

Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Joe Francis; Acting Speaker; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Mark McGowan;
Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Jan Norberger; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Matt Taylor; Ms Josie Farrer; Mr Dave Kelly

PREMIER'S STATEMENT

Consideration

Resumed from 19 February on the following question —

That the Premier's Statement be noted.

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland) [9.15 am]: I wish to begin my remarks today with the words that the Premier used when he addressed the house on Tuesday. He said —

We continue to be Australia's strongest performing economy, with growth of just over five per cent last year. While we are all having to tighten our belts, this is still the best place if you want a job

I focus on the words "we are all having to tighten our belts", which is a curious statement. I have not seen much belt-tightening in Cottesloe and Nedlands, but I can certainly tell the house that Midland has tightened its belt so much that it can barely breathe.

I acknowledge last year's close election result in Midland. One reason for the close result was the list of promises that Premier Barnett made to the electors of Midland. Since the Liberals failed to win my seat from me a year ago, they appear to have lost interest in the place. I will highlight a few of the broken promises.

On 12 February last year, the Premier visited Midland. It was a busy day for him and in the course of it he made a number of commitments. One that received enormous coverage both locally and statewide was a university for Midland. This was a clear commitment. The Premier said —

A Liberal Government will make land in the Midland Railway Workshop Precinct, near the new Midland Public Hospital, available for lease at a peppercorn rent.

We will also commit \$22million for construction of the facility ...

I would expect the university to offer a broad range of courses at the campus. This would include medicine if Curtin's bid to establish a medical school is successful as well as allied health—such as nursing—business studies, education, and engineering.

He noted the need for such a campus —

We are committed to providing better access to tertiary education to people in the eastern suburbs and promoting opportunities in this region ...

A university in Midland would serve people across the east metropolitan region including Ellenbrook, Forrestfield, the Swan Valley, the hills and regional areas.

In the following month, the promise was reiterated when the Liberal Party released its policy document on its website. It stated that if re-elected, the Liberals would contribute \$22 million and land to support the establishment of a university campus in Perth's eastern suburbs at Midlands. It also stated that the Liberals were committed to providing better access to tertiary education to people in the eastern suburbs, hills and regional areas. I am not sure what the Premier means by "commitment" given the number of promises he has broken in the past few months. The policy also states that the Liberal Party would support the establishment of a university campus at Midland operated by Curtin University, which would be achieved by making land in the Midland railway workshops precinct near the new Midland public hospital available for lease at a peppercorn rent and committing \$22 million for construction of the campus facilities.

Those are grand words and strong words, but empty words. It has been a year since then. The people of Midland, who were promised much with great fanfare, have received nothing so far, except for the Premier's admonition that we must tighten our belts. Indeed, the Premier boasted about his education policy and how it is the envy of the nation. Other ministers for education are apparently queuing up at Hale House to hear the Premier's latest pearl of policy wisdom. Perhaps even Minister Pyne has taken time away from the distractions of Canberra to consult the oracle on the hill here. One piece of wisdom those other ministers can all take back is how to cut education funding savagely and, vindictively, call it reform. One consequence of the Premier's funding cuts is the restriction of student choice. The Premier may not realise, nor might he much care, that government schools in my electorate no longer offer a full range of subjects. Subjects that we took for granted back in the 1970s and 1980s that were available at all government high schools are no longer available at most schools in my electorate. In particular, English literature is not on offer to senior school students in or near my electorate. The member for Kalamunda might like to tune in here because it is not available at Kalamunda Senior High School, one of the schools that the children of people living in my electorate attend. People in Helena Valley and other suburbs of my electorate go to Kalamunda and they complain to me also about the lack of subject choice at Kalamunda Senior High School. It is not just Governor Stirling or Swan View Senior High Schools. If an able

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student aspires to study Shakespeare, Patrick White, Jane Austen or T.S. Eliot, they now have to pay for that privilege if they live in my electorate, whereas they do not if they live in the electorates of Cottesloe, Nedlands or Churchlands. Perhaps the Premier does not know this and is delighted since the works of George Orwell are also on that syllabus and today's Western Australian Certificate of Education students are well aware of an environment in which reform means retrenchment and choices are only for those who are wealthy enough to deserve them.

In the same way, the Premier is claiming to be reforming the TAFE sector in the Premier's Orwellian way called "future skills program". It means that the TAFE fee rises by up to 400 per cent, pricing working-class people out of receiving professional training or forcing them into debt to get that training. What the Premier did not say is that the real purpose of the increases is not cost recovery but market distortion to pave the way for the privatisation of training in Western Australia. Here is another piece of belt-tightening. The young people of Midland denied a university are now being priced out of TAFE and all they are being offered by way of recompense is access to a debt burden through the misnamed fee help program.

But I digress. Let us return to another of the Premier's visits to Midland—this time on 23 January last year. In the course of that particular progress he reiterated a promise he had made in October 2012 to move the Midland railway station. This particular proposal has been around for a number of years. I, along with a lot of other people, have been advocating for it for very many years. Funds were in fact set aside for that exact purpose in Eric Ripper's last budget in May 2008, but the project to move the Midland train station and to have a new station located to the east was scrapped in the first Barnett budget—gone by the end of 2008; taken out of the budget and unfunded. That project has effectively been shelved by the Barnett government, along with the airport link to the hills, so Midland tightens its belt again and waits and waits for the Premier to remember it. It is forced to keep its shabby, inconvenient, poorly sited station—which is perhaps the same situation for the people of Butler, who lost a railway station. Perhaps this is the punishment for the great crime of electing a Labor member. I thought the Premier said he was elected for all the people of Western Australia.

One of the big law and order promises made before the election was for the provision of \$13.5 million for closed-circuit television coverage. Of this, \$8.5 million was for the upgrade of a CCTV coordination centre at Maylands, and the other \$5 million was to be given in grants to install the networks. The press release received on this by the local media was only slightly deceptive, intimating that a statewide promise was for Midland alone, but it did make the rhetorical point that becomes quite a powerful question —

“... people are entitled to feel safe as they travel to and from their homes and this continues the Liberals' commitment to community protection,”

It is a fine slogan, but it is rendered meaningless by the sloth of an arrogant and complacent government. The City of Swan has taken the leading role in the establishment of CCTV infrastructure, as it has in the establishment of street patrols by private security firms to fill the gap left by police who have now been deployed elsewhere. But that CCTV infrastructure is limited and not available to the police; it is not linked to the Maylands centre; it is not even linked to the Midland train station. A fraction of that \$5 million would provide that critical link, but like so many things, that promise has also vanished in the morning mist. What is the consequence for the people of Midland?

Mrs L.M. Harvey: In four years we will achieve it.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I will take that interjection from the member for Scarborough, who must surely be embarrassed about this promise, because, guess what? She does not have a single dollar for it in the forward estimates. When we commit to something, we put it in the forward estimates. The Minister for Police might be a fairly new minister but she should have a look at the ministers sitting around her and she will see that the dollars are there for their funding commitments. She should look at the bloke who sits next to her and she will see that the dollars are there for his funding commitments. She should look at the dollars he has in the out years. She does not have the money for her out years. I hope she is embarrassed and I hope she delivers when she gets to this year's budget because so far she has delivered nothing. We do not have a single camera; our cameras have been supplied by the City of Swan and they are not connected to Maylands. What has happened after one year? Precisely nothing. The minister was right to interject and right to be embarrassed, and I hope that she is so ashamed that, at long last, she will deliver on that promise and we will see some of the dollars in this year's budget. If she does not, it will be a total travesty.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: You'll be embarrassed when we achieve it.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I will not be embarrassed; I will be overjoyed. I will be delighted because that is the kind of infrastructure the minister's government has had six years to deliver and the minister has done nothing—six years of inaction and six years of promises to make my community safer, and it is less safe than it was in

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2008. We have fewer police officers in the east metropolitan region than we had in 2008, and the minister knows it.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: That's not true.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: We have a growing population and fewer police officers.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: Are you going to table the document you're reading from?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I suggest the minister button up because she is adding nothing to this and I refuse to take another interjection. I seek the protection of the Acting Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr N.W. Morton): Thank you, member for Midland! You did invite the interjection from the minister.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: I didn't.

The ACTING SPEAKER: You did; you said you would take the interjection. I would rather you did not question my commentary on this. I invite you to continue your contribution, but please direct your commentary to me. Thank you.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. No doubt you will be concerned about the lack of police in the east metropolitan region, even if the minister is not.

I note also some cruel irony to which the Premier subjected some of the older electors. In January last year in the course of launching a campaign, he visited the Yellow Bird project. A photo of the visit appeared in the local media that showed the Premier and a couple of his hangers-on talking to the program coordinator. The Yellow Bird project was funded by the City of Swan and the Department of Local Government and Communities. It provided digital literacy for retirees and other people on fixed and low incomes. Over three years the project educated more than 470 people and held over 4 000 training sessions. This service helped not only my constituents, but also constituents in Forrestfield, Swan Hills and Kalamunda. This was an important and significant service that enabled people to connect with the digital world and function in our contemporary digital economy. Unfortunately, the Premier's visit to Yellowbird was a cruel hoax and a cynical play for votes. He chitchatted with people and made light of his own lack of digital literacy; he charmed the people in that room with the notion of hope. A comment on the Yellowbird Project Facebook page about the Premier's visit states —

... so we wait to see if anything useful happens in response. Fingers are crossed.

That is what belt-tightening means in the best state and the most enviable state; the place where everyone wants to live and work. It means fewer police, crumbling schools, inadequate railways and a mendacious Premier. Midland has tightened its belt.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Mr Acting Speaker, are you going to call the member to order?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, minister.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: I am sorry, Mr Acting Speaker, I did not mean to speak so loudly.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: There is a whole set of new notches on the electorate of Midland's belt. There is a new notch for its underfunded schools, a new notch for its overpriced TAFE, a new notch for its missing university, a new notch for its rundown wrongly sited railway station, a new notch for the closed-circuit security cameras that remain unconnected to the police network and a new notch for Yellowbird. In the meantime, Midland continues to languish. If the Premier were to take a drive back down Guildford Road, across the Swan River and past the blackened and scaffolded shell of the Guildford Hotel—a scandal that his government has done nothing to address in five and a half years—then go over the railway line —

Point of Order

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Mr Acting Speaker, the member for Midland appears to be reading her speech from the tablet. The standing orders of the house dictate that members are not to read their speeches, unless they are second reading speeches.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr N. Morton): Thank you; I will hear the point of order in silence.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Further to the point of order; I am not reading the speech. I have notes on my tablet and people would be aware that I have quoted material on at least six or seven separate occasions. I intend to continue to quote from my notes and I intend to continue using modern technology.

Extract from Hansard

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Mr M. McGOWAN: Further to the point of order, Mr Acting Speaker. You might note that this is regarding the Premier's Statement and you might also note that the Premier read his statement word for word. If the minister has difficulty with reading, perhaps she should have called a point of order on the Premier.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I remind the member for Midland that it is not the practice to read speeches. You can, however, make reference to notes.

Debate Resumed

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I apologise if I am upsetting the member for Scarborough; I apologise if she does not like what I am saying but things are not as rosy in Midland as they are in Scarborough. We do not have tens of millions of dollars as the member does for the Scarborough beachfront. The story of the western and beachside suburbs is very different from that of Midland. Midland and the eastern region have suffered nothing but neglect since the re-election of the Barnett government.

[Member's time extended.]

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: A forum organised by local media outlets was held last year in the Midland Town Hall. A lot of points have already been made in the house and I have raised a lot of the points raised at that forum and more besides today. A lot more points were canvassed on the evening of the forum. The turnout was such that once the evening got under way it was standing room only at the end of the hall. The audience that gathered for the forum engaged in very vigorous discussion about the future of the neighbourhood that they all call home. One of the contributors made a very telling statement from the floor; one that appears to be lost on the Premier and this government. I will quote what that person said at the forum in Midland —

Midland is not a political ball and Midland matters ...

However, for the Premier, Midland is a source of budgetary saving and nothing more. For Midland's people—the electors and me as the member—it is the most important place in the world. And as people from the most important place in the world we do not like being misled, we do not like being conned, we do not like being played for mugs and we certainly do not like being lab rats in the Premier's ideological experiment of privatisation.

The Premier often talks about governing for all Western Australians. He is not governing for the eastern region right now. He talks about parliamentary process, treating people fairly and so on but he is being quite partisan. I am beginning to find his attitude towards Labor members' electorates contemptuous. I find it contemptuous that his ministers often come to my electorate to engage with people without any reference to me. In this house there is a longstanding convention—if one is to attend a member's electorate in the capacity of a minister of the Crown then one advises the member. It is certainly a tradition that I upheld during the seven and a half years that I was a minister. I acknowledge that some members of the Barnett ministry do advise me when they attend events in my electorate and do consult my office, as is proper. I refer to the member for Kalamunda, whose office always advises appropriately, as does the office of the member for Dawesville. This may be because these members have served in the Parliament for a longer time and understand and respect the traditions. They are also people that have served in opposition and therefore understand the role of opposition and the role of government. They understand that each of us is in this Parliament to represent our constituents. Although the Premier and his ministers may not like some of us on this side of the house and may not like the fact that those electorates elected Labor members, they still need to show those members respect. If ministers do not show respect for the member elected by the people, they are not showing respect for the people of the electorate. If I could give some constructive advice to the Premier, it would be to speak to his ministers about this issue because the way some of his ministers are conducting themselves is inappropriate.

Of course, when it comes to election campaigns it is very much us and them but the people of Western Australia expect better from the Premier than what is currently happening with some of his ministers. The people of Western Australia expect members of Parliament to be mature, cooperative, constructive, and achieve the best outcome for all Western Australians regardless of their financial circumstances and regardless of where they live. In order for that to happen, ministers need to work with all elected representatives. I will highlight a couple of cases to make my point. One is the Guildford Hotel and the situation for the past five and a half years. In an earlier quote I mentioned the words "political ball". This is what we have seen here. For five and a half years the Liberal Party has opportunistically held secret meetings and met with the owners and other people. Various ministers and hangers-on have visited my electorate but have not consulted me at all. Some people in this house may think that is funny; if they do then I say they are immature. The words spoken by the government are hollow unless it also acts and shows some cooperation in this situation. If government members are genuine in saying they want an outcome for the Guildford Hotel, surely they would work together and speak to me and involve me as the local member. I get trite little bits thrown at me like, "You have not met with the owners of the

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Guildford Hotel.” Well, no, I have not. I have no respect for the owners of the Guildford Hotel—no respect whatsoever. They have had five and half years; they have made a lot of promises but delivered nothing. We have been told time and again that something is just around the corner. At the last election, the government said it was confident that a building approval would be done and works would be underway by the end of the year. That is what the Liberal statement said; by September or October we were supposed to see building underway. That was last year. Nearly six months on, there is still no progress or likelihood of progress. In fact, the planning approval, as I understand, finishes in June this year. People have said that the owners paid around \$2 million for the Guildford Hotel. People have also said that they believe that the insurance payout was about \$4.8 million. I was told that figure with some confidence. I do not know for sure if that is the amount, but a number of people have attested that that is a fact. So far, it would seem the owners have pocketed that \$4.8 million from the insurance and delivered nothing. They say not to create fuss, just be really quiet because it might deter future tenants. What nonsense; what a complete nonsense. The only thing that will encourage future tenants is actually having premises. This is a cop-out; this is an excuse. The Minister for Heritage is sitting there, and before our eyes this hotel is crumbling. The minister knows that the current Heritage Act allows for demolition by neglect. What is going to happen? People have raised all kinds of issues with me about what the future could hold for this site, but unless proactive action is taken by the government, nothing is surer than that that hotel will crumble and there will be a huge loss in not just Guildford heritage, but the heritage of this state.

