65.6 million over four years. The Minister for Transport stated during the budget estimates hearings that revenue raised through the parking levy will be directed into public transport in the central business district, especially the new Central Area Transit buses. However, we cannot see that expenditure item in the budget, so that is a \$65.6 million black hole.

The second item is the Mandurah railway settlement. The previous government had included this as a contingency item in its budget. However, when the Liberal-National government’s budget was released in May, this item had disappeared from the budget. Since then a settlement has been reached that requires the state government to pay \$52 million.

The third item relates to the police enterprise bargaining agreement. Based on the opposition’s estimates, that will cost the government roughly \$100 million.

The fourth item I want to talk about has something to do with the Department of Corrective Services. The 2009-10 state budget did not sufficiently fund increased prisoner numbers. The Department of Corrective Services advised that it required an additional \$32 million a year as a result of higher prisoner numbers in the WA prison system than were budgeted for. That is a total of \$128 million to fund those cost increases in the prison system. If members are totalling these amounts, it amounts to a \$345 million shortfall in the budget. These commitments made by the government before the budget was released have created a \$345 million black hole in the budget, and sooner or later the Treasurer will have to find money from somewhere to fill that black hole.

Let us now talk about the commitments made by the government after the budget was released. The Esperance port upgrade will cost the government \$100 million. Oakajee port will cost the government \$339 million; the Northbridge Link, \$238 million; Midland Health Campus, \$80 million; Perth waterfront project, \$100 million; Albany Regional Hospital, \$65 million, a new rectangular stadium, \$160 million, and the mid-west powerline, \$250 million. All these commitments are great projects, but the problem is that the government does not have the money for them. These projects have created an even bigger black hole. If members added all those commitments that were made before the budget was released and those made after the budget was released, they total a \$1.5 billion shortfall in the state budget. It is a very big black hole.

Having said all that, I am sure that members can conclude for themselves that I cannot support this bill. I want to emphasize that this bill has nothing to do with waste management or with waste avoidance and resources recovery. I do not wish to mention anything about waste, because if I do so I will fall into a trap laid by the government. I suggest that members on this side of the house who want to talk on this bill should not talk about

waste management, because this bill has nothing to do with waste management; this bill is a revenue bill. This is a revenue bill to raise additional funds to fill up the black hole in the Treasurer's inadequate budget.

HON LJILJANNA RAVLICH (East Metropolitan) [4.48 pm]: I also rise to express my concerns about the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Amendment Bill 2009 and to oppose it and put my views on the public record. I could not agree more with Hon Helen Bullock when she says that this measure is all about revenue and is about nothing more than filling a black hole created by the government—a black hole that has been created by this spendthrift Treasurer who cannot contain government spending and who is now very desperate to find little pots of money that he can put into the war chest, so to speak, because at the end of the day the government cannot pay its bills. The government, more specifically the Minister for Health, could not pay its creditors. I knew the minister could not pay his creditors because I asked a question about outstanding payments to creditors, and I knew from his response that the health minister had a serious problem. The Minister for Health, as part of this government, is only one of 17 ministers. I know that they are all having difficulty paying their creditors on time. They are all having difficulty funding a range of programs and initiatives. We have all been told to pull our belts in and to tighten them because we have a problem. Part of the problem, of course, is that the Treasurer cannot help himself from spending. Another part of the problem, of course, is this royalties for regions arrangement that locks the government —

Hon Wendy Duncan: Four per cent.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: It does not matter whether it is four per cent; it is \$2.8 billion over the forward estimates. Local governments in regional areas are getting the next batch of money before they have spent the last batch of money. Let me assure members that this is causing a great problem. One problem is this legislation before us, which purports to be about waste avoidance and resource recovery, but really provides for broadening the purposes for which the levy imposed under the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy Act 2007 can be applied. Any reasonable person in the community might say that it is, on the face of it, a good idea to have a bill that generates revenue with the intent of putting that generated revenue back into waste avoidance and resource recovery strategies to make sure that we can deal with the growing problem of waste. That would be very sensible. What is not very sensible is for a minister like the health minister to help himself to a pot of money that legally he should not have helped himself to so that he can pay his outstanding creditors. It is not very sensible for the government to wheel a bill into this place for raising revenue through increasing a levy to plug a great big black hole, as it was so very eloquently put by my learned colleague Hon Helen Bullock.