People might say that I am criticising the government. I suppose, yes, I am. But I also want to encourage the government. The government has locked me out of its discussions so far; why not include me? Why not talk to me about what its plans are? No, I do not need to sit around with the owners, but I would like to know, I would like to work on a combined plan. Labor put out a commitment at the last election that if progress was not made by the end of that year it would look to purchase the site in a compulsory action if it needed to. For example, the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, which, at the time, may have still been the Midland Redevelopment Authority, has the capacity to add to its sites that are not contiguous to its area. The hotel could be purchased and added in to the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority. It could be redeveloped by the government and then sold off. It would cost some money and the government probably would not make a profit out of it, but it would not cost all that much in the grand scheme of things—maybe about 10 per cent of the cost of redecorating and improving things at Scarborough Beach. How about something for the eastern region, Mr Premier? How about turning your attention to the Guildford Hotel?

I will make a quick comparison while I am on my feet. During the election, in another a shallow promise this time to the people of Albany, the Premier visited the vacant site where the Esplanade Hotel once stood, and although on the one hand the government had come to Guildford and Midland and said that the rights of the private owners of the Guildford Hotel were sacrosanct and they could do whatever they liked with their land, he hypocritically said that having the site vacant in the centre of Albany was unacceptable and that if something did not happen soon, the government would buy the site. That is just the most gobsmacking hypocrisy; the Premier cannot have it both ways. Since making that promise to the people of Albany, the Premier had done nothing. Do not tell me that the government cannot buy the Guildford Hotel site, because the Premier’s own words were that he could buy the Esplanade Hotel site in Albany because he did not want to see a vacant site in Albany. Does he care about the heritage of Guildford and Midland? This is the landmark building of Guildford, yet it lies there crumbling. The time has gone for people to sit around and say “We are going to wait and wait and wait”. For five winters, that hotel has been unroofed; it is deteriorating by the day. I have heard that squatters are going in there and things are getting worse. What is the government waiting for? What is the Premier waiting for? Is he waiting for someone to get another match and set it alight? Is he waiting for a truck to go through the intersection and give the building a nudge and then go, “Sorry, cannot do anything about it. We tried our best but the Guildford Hotel is gone.” Or are we just waiting for it to slowly crumble and deteriorate to the stage at which it cannot be restored?

Mr J.H.D. Day: What you raise is a very legitimate concern and I agree it is time for action. I will say the Minister for Heritage and I have been discussing it a lot in recent times and it is time for action, it is being examined very closely.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I have a great deal of respect for the Minister for Planning, I ask that he include me in that process. I do not want to score points; I just want to get an outcome. I want an outcome for the people of Guildford, the eastern region and this state.

Amendment to Question

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I move —

That the following words be added after “noted” —

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and that this house calls on the Minister for Corrective Services to explain his involvement with the Pups in Prison program and the secrecy surrounding the escapes over the Christmas period.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro) [9.47 am]: I stand to speak on the amendment that this house calls on the Minister for Corrective Services to explain his involvement with the Pups in Prison program and the secrecy surrounding the escapes over the Christmas period. Briefly, on the Pups in Prison program, yesterday, I asked the Minister for Corrective Services a very specific question that he did not respond to. The minister avoided giving an answer —

Mr J.M. Francis interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Minister, as I said yesterday, I asked a question. The minister's predecessor, Minister Redman—one of the four ministers for Corrective Services under the Barnett government, three of whom apparently missed things that the current minister has managed to identify, according to him; they all failed in the portfolio prior to his arrival on the scene—when he launched the Pups in Prison program at Wooroloo Prison Farm, on 19 October 2011, stated in a ministerial press release that the program would run for 14 to 16 months. The question I posed the Minister for Corrective Services yesterday, was —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr N.W. Morton): Members on both sides, I am listening to the contribution from the member for Warnbro and I would like to do so in silence.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Noting that the 14 to 16 months expired at the time the current Minister for Corrective Services assumed responsibility for the portfolio, the question I asked yesterday was did the minister oversee the extension of the Pups in Prison program in Wooroloo Prison that resulted in the serious gun-toting drug offender Bernd Neumann having the opportunity to take puppies for walks in Wilson as part of the program when he was only three years into a 15-year sentence? That was the very simple question that I expect the minister to answer it when he gets up.

I now move to the secrecy surrounding the fiascos that occurred within the corrective services portfolio throughout the break, mainly in the early part of January, when we saw an extremely violent rapist escape from a van in Geraldton and go on the run with an accomplice, incurring hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of direct costs to WA Police and other government agencies and many indirect costs that have not been accounted for, such as opportunity costs with police spending their time running around the desert looking for escaped prisoners instead of doing their job. I want to focus on that because today the minister tabled in Parliament a very flimsy outline of an inquiry into this matter. We have been waiting seven weeks since the escape of this serious offender for this. The victim and her family have been waiting seven weeks for an explanation from the Minister for Corrective Services as to why, only one month into an 11-year sentence, that individual was transferred to a lower-security prison for his Christmas holidays, when he should have been in a maximum-security prison in Perth.

Mr J.M. Francis interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: This is a serious matter and perhaps the minister might want to pay attention so that he can respond to my questions.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro, direct your comments through me.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I was responding to the minister interjecting across the chamber, and I would appreciate if you keep him quiet or at least urge him to pay attention to me.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Do not question my ruling. I am asking you to direct your comments through me, member for Warnbro.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The Barnett government allowed this violent rapist who was one month into an 11-year sentence to be transferred to a lower-security prison for his Christmas holidays. No explanation had been given for why that individual was allowed to go to Geraldton. In this flimsy outline tabled by the minister, the suggestion is that he was transferred to be close to his family as a result of a bereavement. I understand there is a policy that enables prisoners to apply for transfer to be close to family in the event of a funeral of a close family member. I understand that process is normally undertaken when an application is made, and I also know that 60 per cent of those applications are rejected. The question I want the minister to respond to for the victim of this violent rapist is: if 60 per cent of these applications are rejected, why did the minister allow this violent rapist's application to be approved? In this state, 60 per cent of applications from prisoners who apply for transfer for a funeral attendance are rejected. Historically, at least over the last three years, that is the level of rejection of these

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applications; so, why, when the prisoner was only one month into an 11-year sentence, did the minister allow this individual to go to Geraldton, particularly in light of the fact that his crime is a blueprint for the minister's justification for the laws he intends to introduce for mandatory sentencing for assaults during break-and-enter offences? His offence is the blueprint for what supposedly motivates the minister to introduce mandatory sentencing laws. However, when 60 per cent of applications are rejected, why was this violent rapist one of the 40 per cent approved? That is the first question.

I have a lot of other questions about this pathetic excuse for an explanation for the people of Western Australia around the responsibilities and failures of Serco. The minister has tabled an executive summary titled, "Report on the escape of two prisoners from legal custody at Geraldton regional airport on 3 January 2014", which makes some findings. The first finding that draws the eye is that structural and design flaws contributed to the inner door's inability to withstand the force applied by the prisoners. I do not know what the minister has heard, but I have heard a fair bit about this escape. I reckon, from listening to the Commissioner for Corrective Services, that it was not a structural flaw that resulted in that inner door giving way when the prisoners put their feet against it. I heard that no noise was made when they got out of the van. I have to ask whether the door was even shut. The Commissioner for Corrective Services said publicly that there was a problem with the latch not being snibbed. This suggests a euphemism for not shutting the inner door. We know Serco failed with the outer door and that there is no justification for the outer door being open, because this is one of the new vans the government purchased in 2010, post the coroner's Ward inquiry, so it has air conditioning. We know there is no justification for the outer door being open, so that is a failure right there. That is a policy failure by Serco that should have raised alarm bells and raised a flag in the minister's mind as to whether or not Serco had been providing an adequate service. It was not just happening in this van; it was not just a coincidental or isolated incident but an across-the-board failure and the minister knows that in all likelihood outer doors on these vans would have been left open all over the state. When we go to the issue of the inner door, I want the minister to provide an explanation to the people of Western Australia. I understand there is some claim about a structural flaw on the framework of the door, and the opposition accepts that. The minister got Serco to spend more than \$100 000 to rectify that problem in all of the vans. The minister said that Serco had responsibility for maintaining those vans. If Serco inherited that problem when the government bought the vans that is fine; it was the Barnett government's failure, but Serco has been responsible now for at least two years and it wears that responsibility. The minister needs to explain why Serco did not find that problem before now and so did not fix it. The minister also has to explain why he is not reconsidering Serco's contract in light of the fact that every single one of those vans has that structural flaw. The other question that I really want answered concerns the inner door. The minister knows that that inner door has not just one lock; it has multiple locking features and the ability to shut the door automatically, and, just like a deadlock on the front door of a house, if someone closes the door it should lock. I question whether that occurred on the day and whether that door had actually been shut. That is another question.

Beyond that, what happened to the other two fail-safe mechanisms? If two latches were put across the door and locked, there would have been no way those guys could have kicked their way out of that van, and the minister knows that. That is not a structural flaw; it is a failure on the part of Serco. I am not blaming the blokes on the ground. I am blaming the organisation, the company. I am blaming the minister for the secrecy surrounding this incident, and why he will not reveal those failures. It has nothing to do with security. I have been assured by both the minister and the commissioner that all the structural and procedural flaws associated with this escape have been rectified so that it cannot happen again. In that case, the minister should reveal what went on on the day. It will not reveal any secrets that would enable anyone to escape, because the minister has changed the procedural process and rectified the structural flaws, so he can reveal every detail of how those individuals got out of that inner door and he will not compromise security for the future transfer of prisoners. The minister knows that. There are two reasons that the minister is covering this up. One is the embarrassment to the government, because the minister is incompetent and he has allowed this to occur. The second is the widespread failures of Serco in this contract, which when coupled with three escapes in one month should have triggered the loss of this contract. The minister knows that two escapes in 12 months are enough to trigger the loss of the contract. Serco had three escapes, but when that is coupled with all the failures that could be listed if the minister revealed the full report of this incident, it indicates a widespread failure right across the provisions of services for prisoner transport. The problem is not isolated to this one van or crew. It is not the crew's fault but the policy, and Serco's management. Serco, the company, is responsible and the minister is covering this up. The minister cannot use the excuse that providing information on escapes will compromise future security, because the minister has fixed the problems. The minister has said that the structural and procedural problems have been rectified and will not reoccur; therefore, the minister can tell us about every single problem and reveal the entire report, including the part of the report about that inner door. I know that they failed with the outer door. It does not sound as though the inner door was properly shut. According to the commissioner, the lock did not engage properly. Clearly, no

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secondary locking systems were applied; otherwise, they would not have been able to kick their way out. Why was that not put in this release? Why was that sort of detail not put into this flimsy excuse for an executive summary?

I have other questions, though. There is a finding in the executive summary about the closed-circuit television system. It claims that the CCTV has two separate functions. One is to provide vision of the pod interiors to a screen inside the vehicle cab. The summary states —

This is a function for the immediate benefit of the Serco escort officers.

No, it is not, minister. The quality and monitoring of, and the increased emphasis on, the CCTV is a direct response to the Ward death. It is not there for the benefit of the Serco officers; it is there for the benefit of prisoners to ensure that no-one will suffer any injury or die in the horrible manner in which Mr Ward did. That is why the CCTV is there. That is the first thing. That wording is wrong; the emphasis is wrong. The CCTV is not there for the benefit of the drivers; it is there for the benefit of the prisoners. In the event that it was not working at any stage, it raises the question: why has Serco been allowed to maintain this contract? We must assume that for some time now there has been no guarantee that there is CCTV coverage of the pods in every van in the fleet. The key finding of the coroner's inquiry into the Ward death focused on the quality and failures of the CCTV in that incident. The response of the government in 2010 was commendable. It bought vehicles and all this quality equipment. The government handed over the contract to Serco. If Serco has failed to maintain the CCTV, why is it keeping the contract? If the minister cannot guarantee the quality of the service that is being provided, there needs to be an open and independent inquiry into the maintenance of that contract. It is acknowledged in the summary that the other function of the CCTV is to record the vision to enable retrieval of the video over time. There is nothing in the summary to explain why there is a gap in the recording. We were told that the CCTV was working.

Mr J.M. Francis: The display in the cab was working.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have read that. That is not an explanation. We were told that the CCTV was recording and, for some mechanical reason, the integrity of the component parts may have played a part in the recording not taking place. I put this to the minister: is the integrity of the component parts related to either a failure to switch on the recording equipment or—I think this is true—inadequate battery charge to power the recording equipment? Both of those are complete and abject failures on behalf of Serco. Again, I do not target the individuals involved. I say that it is a systemic problem, and it calls into question the entire contract with Serco. If one vehicle's battery had become flat, in all likelihood no-one would have been looking at the maintenance of any of that equipment right across the fleet. This could have been going on for years and, in all likelihood, has been going on for years. Serco has been reaping the rewards of the \$5.2 billion in contracts that the Barnett government has handed over to Serco since it took office. It has been raking in that money and not doing its job. The company has not maintained the equipment; it has not checked the equipment.

The summary refers to responsibilities for checking. The minister has said repeatedly that those vehicles are the responsibility of Serco; he has said that publicly on numerous occasions. If they are the responsibility of Serco, why was it not maintaining the equipment? Why is the minister allowing it to keep the contract when clearly it has failed? It is not an isolated incident. The minister cannot say that it is isolated just to this vehicle. Answer some questions. Why can we not know the details surrounding that video? We all know that both the staff got out of the vehicle and left the prisoners in the van on their own; otherwise, someone would have been monitoring the back of the pod. It is very clear. I do not know why that sort of detail is not in the executive summary. Why did they both get out of the vehicle and turn the vehicle off? Unfortunately for them, because their company is inept and is failing to comply with its contract, the batteries were not adequately charged to do the recording. Why did they get out anyway? Where were the two Serco officers at the time of the escape? What did they do in response to the escape? How long was it before they found out about the escape? How long was it from the moment they recognised that the prisoners had escaped until they reported it to the police? Did they see the woman at the car rental being affronted by these two individuals? Did they watch that happen and not interfere? Did they pursue the escapees? If they pursued the escapees, was the film recording again at that stage, because it would have been? As soon as they got back in the vehicle and turned the key, there would have been a date and time stamp of that occurring. There would have been a date and time stamp of the moment they turned the vehicle off and got out. It would at least have given us a window of time for the escape. We would know a lot more about what went on. When were the calls made to police? What has happened with the third party responsible for monitoring this equipment, the Ashley Group? Was it investigated? Was it asked questions? Does it have any other financial relationship with Serco? Does it have another contract with Serco that might make it vulnerable to influence from Serco? How deep was this investigation of the equipment, who did it, who referred this matter to the Corruption and Crime Commission and why did they do that?

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All these things are not mentioned in this flimsy report. There are a lot of questions and a lot of secrecy. The only question that can come out of that is: why is the Barnett government covering up so much failure by Serco; why is it so intent on defending Serco at all cost? I think, as the member for West Swan said yesterday, it is because it is too big to fail. The government gave it \$5.2 billion worth of contracts in five years and it cannot afford for it to fail; therefore, it is covering up. This is a massive cover-up.

MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot — Minister for Corrective Services) [10.08 am]: Certainly, I will start on the Pups in Prison program. It will not take very long. Member for Warnbro, there is a very simple solution to this. I will not go through all of the press release of the previous Minister for Corrective Services, but it states in part —

Two puppies made their debut at the prison today, where they'll be trained for the next 14 to 16 months to become so-called assistance dogs.

That is for those particular puppies; it is a 14 to 16-month program to train a dog. It is not the entire program; the program is open-ended. This is highlighted at the end of the press release. It continues —

The program, a partnership between the Department of Corrective Services and Assistance Dogs Australia, will start with two puppies and build from there. The puppies were named Porridge and Biscuit ...

Corrective Services Minister Terry Redman said the program was an excellent example of Corrective Services working for the benefit of the community.

Mr P. Papalia: Did you have any role in authorising the continuation of that?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will get to that. I will just finish this. I tried to answer the question while the member was speaking, but he would not let me. Let me answer it now. The press release continues —

“The Pups in Prisons program has the potential to improve behavioural problems among prisoners while also contributing something positive to the community,” Mr Redman said.

The fact file at the bottom of the press release states —

- **Puppies will undergo training at Wooroloo Prison Farm for 14–16 months**

That is for each dog —

- **Assistance dogs are invaluable to people with physical disabilities, giving them greater independence**
- **More puppies will be trained as the program develops**

The program was open-ended. I can tell members my involvement. When I first became the minister and visited prisons, I went to Wooroloo Prison Farm. I went to a little cell-like hut that a couple of the prisoners who look after the dogs stayed in. I had a chat to one of the prisoners who had a young dog as part of the program. That was my entire involvement in it. The continuation or expansion of the program is a decision that would have been made by the department without my input. Having said that, if the department had come to me and told me that the program had been running for 16 months and asked me whether I thought it was worthwhile continuing—considering that it does not cost the department any money—I would have said yes. I think it is a good program. Did I do that? No. It was open-ended when it was announced, and if the member for Warnbro had read the press release in full, he would have realised that. Does that answer the member for Warnbro's questions?

Mr P. Papalia: There was of course an election in between that time, so you were the new minister at the start of this government's term.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Yes.

Mr P. Papalia: The question was whether you had any role in extending that program—funding that program as a new practice.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: No; it was open-ended, continuous and to be reviewed. It was all outlined in the then minister's press release. If I was asked —

Mr M. McGowan: So you weren't aware of it?

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Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Of course I was aware of the program—if the Leader of the Opposition would listen. Members want to move on to the Serco issue in Geraldton, but they are going to waste my time going back over very simple things.

Mr P.B. Watson: That's the first thing you spoke about.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: It was the first thing raised. If the member for Albany had been in this place, he would have heard it.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: Did you review the programs as part of the process when you became minister?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: This is not something that has a cost to the department. It is in conjunction with Assistance Dogs Australia. It is not something we spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on.

Ms R. Saffioti: Did that media statement talk about walking in the suburbs—that the prisoners were in the suburbs?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: No; it is a different issue. The member for Warnbro did not raise this one. In my view, from my personal experience with dogs, dogs do not have to be taken outside of a prison farm to socialise and train them.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Sorry?

Mr P. Papalia: When did that practice start?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I do not know; it might have been part of the program.

Mr M. McGowan: That's the point!

Mr P. Papalia: The walking outside the prison is the point.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Absolutely; of course. I think it is a good program. If I had been asked to renew it or extend it in the last 10 months since I have been minister, would I? Probably; I think it is a good program. From my experience of going up there and seeing people train the dog, which is probably nine months ago now—it might have been in the first month I was minister—it was a good program. Was I aware they took them outside the prison to socialise them or whether they did? No. Do they need to go outside to socialise? They are in a prison farm with some 400 other prisoners; they probably do not need to leave the perimeter of the prison to socialise the puppy and train it properly. I am not an expert on training disability assistance dogs, but I assume it could be done within the walls of the prison, which is a whole different issue.

So the simple answer to the member for Warnbro's question on whether I know about the program is yes. I met a prisoner who was handling a dog nine months-ish ago up in Woorloo. Did I extend the program? No, but if I had been asked to, would I have? Most likely. Happy? Can we move on?

Mr P. Papalia: Yes, yes, move on.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Scandal?

Ms R. Saffioti: It is a scandal —

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: What—having the Pups in Prison program?

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: This is the one that the member for Warnbro asked the question about; he did not talk about —

Mr P. Papalia: One other question.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Yes.

Mr P. Papalia: Have you found out since this incident how many times that prisoner went walking the puppy outside the prison before he escaped?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Yes. He had been on some kind of release outside the prison, I think, 13 times.

Mr P. Papalia: So he had time to scope the joint out, make his arrangements, get his car delivered and get the passport and the money and all that sort of stuff sorted?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: As I said yesterday, I am not going to go into too much detail because this is obviously subject to a fairly significant inquiry. As I said publicly, the mind boggles when I look at the history of this particular person.

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Mr M. McGowan: You're always the commentator.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I was asked a question and I answered the question and I am accused of commentating.

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): Member for Cockburn, if you had not noticed, the Acting Speaker is on her feet. Members, Hansard is attempting to record this debate and at the moment we have a lot of voices, including the very annoying member for Albany at the moment, speaking over the top of each other. Minister, if you direct your questions at the other side, I am pretty sure they are going to debate you. Would you please direct your questions through the Chair, thank you.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Certainly, Madam Acting Speaker; it was just that there were so many I could not write them down fast enough. I will go through them, and I am happy to take interjections towards the end in case I miss something in the 14 minutes remaining.

Turning to Geraldton, there are two issues: firstly, the decision-making process as to the suitability and the reason one particular prisoner was relocated to Greenough Regional Prison during that time of the year. If the member for Warnbro reads the executive summary—I note his criticism of it; I am sure I will pass that criticism on to the Commissioner of Corrective Services, who obviously —

Mr P. Papalia: Can I ask you one thing then at the outset?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Yes.

Mr P. Papalia: Will you allow me to receive the full report in confidence, so that I can read it?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will ask the commissioner for his advice on that. There are a number of people in this place who would understand the principles of operational security—the member for Warnbro would be one of them, I would be one of them, the member for Willagee, and the member for Churchlands behind me.

Mr P. Papalia: It's not operational security.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Let me answer the member's question—sh!

Mr P. Papalia: No, I've got another one. The question isn't about operational security; it's about accountability of government.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Sure. I am going to accept the recommendation of the commissioner who says to me that there are issues in releasing this because we do not want to compromise the operational security of the prison system. The short answer to the question, member for Warnbro, is that I will have a conversation with the commissioner, and if he is happy to sit with the member for Warnbro or have someone from the Department of Corrective Services sit and discuss it and show the member a copy of it, then that is his call and I will take his advice on that.

To go back to the actual first issue: the escape at Geraldton, the decision-making process and the reason that particular prisoner was transferred. The fact was that he was there not because it was Christmas time, not because he was there on some kind of junket like the member for Warnbro made out in the media; he was there for the purpose of—I am going to read directly from this—facilitating sorry time as the result of the death of a close family member. I am happy to talk to the member for Warnbro privately as to what that particular issue was and why he was there. I do not think it is in anyone's interest to reopen issues relating to Aboriginals attending funerals. I do not think it is in anyone's interest to reopen issues that came out of the royal commission into deaths in custody. If the member for Warnbro wants to —

Mr P. Papalia: But you understand the controversy—60 per cent of these applications get rejected, and this guy gets approved. What's going on?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I am happy to have that conversation with the member privately. The member may have a different view, but what he can take out of this —

Dr A.D. Buti: Are you changing that policy or not?

Mr P.B. Watson: Sixty per cent!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Yes, but 60 per cent—the member does not know how ludicrous some of those applications are!

Mr P. Papalia: They're all funeral applications—60 per cent of funeral applications.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Yes, member for Warnbro, but just hear me out. This is really simple. If there are 100 applications, one of them might be for someone's direct mother, one of them might be for someone

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exceptionally close to that person, but 60 per cent of them might be for uncles, aunties or a distant relative. They will be considered differently from someone who is a closer relative. I do not think any weight can be put on the percentage as to how many are rejected and how many are approved unless we look at a breakdown —

Mr P. Papalia: Okay, but the week after this escape occurred you were calling this guy a scumbag, and you were accusing people inside the department of making gross failures for allowing him to go there. Now you're defending it.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: No, I am not defending it at all. What can be taken out of this is the fact that Commissioner McMahon immediately took on board the responsibility of approving all non-essential prisoner transfers himself because there was an issue, obviously, with the decision-making process.

Mr P. Papalia: I want to know what he was doing there.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The member for Warnbro wants to know what?

Mr P. Papalia: I want to know how you allowed him to be there.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Member for Warnbro, there are 35 000 prisoner movements a year—250 a day. He was assessed —

Mr P.B. Watson: There are 34 999—there's one still missing, isn't there?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Transfers. There are 5 000 prisoners and 35 000 transfers a year—250-odd a day. It is a massive logistical exercise. There are a whole range of rules in the adult custodial area as to who and why and how people get moved around the state. It is an expensive business—the member knows that. It is the fourth biggest department of government by budget.

Mr P. Papalia: But you claimed that you didn't even know about it until after this incident occurred.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Of course I did not know about it. Member for Warnbro, do you really think I am made aware of every single one of the 35 000 prisoner movements a year?

Mr P. Papalia: If it's such a big part of your portfolio, why hadn't you been briefed on prisoner transfer?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Of course I have, but does the member for Warnbro think I am made aware of every single prisoner —

Mr P. Papalia: No, you said you had no knowledge of the policy until this escape.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: No, what I said was, "as if they would have sent him up to Geraldton for Christmas". They did not send him up there for Christmas; they sent him up there for a grieving process to do with a funeral. It just happened to be at Christmas. Last time I checked, people do not really pick the time of year for when they pass away.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: If members opposite want me to answer the questions—I am down to nine minutes.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Right, the escape. The executive summary report that has been released states that there were both structural and procedural issues with the movement. I have said publicly, and I still stand by it, that the vans were transferred to Serco just over two years ago. They were purchased—I think there are some 40-odd vans. They cost the state —

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Forty-one. They cost the state about \$17 million. It was a massive fleet upgrade that came out of the inquiry into the unfortunate death of Mr Ward. When Serco purchased the prison vans, if there was a fault in the vans in the first three months—the statutory warranty for a motor vehicle in Western Australia—it had to be repaired. If anybody here buys a car and there is something wrong with it, the person who sold it to the buyer has to repair it. Over two years in, it is a bit late for the person who owns that vehicle, in this case Serco, to say, "Well, there was a fault in the vehicles that you may have sold me two years ago but we've only just picked it up now." Besides that, part of the fault, when we are talking about the locking mechanism, may not have existed two years ago. It may have come through wear and tear of the locks or wear and tear of the structure of the doors—part of the fault; not all of it, part of it.

Mr P. Papalia: A two-year-old van!

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Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Absolutely. There is a thing called metal fatigue. That is one of the reasons why this report took so long. I appreciate the member's frustration, but there are a number of different processes that had to be gone through, and part of that was the digital video recording, and I will get on to that as well.

Mr P. Papalia: I am not so concerned about the structure fault. I think that is actually a furphy, but keep going. Was it locked? Were the other two locking mechanisms engaged? Was it actually snibbed—the inside?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Was actually what, sorry?

Mr P. Papalia: Was the inside door actually shut and locked as it should be; when you push it closed, it automatically engages?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Obviously not.

Mr P. Papalia: So what you're saying is that the inside door was unlocked?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: No, it was shut.

Mr P. Papalia: Unlocked.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Let me put it this way: if the locks had been double-checked and procedure had been fully followed, then the chances of it coming open would have been minimal. Also, if the locks had been in full maintenance order, so to speak, in perfect working order —

Mr P. Papalia: Forget about that! That's ridiculous! You know that's a furphy!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: No.

Mr P. Papalia: The lock was not snibbed.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Before the member for Warnbro makes that allegation, I will have a conversation with the commissioner this morning.

Mr P. Papalia: Then release the whole report! If I'm not accurate, release the whole report. Clarify it!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: What I will say is that it was due to both procedural and mechanical failure of the doors. A combination of both—both factors were involved. If the locks were working perfectly, the door would not have opened and if procedures had been followed perfectly, the door would not have opened.

Mr P. Papalia: Were the latches done up on the inside door—the other two locking mechanisms, the backup ones?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I understand —

Mr P. Papalia: Well, obviously not!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: There are three locks that work in conjunction.

Mr P. Papalia: No. There's one lock that shuts when you shut the door and then there are two latches you put across with other locks. They weren't on, were they?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I think they work in conjunction.

Mr P. Papalia: No, they weren't.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: At the end of the day, as I said, I will have a meeting with the commissioner as soon as I finish here and I will ask him.

Mr P. Papalia: Have you read the whole report?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Yes. I received the report on Tuesday night. I have read it.