We have a huge problem with waste management. Although this bill provides the legislative power for the revenue generated to plug the black holes created by the Treasurer because of his ineptitude and inability to manage the state's finances and his lack of control when it comes to spending public moneys, unfortunately the problem of how to deal with the challenges of waste avoidance and waste recovery has been put to one side. It has been put to one side because ultimately any money coming in as a direct result of this legislation will not go to that area where it is so very much needed.

Hon Helen Bullock: He can always borrow some money from the health fund!

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: It may be that there are some other little pots of gold in the health budget. We will probably see over time not only the Minister for Health helping himself to a little pot of money that he should not legally be touching to pay outstanding creditors, but also the Minister for Health going to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum and asking him whether it is possible to borrow a bit of money from his appropriation so that he can plug up the hole. We will have all sorts of very unusual arrangements because, quite frankly, when we have a health minister who does not understand the legality or lack of legality of these actions, we are indeed in very serious trouble and heading towards a very dangerous zone. What is happening with this bill is symptomatic of a government that is floundering, a government that has difficulties and a government that is now losing judgement on what is right and what is wrong.

I will spend a little time discussing the waste issue because we are all consumers.

Hon Norman Moore: That's what the bill is actually all about.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I am glad the honourable Leader of the House is keen to hear it, because I am keen to talk about it.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I think it is a good idea because that is actually the title of the bill.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Yes, Mr President; I am getting there. I do not think I have said anything that is not in accordance with the broad policy —

Withdrawal of Remark

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: Before the honourable member gets to the point of the bill, can I ask her to withdraw the remarks she just made about the Minister for Health in saying that what he did with the special-purpose account was illegal? I think she will find the words that the Auditor General used were that it was irregular, but not illegal.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: It is a minor point. I am happy to say whatever you want, Mr President. It is not a point of order.

The PRESIDENT: Order! On the point of order, I did not actually hear the member say the words, but that is not to say that she did not say the words.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: I cannot even remember saying the words!

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Clearly, if the member did imply that the Minister for Health committed something illegal, that should be withdrawn. The member might like to clarify what she actually meant and perhaps that will resolve the situation.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Certainly, Mr President. It is not my job to cast aspersions on the Minister for Health. If that is what was understood or indeed recorded by Hansard, I will withdraw.

Debate Resumed

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: But I really do not have a recollection of putting it in those terms exactly.

Hon Peter Collier: You did say that.

Hon Sue Ellery: You said it was inappropriate.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Certainly it was inappropriate. I make the point also that it seemed to me to be a quantum jump for the Minister for Health to say that because the Auditor General did not say it was illegal, it was therefore okay. At the end of the day, if these things are unimportant, they certainly would not be reported on—they certainly would not be audited, and the audit report certainly would not be presented to Parliament and, through Parliament, to the people of Western Australia. None of that would happen. It therefore must be significant. The point of order was raised by a member opposite. The point I was making five minutes ago was that we are all consumers; even the Leader of the House is a consumer.

Hon Norman Moore: Yes; some consume more than others, and I have watched you over time!

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: What was that?

Hon Norman Moore: You are a consumer of the greatest order!

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I encourage the member on her feet to disregard the unruly interjections.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Thanks very much, Mr President.

The PRESIDENT: If she directs her comments to the Chair, I will listen.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Thank you, Mr President. I can always rely on you!

As consumers I am amazed at how much waste we create.

Several members interjected.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: In fact, I live on my own, Mr President.

Several members interjected.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I do; of course I do. I have a big yellow wheelee bin that goes out once a fortnight and I have the normal green bin that goes out every week, and I can tell members that when I have to wheel them out, they are full. Try as I do to reduce the volume of waste in those bins, and with the best will in the world, it is very hard. Our society is structured in such a way that we buy a packet of breakfast cereal and find that there are about three ounces of flakes in there and about 10 to 15 ounces of packaging. The amount of waste created through packaging is incredible. I did some research into this area, because it is of interest to me. I have no doubt in my mind that the challenge before us is how to reduce the volume of waste per individual; how

Extract from *Hansard*

[COUNCIL - Wednesday, 18 November 2009]

p9198b-9204a

Hon Robin Chapple; Hon Helen Bullock; Hon Ljiljana Ravlich; Hon Liz Behjat; President

to reduce the volume of waste per household; and how to encourage industries to ensure that they are better at recycling and reducing their contribution to the waste problem.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 9212.]