Mr P. Papalia: So you've read the whole report and you can't remember whether the two locks were done!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I read it. I sat here on Tuesday night and I read through it twice. I read it on Tuesday night; I considered it Wednesday and I tabled the executive summary on the advice of the commissioner.

Mr P. Papalia: Is that all you're going to tell us about that door this morning?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Yes, it is.

Mr P. Papalia: Can I ask you another question?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Sure.

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Mr P. Papalia: How many days after the escape did Serco surrender that van to the police for investigation, noting that it was a crime scene?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I can probably get the member the exact time and date.

Mr P. Papalia: Was it two days?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: It was pretty close. I will provide the member with the exact time and date.

Mr P. Papalia: From the moment of the escape, until two days later, no-one outside of Serco got to investigate that van?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will have to check that.

Mr P. Papalia: Thank you.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will check that, but the van was brought to Perth for investigation by the department.

Mr P. Papalia: Two days later?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will check that for the member; I do not know.

Mr P. Papalia: Is that in accordance with police practice?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I am not the police minister; I do not know what the police practice is of investigating police.

Mr P. Papalia: Do you normally hand over a crime scene two days after the event?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Look, do I know what the police practice is, as to handing over a particular crime scene? No, I do not. What a ridiculous question. I will move on. I will talk about the video inside the —

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Members opposite are wasting my time and will not get their answers.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will talk about the video inside. The way it works is that there are video cameras in the pod. The images are relayed onto the dash of the prison van. The operators of the van—the driver and the person in the passenger seat—can actually see what is going on in the back of the van. Along with that, there are things like air temperature sensors, duress buttons that the prisoners can press, and intercom systems so that the operators of the van can talk directly with the people in the back.

Mr P. Papalia: Does the recording equipment have to be switched on by the guards when they get out of the vehicle and turn the key off?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will double-check that, but I think it is automatic.

Mr P. Papalia: If it's automatic, was the battery flat?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Part of the mechanical problem, and I am not a technician either.

Mr P. Papalia: The battery was flat!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Not just that. It was not —

Mr P. Papalia: The battery was flat on one of 41 vehicles and very likely on other vehicles!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Let me just say this: there was also an issue with the integrity of the hard drive.

Mr P. Papalia: The battery was flat!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: It was not just about the charge of the battery.

Mr P. Papalia: But was it flat?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: It was not totally flat. There was some charge in it.

Mr P. Papalia: Okay. Would it have had enough power to power the automatic recording device? Come on, it must be in the report!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: It is, but what the member needs to know is that when the department —

Mr P. Papalia: You're covering up!

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Mr J.M. FRANCIS: No, just shut up and listen to me: when the department realised that there was no data recorded on the hard drive, for whatever reason, whether it was because the battery was flat or a faulty hard drive, whatever reason —

Mr P. Papalia: What did they do?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Shoosh! Just sit! Good dog! Sit!

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I only have one minute left, and the member wants me to get it out. The first thing the department did was refer it to the Corruption and Crime Commission so it could make absolutely sure that there was nothing untoward in the treatment of the data on the hard drive, and they did that. The CCC reported back on that. The member for Warnbro came out saying, “The department and the minister need to refer this to the CCC today.” It had been done five weeks earlier, but it took some time —

Mr P. Papalia: Why was it referred to the CCC?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Because there was no data on the hard drive. I just said that. They wanted to make sure there was nothing untoward in the treatment of the hard drive.

Mr P. Papalia: So there was suspicion there was a cover-up?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: When there is no data on it, we need to rule out all possible options, do we not?

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn) [10.28 am]: The response from the Minister for Corrective Services and the tabling of this paltry explanation of the escape of the prisoners from Geraldton regional airport raises more questions than the minister provides answers. I go quickly to these issues. First of all, when the minister talks about the design flaws and structural problems of the security door, the minister should know that all the equipment inside corrective services is tested thoroughly. For example, when the two new units were built at Hakea, the doors and the windows into the units were tested thoroughly and were found to be wanting and were completely replaced. The minister cannot stand here with this report and say that there were design flaws, that there were structural problems with the doors of the van, because those would have been tested thoroughly. The minister knows that all this equipment is tested thoroughly before it is put into service. Therefore, what the minister said is not true. I put it to the minister that he should table information that relates directly to what those design flaws and structural problems are. The minister should also table information about the testing of the security systems of the van doors.

The second issue is the closed-circuit television recording function. The minister’s executive summary states —

Independent testing of the system showed that the recording function had ceased weeks prior to the escape event.

The minister’s own report states that the CCTV recording function had not been examined for weeks. How good is Serco’s ability to monitor prisoners in its van if the equipment in its van had not been checked for weeks? For the minister to say he does not have any technical knowledge of that is rubbish. The minister has told the house many times about his background and his knowledge of mechanical and electrical items and how he strips down and rebuilds cars. The minister knows exactly what the issues are. The minister even said that the battery had some life in it. The minister knows what the problem is—it is in the report. The minister should be honest with the house and be honest as a minister and table that report. The minister can take out whatever sections of that report he believes might expose security, but he should table the report so that the people of Western Australia will know exactly what went on. If the minister will not do that, the member for Warnbro will continue to call—as he should—for a proper inquiry into all the incidents around the escape and the minister’s role in responding to those incidents.

The third issue is the terms of reference for this inquiry. The executive summary states that the terms of reference include —

- identifying how the prisoners were able to breach security and abscond
- reviewing the adequacy of emergency and risk management, and
- investigating any compliance issues

That is just management jargon and management gobbledegook. If the minister wants to ask questions using management jargon and management gobbledegook, he will get management jargon and management gobbledegook answers. The minister has those answers in his report, under “Summary of Recommendations”. I will quote one of the recommendations —

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That the risk assessment tools currently in use could be improved to support a risk management culture and to approach risk using a Composite Risk Index.

What does that mean about the escape of two prisoners, one of whom is highly dangerous, from a van at Geraldton Airport? It means that the minister will bring in a new risk management culture using an outside contractor—that is another one of the dot points—to help manage the risk within the Department of Corrective Services. Is that not the job of the management of the Department of Corrective Services? The minister has identified that what he needs to do is look at the risk management culture and bring in an outside contractor to help manage the risk. No, minister, that is not what this is about. This is about the minister making sure that his department operates properly. This is about the minister playing his role as the boss of the Department of Corrective Services—as the minister responsible for the Department of Corrective Services—to ensure that his department runs correctly.

Another of the recommendations is as follows —

That DCS reviews critical incident response policies to define tasks, roles and responsibilities for various positions that includes independent investigation and evidence preservation ...

What does that say? For the minister to raise this issue in his executive summary says that there is a serious issue with the role of Serco and its investigation in the first place, and also with its evidence preservation, as raised by the member for Warnbro. The minister has not explained that. That is why this document raises far more questions than the minister has answered today.

MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham — Leader of the Opposition) [10.36 am]: We have moved this amendment in an attempt to get answers about some very important issues. It would be fair to say that over the summer period, there were significant issues surrounding the escape of prisoners from the clutches of the Minister for Corrective Services. We want to get some answers about those issues.

Two issues are raised in the amendment. The first is the escape of dangerous drug dealer Bernd Neumann while walking a puppy in Wilson under the Pups in Prison program. The only answer we got from the minister about that incident was that that prisoner had been let out of prison on 13 separate occasions. Members might recall that the Minister for Corrective Services was quoted on the front page of the newspaper as saying that he would get to the bottom of this, and there might have been some ill-doing inside his agency that enabled that prisoner to be let out. One would assume from that that this prisoner was let out of prison only once. However, the minister has just confirmed that this prisoner had been let out on 13 separate occasions. Was that 13 separate occasions of walking a dog at a park; and, if it was, what does it say about the veracity of the minister's claim that there might have been some ill-doing or misconduct inside his agency? Surely if there was misconduct inside the minister's agency, this guy would not have been let out on 13 separate occasions, because someone else would have noticed. Why was he let out? How did it happen that he was let out 13 times? Was he walking a dog on each of those occasions? Again, the minister's answers raise more questions than they provide answers. I would like to know the answers to those questions in relation to this bloke, who still has not been found. He is out there somewhere—who knows where and who knows what he is doing. Again, we want answers about that.

In relation to the escapes from the van in Geraldton, I find it incredible that the minister acts as though he is just a commentator on these issues. The minister is always saying, "I am really angry about this and I am going to get to the bottom of this. A culture has developed, and I want to know how this has happened." This government has been in office for nearly six years. The time for the minister to be a commentator is over. The time for the minister to take responsibility is upon him. Take responsibility, minister. Man up and say, "Yes, I am the minister, and this is my responsibility."

A range of questions posed by the member for Warnbro have not been answered. Why were the prisoners in Geraldton? The minister always talks in broad terms without answering the question. Why so soon into their sentence were they in Geraldton at the airport? What was the arrangement inside the van? Were the doors properly bolted? If there were three locks, was each of them properly bolted; and, if not, why not? Then the minister revealed that the battery on the recording device was "not totally flat". I would have thought that a battery is either flat or it is not. If it is not totally flat, that means it is not flat. The confusion in the minister's tone shows that he does not actually know whether the reason the recording devices were not working was to do with the battery or the van. Why were the cameras not working? I remember Christian Porter going on about how there would be cameras in these vans and that they would fix some of the issues. It turns out that the cameras were not working. Why were they not working? Was it a battery issue, was it a maintenance issue or was it a whole range of issues? Regarding the van itself, if that crucial piece of evidence in a major criminal inquiry was not surrendered to the police for examination for two days, it raises all sorts of suspicions in my mind that the minister has not answered. There are five or six questions that have not been answered. The minister needs to take responsibility and provide proper evidence. All this executive summary does—this two-

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and-a-half page piece of flimsiness that has been tabled here—is raise a whole range of questions that have not been answered. The minister needs to do two things: first, he needs let the shadow minister, in the confines of the minister's office, read the actual report to see whether there are other issues that need to be raised; and, second, he needs to have a proper inquiry, not this internal whitewash.

Division

Amendment put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Ms L.L. Baker) casting her vote with the ayes, with the following result —

Ayes (16)

Ms L.L. Baker	Mr F.M. Logan	Ms M.M. Quirk	Mr P.C. Tinley
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr M. McGowan	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Mr P.B. Watson
Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr M.P. Murray	Ms R. Saffioti	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr P. Papalia	Mr C.J. Tallentire	Mr D.A. Templeman (<i>Teller</i>)

Noes (31)

Mr P. Abetz	Mr M.J. Cowper	Mr A.P. Jacob	Mr D.C. Nalder
Mr F.A. Alban	Ms M.J. Davies	Dr G.G. Jacobs	Mr J. Norberger
Mr C.J. Barnett	Mr J.H.D. Day	Mr R.F. Johnson	Mr D.T. Redman
Mr I.C. Blayney	Ms W.M. Duncan	Mr S.K. L'Estrange	Mr A.J. Simpson
Mr I.M. Britza	Mr J.M. Francis	Mr W.R. Marmion	Mr M.H. Taylor
Mr T.R. Buswell	Mrs G.J. Godfrey	Mr J.E. McGrath	Mr T.K. Waldron
Mr G.M. Castrilli	Mrs L.M. Harvey	Ms A.R. Mitchell	Mr A. Krsticevic (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr V.A. Catania	Mr C.D. Hatton	Mr N.W. Morton	

Pairs

Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr B.J. Grylls
Mr R.H. Cook	Dr K.D. Hames
Ms J.M. Freeman	Mr P.T. Miles
Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms E. Evangel

Amendment thus negatived.

Consideration Resumed

MR R.F. JOHNSON (Hillarys) [10.46 am]: In my first 20 years as a member of this house I have advocated on many issues. During the last year, though, my focus has centred on one main issue—the state's increasing debt levels. This is because I believe it eclipses in magnitude all the other matters that have come before this house in recent times. Last year, while many Liberals were basking in our election victory, I became a killjoy by predicting that we would not be able to keep all of our election promises. Unfortunately, that has come to pass. I predicted that despite the backtracking on promises, we would still lose our AAA credit rating. Sadly, that has also come to pass. I said that the consumer price index—only assumptions for salary increases in the budget are believable only to those who believe in Father Christmas, and less than one year on, we have already breached those assumptions. Despite all this, some individuals would have us believe that everything is fine and the debt is nothing to worry about. They believe we should feel very confident that it will not affect our futures or indeed our careers as members of Parliament. I believe that those words are akin to the assurances given by the designers of the *Titanic*. The midyear review predicts that Western Australia's percentage of gross borrowings by 2016–17 will place us behind only New South Wales and Queensland. In those two states the Labor governments responsible were electorally annihilated. I sincerely do not want this government to meet that fate.

Before anyone accuses me of being negative, they should note that the Premier's Statement this week painted a much bleaker picture than I have of WA's debt position relative to the other states. The statement said that debt was \$40.09 billion in New South Wales, \$34.6 billion in Victoria, \$31.3 billion in Queensland and \$20.25 billion in Western Australia. In June 2013, population figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicated that that figure represents over \$5 400 for every man, woman and child in New South Wales; \$6 000 in Victoria; \$7 600 and Queensland; and over \$8 000 in Western Australia. That \$8 000 figure is of course projected to grow to \$20 000 and beyond. That is in the order of \$100 000 per family, the interest on which will be some \$5 000 per annum. How does anyone think we will collect \$5 000 per family per annum in state taxes just to meet our interest bill? Without urgent correction, we will leave our children a debt in perpetuity. We hear words like “this government makes tough decisions” for pushing through projects such as the new stadium and Elizabeth Quay. It is time that we also made the tough decisions on arresting the rise in the state debt, and then actually reducing it. Again, except for those who still believe in fairytales, we will not achieve this without spending less than we bring in.

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The specific area that I will be addressing today is the sacred cow that I believe is long overdue for debate—that is, royalties for regions. There is no doubt that the theme of royalties for regions was a shrewd political tactic during the 2008 election. National Party members did very well with that slogan and it gave them the balance of power in forming government. I use the term “slogan” because at the time that is all it was, and I applaud the then Leader of the Nationals for the political benefits he secured for his party. I do not believe that there had been any proper planning for how the funds would be spent. All it needed was the slogan or theme to catch the imagination of regional and rural voters, and, in the absence of any real vision for their future, it definitely worked.

There is a very important question that needs to be addressed, though—it is fairness and equity for all Western Australians. Let us be clear that most regional communities are not the beneficiaries of projects such as SuperTowns. Is it fair for such a large proportion of royalties to be used exclusively for the benefit of anointed regions, bearing in mind that there has been and always will be funds spent from the consolidated account in these same areas? Is it not the case that the mineral royalties from Western Australia belong to all its citizens? It is an unfortunate reality that some regional and rural councils had a difficult job in being able to spend some of their funds; that is why they ended up with plastic cows and musical toilets—hardly essential government services and infrastructure.

I am and always have been of the view that Western Australians living in regional areas need some extra support. Life can be pretty tough for our farmers and those who live in our country towns and rural areas. In fact when I was a minister under Premier Richard Court, I actually introduced the Buy Local policy. That ensured that all regional government departments had to give first preference to local companies for all their supplies or building requirements. This policy became mandatory and assisted many people living and working in these areas. There was a 10 per cent allowance that helped local business to be competitive. But any spend in regional areas should be based on need, not on some arbitrary quota set by a political party. The main question we must now all ask ourselves is this: should all Western Australians be treated in a fair and equitable way? When I ask this, it needs to be understood that the distribution of royalties for regions funds is far from equitable even among rural and regional Western Australians, as only a small percentage of towns are selected for the major programs. Surely we should be spending our income in areas where the need is greatest. Good government should be able to make these sorts of responsible decisions. Indeed, whereas the National Party is a sectarian party, the Liberal Party has always sought to represent the whole of the community. For this reason, we have traditionally enjoyed majority support in regional Western Australia.

The royalties for regions ploy has significantly diminished the standing of the Liberal Party in regional WA relative to the National Party, while we also take the full hit in the city for the collateral damage in the form of various broken promises such as the Ellenbrook railway, the light rail and the airport link. Indeed, I remember the words of Tim Marney, the former Under Treasurer, back in 2008 when he warned that royalties for regions could cost the state its AAA credit rating, and the Nationals at the time said that we could instead give up projects such as the Ellenbrook railway.

Let me make it quite clear that my comments are not an attack on the National Party or its ministers. In fact, I would go as far as to say that when I was in cabinet, the Nationals ministers were among the most capable. I say this in the knowledge of working closely with them over a long period. Nevertheless, I believe it is now time to abolish the royalties for regions policy and the legislation that divides our people into two categories; namely, those who get extra from this policy and those who miss out. Surely with the unprecedented debt that we have at the moment and with it increasing every month, now is the time to make a long overdue tough decision and tell our friends in the National Party that we can no longer afford to indulge them with this policy. Just as I believe that as a matter of principle it is wrong to continue with such discrimination against many of our citizens, the Liberals have always sought to be one party for one state. With the wisdom of hindsight, we should never have entertained the wedge politics of city versus country that royalties for regions represents. We must now correct our mistake in light of the state’s new economic circumstances, which if unaddressed will ultimately be devastating for both city and country people alike. It is my earnest hope that our colleagues, the Nationals, will take a mature approach to the shared budgetary challenge by giving up or at least putting a moratorium on the royalties for regions policy. If not, then the government will have a genuinely tough decision to make.

Many people do not realise that many of the projects announced under the royalties for regions banner have increased our debt and put a huge burden on taxpayers to eventually repay it. The very name of the program is extremely misleading. In truth, our royalties are operating revenue. Nearly all of our operating revenue is all spent on operating expenditure. We simply use the figures from this operating revenue to calculate an arbitrary 25 per cent figure for the royalties for regions program. We then borrow a significant amount of money to pay for capital items associated with this program and plunge the state into even further debt. Because of the budgetary situation we face, some of the expenditure coming from royalties for regions is not how it was

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originally designed to be spent and is being spent in areas that would normally be covered by the consolidated revenue expenses.

Why keep up a charade that everything is normal? The government should simply ensure that country people get their fair share of infrastructure and services like everyone else. We should now bite the bullet and show common sense and abolish royalties for regions. I do not believe that country people would want to see discrimination against their metropolitan cousins, and indeed many of their country cousins as well who miss out on the money, as it is splashed around very unevenly.

Royalties for regions is in many ways a big welfare program that does very little to bring real businesses, economic growth and ongoing employment opportunities to regional Western Australia. Surely the focus of a conservative government should be on supporting private industry to thrive in the regions. Commercial enterprise can make real and sustained differences to the long-term viability of many of these communities in a way that government never can. Without tackling royalties for regions, we will continue to penny-pinch on critical matters such as the road trauma trust fund. The legislation that supports this account is being ignored. The Road Safety Council recommended that almost \$105 million should be spent on projects and infrastructure that it believes will save lives and prevent critical injuries—lives of both city and country people, I might add. Instead, the government is spending only \$76 million from the fund. This is wrong and I believe goes against the spirit of the policy and indeed the legislation. All of these funds are derived from speed and red-light cameras.

In the past, credit rating agencies have accepted that to protect our AAA credit rating, we should not exceed a debt-to-revenue cap of 47 per cent. The net debt-to-revenue ratio at the end of the last financial year was 48.7 per cent; it is projected to reach 53.3 per cent at the end of this financial year, and 61.6 per cent by 2017. I believe that what we see highlighted in the 2013–14 midyear review shows that, unlike the situation faced by the federal government, there has been no collapse in revenue to the state government. Revenue growth for this year is now predicted to be 9.9 per cent, up from 8.9 per cent in the budget. The problem is continued high growth in spending, now forecast at 8.4 per cent. The fiscal action plan, the full implementation of which is required to keep 2023 debt below \$50 billion, is already failing. As part of this plan, growth in staff expenses is supposed to be contained within consumer price index growth. Additional allocations across the forward estimates of \$440 million to health services, \$80 million to education and \$89 million to law and order are just the first breaches in the dam wall of the fiscal action plan.

The fiscal action plan and its wages policy will be seriously tested again when the police enterprise bargaining agreement, for example, comes onto the agenda in a few months. Experience over many years shows that police officers and their union are most unlikely to accept a lower-than-CPI or even a CPI-only wage increase, especially after seeing other public servants and others receiving more than the benchmark. It will be even more worrying if public sector workers get a CPI wage increase, because employing additional nurses, teachers, police officers and doctors will have to be offset every time by cutting equivalent staff numbers elsewhere. Treasury's long-term financial modelling, which was published in the budget papers, shows a 2023 debt of \$47 billion if the fiscal action plan is fully implemented and \$86 billion if the plan fails. The government has tried to build on the plan with project deferrals, procurement spending cuts and asset sales, but the extra allocations to health, education, law and order and electricity subsidies work in the other direction. Unless projects are actually cancelled, not just deferred, or there are massive privatisations, in 10 years, the state's debt will be between \$47 billion and \$86 billion, with a figure at the higher end looking more probable. Even at the lower end, that is still utterly unacceptable.

Debt servicing costs, which are now \$1.4 billion gross across the total public sector, will rise substantially—even more so as interest rates eventually rise—eating into the money available for health, education and policing services. Let me put that into perspective. The interest that is being paid is more than what is spent on the whole police budget. Members can imagine that if we did not have to pay interest on that debt, more nurses, teachers and police officers would be able to carry out their valuable work in our society.

We have been told that part of the answer to reduce the state's debt is to sell public assets. There is talk about selling some infrastructure in certain ports and of privatising some areas in government. This approach should be taken with great caution, because some privatisation schemes in other countries have cost governments an enormous amount of money when private enterprise has not spent money on necessary repairs and renewals. I believe we have a similar situation with one of our rail freight tracks. I am delighted to hear that Lotterywest has been completely ruled out as being for sale. I hope that the Perth Mint receives the same consideration. I would hate to see the government actually selling off the family silver—no pun intended. The government should reconsider the savings that would be made if the new stadium were financed and run by private enterprise, because that would bring down the projected state debt by about \$1.5 billion. I shudder to think that we as a

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conservative government have reached a situation in which it is not only the credit rating agencies that have serious concerns, but also the Western Australian public.

We have a significant job of work to do. Tackling a big savings opportunity like royalties for regions, which would be a just and fair approach, will be a substantial test of our capacity to make the even tougher decisions that lie before us. My message to the government is very simple: before we start selling assets owned by the people, let us make the morally right decision to abolish royalties for regions. In the words of Thomas Jefferson —

To preserve our independence, we must not let our rulers load us with perpetual debt. We must make our election between economy and liberty, or profusion and servitude.

MR J. NORBERGER (Joondalup) [11.03 am]: I look forward to adding my contribution to the Premier's Statement. I am coming up to almost one year in this esteemed place. Returning to Parliament and preparing for my speech this morning caused me to reflect on my first year in Parliament and my first year representing the wonderful people of Joondalup. I will take a few moments to reflect on the make-up of my electorate, the lovely people I have met and the organisations with which I have dealt.

I have lived in the Joondalup community for the great majority of my life: indeed, my wife and I still live in the heart of the community. It has some amazing schools. It has three high schools, two of which are private and one, Belridge Secondary College, is an independent public school. They are all of outstanding calibre. There are nine primary schools and three education support centres. For those members who do not know about education support centres—I am sure most do—they are attached to existing schools and specifically cater for children with disabilities. My sister had need for her first child to attend an education support centre at Joondalup Primary School. My own family has experienced the professionalism and outstanding level of care and education that those children receive. Education support centres do not operate in isolation on their own campus; rather, they are situated on the campus of other schools with the two schools working closely together. The children interact as often as practicable and possible, which benefits not only the children in the education support centres, but also, having spoken with principals from the adjacent schools, the children at school because they learn about children with disabilities and they learn acceptance and understanding during their interaction. I simply do not have enough time today to go through the list of amazing teachers, principals and school staff whom I have had the great privilege of meeting. Each school I have visited has outstanding and passionate teachers and highly competent and caring principals. I am utterly proud to have each and every single one of them in my electorate.

Behind the schools, of course, are volunteer organisations, such as the parents and citizens associations. I have the privilege of attending throughout the year as many of their meetings as possible. It amazes me no end the level of volunteering in our community—the mums and dads and, in some instances, people who do not have children at the school but who feel that it is incumbent on them to volunteer and assist the school to move forward. To all members of the P&C organisations in Joondalup who help out tirelessly—some have full-time jobs—whether they man the canteen or uniform shop, take care of students' banking or assist with school fundraisers, I thank you sincerely. It has been an absolute privilege getting to know them over the last year.

Joondalup is also home to the Joondalup learning precinct, which houses Edith Cowan University, the West Coast Institute of Training and the Western Australia Police Academy. It is an outstanding precinct. For the fifth year in a row, Edith Cowan University has received a five-star rating in the *Good Universities Guide* for its teaching quality, generic skills and overall graduate satisfaction. That is a great accomplishment and I am very proud on behalf of Edith Cowan University. I congratulate it on that achievement. The university is rapidly expanding. ECU is ideally situated to help service the huge population growth in the northern suburbs. Moreover, ECU is a popular university for a growing number of international students, many of whom are from Africa. We know that the Premier recently travelled to Africa, and many African students are studying at ECU. To help accommodate that growth, ECU has invested \$72 million in its new Building 34 project, which will house an enhanced student services facility. It is due to be completed in 2015. Concurrently, a new 127-bed student development for accommodation is being built featuring multiple common areas and a swimming pool. It is in addition to existing student accommodation options. It is great to see that further development in Joondalup. ECU is also home to the Joondalup Pines outdoor cinema, which was upgraded in 2013 with new seating options, a picnic space and landscaped areas. It is a great place to go during the summer film festival. People can rug up, grab a pizza from Slice of Italy and watch a great movie outdoors.

The West Coast Institute of Training is a fantastic training facility. I came from a training background in the private industry before coming to Parliament. West Coast Institute has outstanding staff, outstanding management and a great board. Managing director, Michelle Hoad, and her great staff do an outstanding job. West Coast Institute is an award-winning culinary school. In fact, one of its apprentices was recently awarded apprentice of the year Australia-wide. I pass on huge congratulations to that apprentice. It also has a state-of-the-

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art computer animation facility that has to be seen to be believed—in particular the 3D area. A lot of the lecturers are now travelling internationally to share their knowledge of animation with other countries.

I do not want to digress too much but I could not help but be aware of some of the comments made by the member for Cockburn yesterday about the training area. I have to say, as someone who takes an equally keen interest in training, the member took a substantial amount of poetic licence regarding funding or fee caps. Before coming into this place this morning I decided to closer investigate some of the member's assertions. It is only proper that we make these statements clear. I say to the member for Cockburn that the mentioned \$400 cap is specifically targeted at school-age students who, under school-leaving-age legislation, are required to be engaged in education, training or approved employment. Furthermore, the \$2 500 fee cap that the member spoke about applies to all other students enrolled in a qualification between certificate I and certificate IV. Importantly, the \$7 500 fee cap also discussed by the member for Cockburn is for diploma students and—this is important—is accompanied by access to an income-contingent loan that enables them to defer upfront fees until they are earning above a certain salary threshold, which is currently over \$50 000 per year. In essence, this is similar to the higher education contribution scheme system. When I was an undergraduate at university I applied for HECS. Since then I have obviously paid that back but at the time that was a decision I made to further my education. Similar help is also available for diploma students. The member for Cockburn also referred to fees for enrolled nursing diplomas. On that, I should say that the West Coast Institute of Training has a simulated hospital ward. That is an outstanding facility that I have had the opportunity to tour. In fact, the nursing faculty is quite strong at the West Coast Institute of Training, which is why I took a fair bit of interest in the member for Cockburn's comments. The 2013 figure of \$600, quoted by the member, was a one-semester fee only. The diploma of nursing is generally scheduled over three semesters. To set the record straight, to complete a diploma of nursing in 2013 the fee would normally be around \$1 800. I will leave that subject there but I wanted to set the record straight because West Coast does a fair bit of nursing training and I do have a general interest in training.

The Western Australia Police Academy is an outstanding facility. I am proud that the academy is in Joondalup. I have had the opportunity to attend a number of graduations that certainly reminded me of my own graduation from the Royal Australian Air Force; it was very similar. It is a state-of-the-art facility attracting quite a bit of attention from other states and countries and that is great to see. There are delegations coming to have a look at our academy and how we train our officers to see if it can be emulated in their state or country. The academy has a great simulator room and I believe I did members of Parliament proud when I took part in a simulation and tasered some poor lady; but apparently, I did the right thing because I got the instructors' nods of approval. Or, maybe they were being nice and generous to me.

A community is not complete without community groups and Joondalup is certainly no different. There are some wonderful community groups in the area. To begin, I will talk about some of our residents' associations. One of the longest running and, dare I say, the most successful residents' association that we have in Joondalup is the Connolly Residents' Association. It is currently being well looked after by Penny Gilpin, Brian Richardson and the board. It is very proactive and gets a lot done for the community; the members communicate with the community and they get a lot of support. I also want to give the Connolly Residents' Association members credit for making themselves available to offer advice to residents of surrounding suburbs who want to start their own residents' association. Most recently, the Heathridge Residents' Association was created. This was initiated by Karyn West, and I congratulate her for all her hard work. I also thank Penny and Brian for offering their advice to Karyn. That residents' association is now up and running with a great vision for Heathridge—a vibrant suburb going through renewal with more and more young families moving into the area. I believe that the Heathridge Residents' Association will serve that suburb very well. The Currambine Residents' Association was also created quite recently. I admit that I have not had the chance to meet this group yet but it is on my to-do list. It is a fairly new residents' association and I congratulate it for its creation. Certainly, both I and the member for Ocean Reef will offer them as much support as possible. One suburb that I will be happy to work with in the future and will also benefit from a residents' association is the suburb of Joondalup—aptly named after my electorate. While there is not yet a residents' association, I imagine it would be very well represented. I will work with the residents of Joondalup to see if there is an interest in starting a residents' association.

We also have the Joondalup Men's Shed, which I am proud to say won the 2014 Premier's Australia Day Active Citizenship Award. It is an outstanding group. My two-year-old has a little wooden toolbox that I acquired from them; he absolutely loves it. I say well done to the men's shed. We are also home to The Spiers Centre in Heathridge—another outstanding community group that offers financial counselling, children's groups and all manner of support. The list is endless. I would need all of my remaining time this morning to tell members about the beneficial services provided to the community beyond the bounds of Heathridge by The Spiers Centre. I

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thank Rhonda Adamson, the staff and board and encourage them to continue the great work they are doing. I will continue to support them in any manner I can.

Joondalup has some amazing sporting clubs—far too many to go into too much detail. There are clubs at a local level, at West Australian Football League level and clubs for basketball and netball—you name it. Joondalup is at the sharp end with its sporting clubs. We are home to the mighty Falcons, the West Perth Football Club, and it would be remiss of me not to remind everyone that the West Perth Football Club was the 2013 WAFL premiership winner. Congratulations to them.

Mr N.W. Morton interjected.

Mr J. NORBERGER: No; it will be repeated. I reckon they will hold onto that crown for a while. The West Perth Football Club, together with the Ocean Ridge Amateur Football Club and the Quinns District Football Club, came up with a concept they call “integrated football teams”. This is an outstanding initiative. For those members who are not aware, this is a football initiative for anyone over the age of 16 with an intellectual disability, whether male or female.

Mr N.W. Morton: That is an excellent program.

Mr J. NORBERGER: It is outstanding, is it not? Again, I, the member for Ocean Reef and many other members in the northern suburbs are delighted to support this initiative. I take my hat off to the local football clubs for creating these opportunities for greater inclusion and awareness of disability in our communities. It would be wrong of me to not acknowledge that in this place.

Mr A.P. Jacob: Member, can I just say that it was the Ocean Ridge Amateur Football Club members who first thought of that. I managed to make it to the first day when there was extensive interest. I think there were 20 to 30 players who rocked up so they could field a team off the bat.

Mr J. NORBERGER: Well done to the Ocean Ridge Amateur Football Club and the support it has received. I move now to the Joondalup Health Campus. At the heart of the Joondalup town centre is this amazing medical facility. Many of the north metropolitan team, including me, are very proud of this facility. I want to share some key pieces of information and some statistics with members who may not be fully aware of the Joondalup Health Campus. It is actually Australia’s largest public–private partnership hospital; I am proud to have it in Joondalup. There are currently 664 licensed beds which makes Joondalup Health Campus one of the largest hospitals in Western Australia. I believe it is currently number two after Royal Perth Hospital. It is one of the largest hospitals and will remain so. From January to December 2013, emergency presentations at Joondalup Health Campus totalled 90 818 or 248 per day. Those statistics make it one of the busiest emergency departments in Australia—quite amazing.

The redevelopment that has recently been completed at Joondalup Health Campus came in under budget and ahead of schedule. I think that is very important and worthy of mention. It went from a 380-bed general hospital to a 664-bed sub-tertiary facility, following a \$223 million investment by the WA state government and, it should be added, a \$131 million investment by Ramsay Health Care. It gave the campus an expanded level 2 special-care nursery. It has an additional ward with 85 beds; 12 new operating theatres; a catheterisation lab and a 10-bed coronary care unit; a nine-bed intensive-care and six-bed high-dependency unit; a new 150-bed private hospital; an additional specialist medical centre; a clinical school; and pathology and radiology facilities—and the list goes on. This redevelopment is the Reid report in action. It is expanding our outer metropolitan hospitals to relieve pressure on the major tertiary hospitals, while enabling most patients to receive hospital care closer to home. I congratulate the hospital on everything it is doing. I know that the expansion has not finished yet. The growth will continue in the near future.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr J. NORBERGER: It is great to see a lot of local development and private investment happening in Joondalup. I believe that that is testament to not only the area of Joondalup, but also the confidence that private investors have in our state and our future. I will share with members a couple of examples. We have the wonderful Joondalup Resort. For those who do not know, Joondalup Resort has WA’s number one ranked golf course and it is ranked number four in all of Australia by Golf Australia, the governing body. That is quite an achievement. Most recently, Joondalup Resort has invested \$12 million in the creation of the new Lakeview Ballroom, which is an absolutely stunning facility. I thank the Premier for taking the time to officially open that facility. The Lakeview Ballroom has a 450-seat capacity. A sorely lacking capability in the northern suburbs prior to this has now been addressed. From what I have heard, bookings are already looking very healthy, which does not surprise me. Joondalup Resort has said that the next project is to add even more hotel rooms to the

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resort, which is understandable given the growth in the northern suburbs and also its reputation as an outstanding resort.

Lakeside Joondalup shopping centre is undergoing a \$300 million redevelopment to become the state's largest shopping centre. By the time it is completed in the next year or so, it will have Myer, which is a great addition—I was hoping that David Jones might join as well, but I will keep working on that—and 120 new specialty stores. In total, it will have over 90 000 square metres of retail space. That is a great investment and a great sign of confidence in Joondalup and its surrounds. On a side note, I want to congratulate the management of Lakeside Joondalup for having the courage in this era of overt political correctness to have a full nativity set on display prior to Christmas. At a time when no-one is even willing to say “merry Christmas” anymore, and everyone has to say —

Ms R. Saffioti: Everyone says “merry Christmas”.

Mr J. NORBERGER: No; people say “happy greetings”, “festive seasons” and “happy holidays”. With all the controversy around the world, shopping centres were no longer able to have nativity sets. I am quite happy to say on the record well done to Lakeside Joondalup for having the courage to put in a nativity set.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I said “merry Christmas” to you before we finished.

Mr J. NORBERGER: The member for Mandurah did indeed.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.M. Britza): Members!

Mr J. NORBERGER: Briefly, I also want to thank the City of Joondalup. I have had a great time in the last year working with the CEO, Mr Garry Hunt. Obviously, I have been very much welcomed by the mayor, the councillors and the various officers of the City of Joondalup, and I am very glad to say that I have a great working relationship with them. Together we are working on the vision for Joondalup. Speaking of which, the vision for Joondalup really is to continue to be the CBD of the northern suburbs. It has had amazing growth. It is now calling Yanchep a suburb, whereas it once used to be a holiday destination. Joondalup had always been envisioned to be the CBD of this northern corridor of growth. In many respects, as I have mentioned, we are getting there with the hospital, the shopping centre and that kind of stuff, but I believe more needs to be done. I also believe there is a window of opportunity in which we need to do it. With the recent changes to the town planning scheme, the height restriction on buildings within the CBD of Joondalup has now been lifted. That is great, because at the moment there is nothing beyond three or four storeys. If it is properly designed and developed, it would be great to see some more medium-size high-rise buildings, commercial space and the like being developed in Joondalup, which in turn will allow people to get meaningful employment in Joondalup without having to travel into the city. This would mean fewer people on the freeway and would, in its own right, act as a catalyst for smaller businesses to pop up to support the people working in Joondalup. As such, I am obviously delighted that the state government has made a commitment to look at decentralising a portion of a government department to Joondalup. That is certainly a project that I am very much looking forward to.

Work is also being done on the Edgewater multistorey car park—a \$47 million investment. The application to the City of Joondalup for development approval has officially gone in. The project has been budgeted for and is going ahead. That will relieve a lot of pressure at the Edgewater train station. It is a popular train station. If people do not get there early, their chances of finding a parking space are very low indeed.

Finally, I thank the Minister for Transport because the widening of the Mitchell Freeway has made a huge difference already for the residents of the northern suburbs and certainly for the residents of Joondalup. That additional lane from Hepburn Avenue to Joondalup has made a massive difference. I even benefit from that on a Thursday afternoon when we finish at five o'clock.

I take this opportunity to thank the people of Joondalup for the faith that they have entrusted in me, and I look forward to serving them in 2014 and beyond.

This is where it gets a tad interesting, because originally this is where my speech should have ended. In fact, it would have ended if it had not been for the events that I witnessed in this chamber yesterday afternoon. I feel compelled at the end of my speech to lob a hand grenade of reason into this debate. Yesterday, due to unprofessional, rowdy, childish and undisciplined behaviour, a significant number of opposition members, the majority of whom are shadow ministers, were on the verge of being thrown out of the chamber. The members for Mirrabooka and Warnbro were on three strikes, the members for Cannington and Victoria Park had been called three times, and the members for West Swan, Armadale, Midland and Bassendean had been called twice—and the list goes on. All of this happened after barely two hours spent in this chamber. This rabble even required the Speaker to ask that they not make snide remarks across the chamber. We would expect this type of behaviour

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from schoolchildren, not members of Parliament. This motley bunch opposite is supposedly the alternative government, yet this is the type of behaviour that they choose to project to the Western Australian public.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for West Swan!

Mr J. NORBERGER: Is it any wonder that they got such a drubbing handed to them at last year's state election?

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr J. NORBERGER: If that is how members opposite are going to project themselves —

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I caution the member for Warnbro for that comment. Members, I want to hear this speech in silence.

Mr J. NORBERGER: I cannot believe that members opposite are not embarrassed by their own behaviour, or is this truly how they would conduct themselves as ministers of the Crown, because, in essence, as shadow ministers, that is what they aspire to be? We assume that members opposite put on a different face when they are in public, but if that is the case, why do they not act professionally in this chamber? Members on this side of the house take the role of a member of Parliament seriously, and we certainly do not take it for granted. That is why we are getting on with the job of delivering real outcomes for the people of WA. Let us be frank for a moment; the type of behaviour that was displayed yesterday would not be tolerated for five minutes in the private sector, and I do not think it would even be accepted in the public sector. So why should the standards of a member of Parliament be any lower? This chamber is not some union rally meeting point. But, again, I do not think it is fair to just blame the offenders themselves. As embarrassingly childish as they may be, as with an undisciplined child, eventually we have to look at the parent—or in this case the leader. The Leader of the Opposition is the leader of this pack. He was a commissioned officer in the Australian Defence Force. I, too, served my nation in the Australian Defence Force, but my memories of that time are of discipline, self-control and professionalism. It would seem that the Leader of the Opposition has forgotten these traits rather quickly. Watching members carry on yesterday in their Monty Pythonesque rendition of Shakespeare, I wondered why the Leader of the Opposition just sat there. I could conjure up only three possible answers. Firstly, the Leader of the Opposition endorses, encourages and agrees with the childish and unprofessional behaviour of his shadow cabinet and backbench; secondly, the Leader of the Opposition does not endorse or encourage this behaviour but has no control over his members—that is, they do not listen to him; or, thirdly, he simply does not pay attention to the behaviour of his shadow cabinet and backbench. I actually give the Leader of the Opposition enough credit to not believe the second or third options could possibly be the reason. Unfortunately, though, that leaves us with only the first option, which is that the Leader of the Opposition—the man who would like to be Premier, and indeed whose job is to portray to the people of Western Australia an alternative government—is happy to lead a rabble of childish and unprofessional members who teeter on the edge of being dismissed from the very chamber from which they would like to lead this state of ours.

I finish on this point: it is well known that members opposite routinely rely on the hard work of our Western Australian journalists and reporters to do their job for them. I guess in some macabre way this should almost be seen as a compliment to our reporters. Time and again we see opposition members come into this place with a printout of an article from the *The West Australian* or *The Sunday Times* and quote from it or refer to it. Indeed, they rely on it to underpin their argument; therefore, I will reciprocate. In case members opposite were all far too busy conducting a full dress rehearsal of yesterday's theatrics, I will read some excerpts from an article in *The Sunday Times* by Joe Spagnolo that states that the Labor Party needs —

... to show the public why Labor can be a credible alternative government.

A major criticism I hear of Labor is that it is too negative, and that it does not present well enough as an alternative administration to the conservatives.

The Labor Party does not do a good enough job there. Joe Spagnolo further writes —

Since the election, we have heard very little about Labor's plan for the future of this state.

We have a plan that the Premier outlined on Tuesday, and I think it is a very, very comprehensive plan. We have not heard anything from members opposite even remotely resembling a policy or their vision; instead, they just muck around like schoolchildren and almost get thrown out of this place. Joe Spagnolo's final advice is —

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 20 February 2014]

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Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Joe Francis; Acting Speaker; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Jan Norberger; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Matt Taylor; Ms Josie Farrer; Mr Dave Kelly

Focus on what you can control, and not on what you cannot control.

If the Leader of the Opposition were in the chamber, I would ask him these really quite simple questions: can he or can he not control his side of this house, and can he portray to the people of Western Australia a credible alternative government? I do not think he can, but time will tell. My only concern is that I am not quite sure how much time the Leader of the Opposition has left to do so.

MR S.K. L'ESTRANGE (Churchlands) [11.33 am]: I stand today to respond to the Premier's Statement and do so because I am proud of the government's performance, particularly since 2008 under the leadership of Premier Barnett and under the recent Treasury leadership of Hon Troy Buswell. But I am concerned about members opposite. I am concerned about the responses I have been hearing to date from members opposite about the Premier's Statement. I particularly draw members' attention to the member for Victoria Park. I am pleased that he is a supporter of the Perth International Arts Festival, and he said words to the effect of, "What a great summer it's been." Maybe he likes the arts and maybe he loves going to see summer flicks or reruns of *Gidget*. Maybe he likes to reflect on the love triangle between Gidget, Moondoggie and Kahoona, but in this place we are a little more interested in good governance and making sure that the economy of Western Australia is running well. Although members opposite like to grab media attention by focusing on negativity, from my perspective, and certainly that of my peers, the ministers in this government are clearly focused on running the state efficiently and well.

Some kids are in the public gallery today, and I know they will be interested to hear that a shadow minister actually brought a little toy doggy into the chamber. He did that to try to excite us with his theatrics, and he also had a big photoshopped image of the Premier. Those types of antics are not what an opposition that professes to be an alternative government should be embarking on. It should be focused on the economy.

Ms R. Saffioti: Photoshopped? Are you saying he tampered with that photo?

MR S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I am not saying he tampered with the photo, no.

Ms R. Saffioti: That's what you said—"photoshopped"; so he tampered with it.

MR S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Well it looked pretty big.

Ms R. Saffioti: So he printed a photo. Are you saying he tampered with it?

MR S.K. L'ESTRANGE: No; I am saying "photoshopped".

Ms R. Saffioti: You were alleging that he tampered with it; that's what you were doing.

MR S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Let me help the member with her understanding. I am glad the member for West Swan raised this point about tampering because I want to refer her to an article in *The West Australian* of Tuesday, 23 September 2008. It was an editorial written just after the member's side lost government and was headed "Cost blowouts reveal a Government out of control". The article reads —

The fact that major State projects are going to cost much more than believed is bad enough. But the revelation that outgoing Housing and Works Minister Michelle Roberts apparently knew before the election about tens of millions of dollars worth of claims on the Arena stadium project makes things worse.

Along with outgoing Treasurer Eric Ripper's assertion that he could not "recall" whether he had been made aware of cost blow-outs on the project, it all adds up to the Labor Government being addicted to cover-up, control and spin.

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mr M.H. TAYLOR: The member clearly does not want interjections and is not seeking them, yet they are constant. Mr Acting Speaker, I ask that you please ask them to remain quiet so that I can hear the member.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.M. Britza): The point of order is noted; thank you.

Debate Resumed

MR S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The article reads —

... it all adds up to the Labor Government being addicted to cover-up, control and spin, an addiction which, it seems, spread to the public service.

The Government has gone but the public service still needs to be dealt with.

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When members opposite throw at me the word “tamper”, let us have a look at how much tampering was going on when they were in government. There is enough evidence to suggest that they do not understand what good governance is all about—we do. We also understand that the people of Western Australia, although humoured by the opposition bringing doggies and pictures into the chamber, are actually more interested in what is going on in their daily lives. They are actually more interested in whether the schools and hospitals are operating well. Their focus is, “Have I got a job? Are my kids happy? Do I have a home?” The opposition can keep trying to grab media attention, as it does, and it is all good fun, but let us just think about what is going on in the state right now. That is what this government is focused on. I will read another article from *The Australian* dated 30 January 2014 by Adam Creighton titled “Prosperity pointers signal West’s the best”.

Mr D.J. Kelly: The member for Joondalup just criticised us for relying on newspaper articles to base our arguments on.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: Member for Bassendean —

Mr D.J. Kelly: You’ve referred to two articles now. He just said that is a poor argument. How many more newspaper articles have you got there?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean, I think he is endeavouring to answer.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: Member for Bassendean, I am trying to show members opposite that somebody else out in the community has done some analysis.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Listen to what you’ve just said.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: Yes, I read an article—I am sure the member for Bassendean has read an article.

Ms J.M. Freeman: Yes, but he criticised us for it.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: If members opposite would let me continue.

The article reads —

Other states should try to emulate Western Australia, the nation’s most free state and most likely to generate prosperity, says an unprecedented analysis that ranks the six states based on the scope and size of government.

That ranks Western Australia as number one, and the people of Western Australia get that. While the opposition is trying to grab media attention, we are actually making it into articles in the paper. The analysts are saying, “Let’s have a look at what’s going on. Hey, by the way, you’re doing a really good job!” I know that the member for Bassendean aspires to one day be a minister, but he needs to be aware that it is not all about heckling and media grabs; it is about getting things done. So the government of Western Australia’s Department of State Development published in January 2014 the “Western Australia Economic Profile”. I will highlight a couple of things in that profile that support my argument. First, Western Australia’s real gross state product rose 5.1 per cent in 2012–13, and was above annual average growth of 4.9 per cent over the past 10 years. Second, Western Australia’s merchandise exports rose nine per cent in 2012–13. Third, Western Australia’s population rose 3.5 per cent in 2012–13, and was above annual average growth of 2.5 per cent in the past 10 years. We had 80 986 people come to Western Australia last year. This is not a state that is in disarray; this is not a state that is struggling because the opposition decides to bring a puppy dog into Parliament and say that things are all doom and gloom. This is about focusing on the management of the economy and the management of this state for the benefit of all Western Australians, which is what the Premier and the Treasurer are focused on. While members opposite are doing their antics, let us let the ministers, the cabinet and the Premier get on with the job. Annual average employment grew 1.7 per cent in 2013, which was higher than Australia’s growth of 1.1 per cent. State employment is forecast to grow by 1.25 per cent in 2013–14. Often members opposite go on about us relying too much on the mining sector. I remind them that it is not all about mining. In fact, services industries accounted for 46 per cent of Western Australia’s employment in 2012–13. Of course, we know that business investment in Western Australia rose 2.6 per cent to \$19 billion in the September quarter of 2013, which just goes to show that the prophecies of doom and gloom certainly are not resonating through the business community. Finally, the value of the state’s agriculture, forestry, fishing and food manufacturing exports rose 21 per cent to \$5.8 billion in 2012–13. So it is not all about mining; it is not necessarily all about the services sector. They are doing very well, but so is the bush. This does not include the recent bumper harvest that we managed to achieve. The figures stack up; the rhetoric on the other side of this chamber does not.

What does this all tell us? I will tell members what it tells us. It tells us that what members opposite, with their down-talking proponents of apocalyptic doom and gloom, are saying does not match the Western Australian reality. That is what it tells us. The naysayers over there seem to want to ignore the state’s economic success on

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the one hand, and on the other hand they want to try to focus on what they can do to try to evoke some sort of reaction in the community today. That is where their focus is. It is not focusing on policy; it is not focusing on what the government is doing to improve this state of Western Australia. It is all about the media grab. That is what it is all about. In fact, it is interesting that some of our commentators are picking up on this.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Another newspaper article.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Yes, it is.

Dr A.D. Buti: The member for Joondalup said that you shouldn't worry about newspaper articles.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The member for Joondalup did not say that; the member for Joondalup —

Dr A.D. Buti: And he also then referred to one. What a hypocrite!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The member for Joondalup said he would like to use the example —

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is not parliamentary or appropriate to call someone a hypocrite in this house. It has been long established.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.M. Britza): That is correct.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: That word has been used and accepted by the current Speaker on many occasions.

The ACTING SPEAKER: It is correct that it has been considered unparliamentary, and I caution the member.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I withdraw the comment.

Debate Resumed

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I refer to an article in *The West Australian* of Friday, 22 February 2013, written by Gary Adshead and titled "Don't fall for Labor's watered down plan". He was referring to the waterfront plan and talking about the Leader of the Opposition. The article states —

Now, he wants voters to believe that going ahead with the planned development—and diverting motorists around it—is appalling because Perth's traffic has increased since the time he was all for the idea.

His stance might grab a headline and spark debate but it's too cute by half and the public shouldn't fall for it.

Commentators are starting to see what is going on, and they are starting to communicate this to the public. So although the economy is doing extremely well and this government is focusing on ensuring that the levers of that economy stay sound, it is important that we also recognise that the government is doing some great good out there in the community, and it is doing that in a large variety of ways.

I refer members to the government of Western Australia's key outcomes document 2008–2012. It is full of examples, but I will highlight a small group of them. In agriculture and food, the government began the expansion of the Gascoyne food bowl, with \$25 million allocated towards horticulture. An example in child protection is that the government allocated \$68 million over four years to introduce the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse, and it provided an increase in funding of \$39 million to cope with the expected demand for child protection services in the 2011–12 financial year. Moving into community services, the government provided an additional \$600 million over four years to support a sustainable not-for-profit sector and to ensure that a fair and appropriate price was paid by government to the sector for the services it provides. Moving towards the corrective services sector, funding of \$655 million from the state government in 2009 saw a commitment for a further 2 590 prison beds to be added to the prison system by 2015. In culture and the arts, the government opened the \$70 million Albany Entertainment Centre, a joint partnership between the state and federal governments. With disability services, the government established the key initiative, the Alternatives to Employment program, committing \$57.3 million over five years to help young Western Australians with a disability. In the finance area, 5 000 public servants were relocated into Gordon Stephenson House in 2011, saving the government \$25 million a year in office accommodation. With fire and emergency services, the government allocated \$128 million in the 2011–12 budget for funding across four years to boost front-line emergency services throughout the state. Of course, there is health. What an outstanding achievement to date in health. The government led the construction of the \$2 billion, 783-bed Fiona Stanley Hospital project, which is the largest building infrastructure project ever undertaken by the state of Western Australia. It allocated a further \$170.4 million for the construction of a new 132-bed regional health campus for Albany in the great southern

Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Joe Francis; Acting Speaker; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Mark McGowan;
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region. It provided \$1.17 billion towards a state-of-the-art new children's hospital project. Nobody can be in any doubt that this state is by far and away leading the way in health in Australia, if not currently in the world.

If we move to housing, there has been the release of the affordable housing strategy of 2010–2020—an area that will continue to be something that we on this side should be focused on, particularly given that we have just had 80 000 people migrate from the east and overseas to this state because they recognise the benefits that this state can provide. In mental health, we delivered a historic 2010–11 state budget for mental health in Western Australia, with \$506.56 million allocated for mental health services through the commission, and \$28.9 million allocated over four years for 10 new acute mental health beds at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. In Mines and Petroleum, we launched an \$80 million exploration incentive scheme to aid in the discovery of valuable new deposits and then committed a further \$37.5 million to build on the highly successful scheme. In planning, we allocated \$134 million towards the Perth City Link, reconnecting the CBD with Northbridge and delivering improved access in connectivity. We have also committed \$438 million towards Elizabeth Quay, the Perth Waterfront project that will return the city's focus to the iconic Swan River. We have invested \$94 million in the 40-hectare Riverside project on the banks of the Swan River, transforming the city's eastern gateway. As we can see, cabinet, the Premier and the Treasurer are focused on managing the levers of the economy and are doing a great job with that. Not only are we focused, we are also getting on with supporting the community of Western Australia with these commitments in the budgets to the big projects that will transform this state to the benefit of Western Australians for the next 50, 100 years or more. I could go on! There is the boost to police ranks with \$208.5 million in recurrent funding. An enormous amount of money is being spent on regional development. We have supported the Ord–East Kimberley expansion, a \$415 million initiative towards realising the full potential of available resources. We have committed \$1 billion in funding to transform the Pilbara through the Pilbara Cities vision. We have allocated \$85.5 million to enhance and stimulate growth in key regional towns.

Ladies and gentlemen, the document is filled with examples of the successes and the commitment that this government, on this side of the chamber, has been making towards the success of Western Australia. This is in stark contrast to members opposite. It is interesting that the member for Girrawheen—it is strange that she is not here, but I did listen —

Ms M.M. Quirk: I'm here!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Sorry, it was not the member for Girrawheen. I apologise; it was the member for Mirrabooka.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Get it right!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I do apologise. The member for Mirrabooka made the comment—I think I got this quote right because I wrote it down at the time—that McGowan, Wyatt and Cook funded their election commitments. I think she said it in this house; let me just work with that. The member for Girrawheen —

Ms M.M. Quirk: Mirrabooka!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Sorry, the member for Mirrabooka. It is a shame that the member is not here because, clearly, she needs a calculator. Her blind respect for her trio reminds me a bit, and on the arts theme that members opposite gave us yesterday —

Several members interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: It reminded me of the front row in the maths class of *Welcome Back, Kotter*. It had old Vinnie Barbarino, Arnold Horshack, and Freddie “Boom Boom” Washington sitting up the front. Poor old Mr Kotter would try to get these kids to learn some stuff and they always struggled a bit. I will tell members that those three buffoons struggled because they could not add up either! They were a bit like the trio that the member for Mirrabooka thinks is capable of running this state. I will tell members why.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I am glad the member is here to listen to it, because when we actually go about having —

Several members interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Let me just give members an example of when these guys opposite were in government.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: An article called “Hospital pledge in sick bed” by Paul Lampathakis in *The Sunday Times* on 24 December 2006 states —

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HEALTH Minister Jim McGinty has broken a key election promise to open the Fiona Stanley Hospital ...

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: It is a broken promise, another one—look at this.

Dr A.D. Buti: The current member for Kwinana was not in Parliament!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I did not say the current member for Kwinana.

Dr A.D. Buti: You did; you referred to Cook, Wyatt and McGowan.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Yes, but what I am saying is that their election promises cannot add up and I am citing some examples.

Dr A.D. Buti: From McGinty in 2006! Well, that's really good!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The member for Armadale has raised a good point. From memory, I think my learned colleague from Alfred Cove, in one of his speeches last year, alerted us to the election pledges of Labor going into the last election. I think the member for Alfred Cove highlighted that the opposition's commitments came to \$8.5 billion on top of current commitments. Was it something like that? It was something like that! Members opposite come into the chamber and say, "Hang on, it's all about accepting commitments", but then they projected \$8.5 billion more that they were never going to be able to live up to. It just was not going to happen. I am trying to draw members opposite back to the fact of what their track record was like when they were previously in government.

Let us have a look at what was going on with the previous Labor government's own budget control.

Dr A.D. Buti: What was the state debt when you took over in 2008?

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I am glad that the member for Armadale raised the concept of state debt. Let me turn to *The West Australian* of 11 April 2006, which states —

Why our kids will pick up the bill for Ripper's spending spree

This is how the Labor opposition managed government!

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Just pay attention! The article by Mark Drummond states —

'The Gallop Labor team is committed to the disciplined management of WA's finances. The strategic and sustained development of the State depends on it.'

That is a quote from opposition members; that is what they said. That is what Mark Drummond reflects on. He continues —

If Labor had stayed true to that 2001 pre-election pledge, Treasurer Eric Ripper would probably be in a position to deliver across-the-board tax cuts in next month's State Budget, with enough change left over to negotiate a cash discount on a state-of-the-art 60,000-seat sports stadium.

That's because the cumulative cost of Labor's habitual failure to meet its own spending targets—a key plank in its commitment to disciplined financial management—now tallies \$2.4 billion.

He went on to state —

Under the Gallop —

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Listen, member. He went on to state —

Under the Gallop and now Carpenter governments, the amount spent each year on general government salaries, including superannuation, has ballooned from \$4.3 billion in 2000–01 to an estimated \$6 billion ...

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.M. Britza): Members!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I will put the question back to the member for West Swan: where would Labor be now? If the opposition were in government, it would have added \$8.5 billion additional commitments.

Several members interjected.

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Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: That is what members opposite were saying!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for West Swan, you say that he is inviting interjection, but not six at a time. I ask you to direct your comments to me, member.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Yes, thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for West Swan, I call you for the first time.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I am highlighting the fact that the member for West Swan seems to be saying that when she was in government, and she said, "I was here, I was in government"—that is good, I am glad to hear that, because she would fully understand what Mark Drummond reported on 13 March 2008, when he stated —

Treasurer Eric Ripper has been forced to seek parliamentary approval for \$750 million —

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: In 2008 —

in extra funding to cover runaway Government spending this year after admitting Labor had breached another of its financial guidelines.

Mr B.S. Wyatt interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Victoria Park!

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, let the member finish.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for West Swan and member for Victoria Park, you are insisting on going over my voice. If you are going to do that, I will call you.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I heard an interjection—was it, "What about my own electorate?"

Ms M.M. Quirk: Yes.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: That is a good point because my electorate, as members know, has been increasing the number of kids going to a lot of its local schools recently. We have had an influx of people moving into the area into what were older homes. One of the things that I will certainly be keen to see is whether we can continue to make sure that some of our older inner-city suburbs get some funding to support the infrastructure, particularly in some of our local schools. Although we are focused on increasing housing in Western Australia to support the increased numbers of people coming to this state, we should not forget our inner-city suburbs.

However, the main focus of my debate today is to support the Premier and the Premier's Statement and to highlight that the opposition should now be focusing on presenting itself as an alternative government. I am concerned about what it would look like if the opposition was going to present an alternative government to the people of Western Australia and how this economy and this state would be managed. It is the job of members opposite—I grant them that; I grant the member for Victoria Park his passion—to try to hold this government to account. That is the role of an opposition, but it is also the role of all Western Australians to look very carefully at what an alternative government might end up looking like.

I am curious about how they would work that out. When we think about it, we have the missos, the shoppies, the old left, the centre, the old right, the new right, and the unaligned. We have all these different groups, and we do not know how they are going to sort themselves out. At some point, they will have to work that out.

I conclude by saying that we need to focus on the reality of the management of this state and the success of this government in its management of this state. I will finish by highlighting the CommSec bulletin "Economic Insights" of Monday, 17 January 2014. It is headed "State of the States: State and territory economic performance report", and it states in part —

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- How are Australia's states and territories performing? Each quarter CommSec attempts to find out by analysing eight key indicators: economic growth; retail spending; equipment investment; unemployment; construction work done; population growth; housing finance and dwelling commencements.

It states also —

- Western Australia remains the top-performing economy in the nation with no slippage in the ranking over the past few months.

This is a government that is managing the state economy. As I have highlighted in some of the examples I have given, this is a government that is managing big projects across this state, while simultaneously supporting the needy in Western Australia who require government support.

Ladies and gentleman, I commend the Premier and the government on their performance to date, and I thank the Premier for his Premier's Statement.

Points of Order

Mr B.S. WYATT: Mr Acting Speaker, I want to clarify one point. The member for Churchlands in his speech alleged that the photograph of the Premier with a hook, which I had referred to on Tuesday, had been photoshopped. I have a copy of the photograph here. To say that I had photoshopped it means that I had deliberately altered the photograph. I put on the record that that is not the case. I did not photoshop that photo. I do not know whether the member stands by those comments or wishes to withdraw them. I gave a copy of this photograph to the Premier on Tuesday, and I will table it again, for the benefit of all members, because I did not need to photoshop this photograph to make it look as horrendous as it actually is. In light of that allegation made by the member for Churchlands, I put that on the record.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.M. Britza): There is no point of order.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Mr Acting Speaker, further to that point of order, I reiterate my point. I said that he should put aside his doggy-toy antics and photoshopping prowess. I was not indicating that the member for Victoria Park had photoshopped anything.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: I had only one photo—that one.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The Chair will hear the point of order in silence.

Mr P.B. Watson: You said there was no point of order.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Albany!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: On a further point of order —

Mr P.B. Watson: You said there was no point of order.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Albany, I call you for the first time. I want to hear the further point of order.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Mr Acting Speaker, I want to make the point that I was not saying that the member for Victoria Park had photoshopped, and if I gave the impression that I was, I apologise. I was not saying that he had photoshopped.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen, I call you for the first time. The point of order is to be heard in silence.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise on a further point of order.

The ACTING SPEAKER: No; he has not finished.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Mr Acting Speaker, my use of the term "photoshopping" might have been interpreted in that way, and, if that is the case, I withdraw it, because I am not saying that he did photoshop, because I would not know, because I have not checked. I used the term "photoshopping", and I apologise if I —

Ms R. Saffioti: You said it!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I have made the point, member, that I am not saying the member for Victoria Park photoshopped the photo.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you.

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Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Mr Acting Speaker, further to the point of order, I was trying to seek clarification of what the member was doing. That is because the clock was not running. You had already ruled that there was no point of order, and I was trying to seek clarification of whether the clock should have been running, because if the member was simply continuing with his speech, he should have been using his time. The member could not have been making a personal explanation, because there was not time for that to occur. Given that you had ruled on the point of order and I had not heard the member for Churchlands raise a point of order, I was not sure why the clock was not running. My point of order is why the clock was not running.

The ACTING SPEAKER: First of all, the Chair is open to reconsider a point of order. That is the first thing. I am open to hear further to the point of order. As to the clock not running, the clock was put on hold while I was considering the point of order.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Therefore, are you suggesting, Mr Acting Speaker, that the member was continuing the debate about the point of order?

The ACTING SPEAKER: He was.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Therefore, can I make an observation regarding the point of order raised by the member for Victoria Park?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Are you making a comment further to the point of order?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes.

The ACTING SPEAKER: You can make a submission, yes.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Thank you very much, Mr Acting Speaker. My submission is that you should not take any notice of the commentary of the member for Churchlands, because what he is doing was talking about his own behaviour. He was not talking about the point of order that was raised by the member for Victoria Park. The member for Victoria Park was quite clear in his point of order, whereas the member for Churchlands was talking about matters unrelated to the issues that had been raised by the member for Victoria Park. Therefore, Mr Acting Speaker, in considering the member for Victoria Park's point of order, you should consider only the matters that were raised by the member for Victoria Park and not the matters raised by the member for Churchlands, because they were not properly made to you.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I had given a fair bit of latitude to the member for Victoria Park to explain what he wanted to do, and I felt that the same consideration should be given to the member for Churchlands. I felt no conflict there at all. There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

MS J. FARRER (Kimberley) [12.07 pm]: In speaking to the Premier's Statement, I wish to raise serious ongoing issues in my electorate and to say that despite numerous pleas for the government to take urgent action, the situation has not improved. Over the Christmas period, many members travelled overseas and managed to have a small break from constituent work. In my electorate during this time, there were three completed suicides in January. That meant that I spent much of my time consoling family members of the deceased. Every case of suicide is devastating, but most shocking to me was a case in my home town of Halls Creek where a 12-year-old boy hung himself. This had a dramatic and traumatic effect on a lot of the kids around his age group. A lot of these kids did not want to go back to school because the funeral of this little boy had not taken place, and it still has not taken place. That has left a lot of people feeling really bad.

Suicide continues to create a wave of grief throughout my electorate. I call on members of the Legislative Assembly to think about the bipartisan commitment given by members to this issue last year. What has happened since that time in communities to improve and support the mental health and wellbeing of people who need it? Interagency collaboration and communication is still not fully utilised, and the current silo approach of departments is not effective. Procedures, especially for data collection methods, are not consistent and shared between departments that have a vested interest in the same situations—namely, police, Department for Child Protection and Family Support, youth justice, education and mental health. Those departments are all frustrated, and they all agree that more could be done to establish a collaborative approach to finding solutions to the major issues that face my electorate. I call on the ministers responsible for these portfolios to show leadership and ensure that these departments work together more effectively, rather than wash their hands because the problem is too dirty or there is a maze of cobweb-type issues. In my heart, I feel very tired. I feel as though I am being left alone to try to work with the people in the Kimberley. People are often quick to agree, that, yes, we should do more. But it ends there. What is actually being done?

I turn to housing in my electorate, in Broome for instance. Broome is one of the fastest growing towns in WA—an international tourism hub. Anyone walking up along Kennedy Hill would be shocked to see the Third World

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 20 February 2014]

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Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Joe Francis; Acting Speaker; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Jan Norberger; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Matt Taylor; Ms Josie Farrer; Mr Dave Kelly

conditions numerous people are living in. There are houses that were condemned as uninhabitable last year due to dangerous exposed electrical wires, leaking sewage and structural problems, but they still have whole families living in them. These people have not been supported and they have nowhere to go. Homelessness is a huge issue and there is simply not enough being done to combat the situation. I would like to ask the Premier why the Indigenous housing package was delayed for two years, with it now due to start in 2015. We need help now.

In contrast to this estate of condemned buildings, 100 metres away on the same road stands a multimillion-dollar hotel that has struggled for business in recent years due to the downturn in tourists travelling to Broome. There are broken promises around the halving of tourism advertising funds. The tourism industry needs all the help it can get in Broome. What is the strategy from this government?

There is the question of boat ramp funding and the linking of it to the Nationals' promises for the election. There were lots of promises, but no delivery whatsoever from either member of the coalition.

I turn to women's shelters. It was good to meet with Helen Morton, the Minister for Child Protection, at Fitzroy Crossing to discuss a lot of the issues that the Fitzroy Women's Shelter had raised and to talk about all the good work it does. Women in the Kimberley are tough; they are the strength within their communities. We only have to look at people like June Oscar or the women in Fitzroy who have established and maintained some brilliant social and community development programs that add real value and support to the lives of the people of the valley. These types of programs should secure permanent funding from the government. The government should support the people on the ground and the leaders in the communities who have lived the issues firsthand and who will probably live the rest of their lives in the community. They are the ones who the government must invest in in order to make real changes on the ground. The government needs to invest in the already established community programs that have proven to be sustainable for years. We do not need to continually reinvent the wheel. The Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre in Fitzroy Crossing and the Wyndham Early Learning Activity Centre are examples of longstanding organisations desperate for funding to continue their life-changing programs.

Flooding in the East Kimberley has had a major effect, as it does nearly every year, and some remote community roads have been completely washed away. Many communities have been running short of food, water and other essentials, like nappies, that they desperately need. The state government needs to provide support and invest in better infrastructure into the future. I raised an example of this last year when I spoke about the Beagle Bay road conditions and how children were forced to miss weeks of school because the school bus could not travel on the roads and the children had no way of attending. That happened again this year and if the government does not start taking these issues more seriously, it will happen again next year and probably the year after that too.

I now go to school funding cuts. Kimberley parents are outraged at the mindless dealings of the government with the future of their children, already disadvantaged for opportunities due to the factors of living in rural and remote areas. Parents feel that this was a low blow by the Barnett government.

There needs to be support for small businesses and better government tendering processes are essential. The government needs to support local job creation in manufacturing and other sectors, not just in mining.

I would like to speak about Moola Bulla. I come from Moola Bulla, which is the site of one of the longstanding native title claims that has existed through the Kimberley Land Council, and I wonder why the government is taking so long to help make that process work. Do we have to wait until everyone is dead before everything is processed?

I noted with interest the Premier's commitment to introduce a bill that recognises the Noongar people as the traditional owners of the south west of Western Australia. The Premier even stated that it will be one of the most important pieces of legislation to be introduced into the Western Australian Parliament in the history of this state. I would like to applaud the Premier for this important commitment and I applaud the house as a whole for its apparent support for the proposed Noongar recognition bill when it is eventually before us for consideration. However, as members know, Aboriginal people in this state are not all Noongar people. We may look the same to some of you mob, just like you white people look the same to us! Seriously, what about our people? What about my mob, the Gidja mob? What about the Nyikina, Yawuru, Karajarri, Ngurrara, Bunuba, MG, Martu or Ngaanyatjarraku peoples? I could go on and on and list the different societies of language groups that live in our electorate. It is time—it is very definitely time—that we here in this Parliament, through our leadership, demonstrate that we are all equal in law, in humanity, in life and in death. I would like to suggest a small step that will be truly historic from not just a state perspective but also a national perspective. It is time that Aboriginal people were recognised through an amendment to the Western Australian Constitution with the specific intent to recognise all Aboriginal peoples in our state's Constitution.

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I know a bill was read in Parliament in 2004 that was not passed and I think it is about time we had a look at that. I have a copy of that bill here. I know this is not a timid step and I know there are people on both sides of this house who want to shy away from this because they will be afraid, but timidity has never achieved anything great. This bill will send a beautiful message and an invitation for all Western Australians to be united under our Constitution. It will be a way to demonstrate to the rest of our nation that WA accepts and recognises that true reconciliation means bold action, brave people and meaningful dialogue. Members, when this bill is introduced, do not be afraid, do not be timid, just be magnificent. I would like to say to the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition that I, again, congratulate them both on their commitment to the Noongar people, but I challenge them to step forward with me and deliver a great act for all Western Australian Aboriginal peoples.

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean) [12.19 pm]: I start by thanking the member for Kimberley for that speech. It is one of the great paradoxes that we live in a state that is one of the richest in the world and yet we have many people, especially in the member for Kimberley's electorate, but not only in her electorate, who still live in substandard conditions. It is a challenge to all of us on both sides of the house to work as hard and as seriously as we can to remove the disadvantage that the member for Kimberley has just spoken about.

I am the Labor shadow Minister for Fisheries so I want to begin my comments today by addressing the issue that has been so prevalent over summer—that is, the government's shark culling program. I start by saying two things. Firstly, my family and I regularly go to the beach; my children love going to the beach. The proposition that people who are opposed to the cull probably do not go to the beach, which has been suggested by a number of government people at various times, is just nonsense. I just want to put that on the record.

The second thing I want to say is that any fatal shark attack is a tragedy, and that I find completely offensive any suggestion that people who do not support the cull somehow do not care about human life. A great speech was delivered on the steps of Parliament the other day by Sharon Burden who lost her son to a shark attack. She opposes the cull. It would be staggering if anyone suggested that she does not value human life. However, comments have come from members of the government suggesting that if people do not support the cull, they do not support protecting human life or they put sharks before human life. I find those comments offensive.

Why do so many people in our community oppose the government's shark-cull policy? Labor has always said that this issue should be dealt with on the basis of the science. No scientific evidence has been put forward by the government to support the killing of sharks. When this policy was first announced, Labor asked the government to produce the research that supports this policy. None has been forthcoming from the government. Instead, we heard the Premier say things such as, "Because of the fatalities that have occurred, something has changed in our ocean." At one point he said that sharks were showing more aggressive behaviours. It is ridiculous for the Premier to suggest that he can somehow get inside the collective mind of sharks off the Western Australian coast. The government has not put forward any coherent explanation for this policy other than vague comments such as, "Things have changed."

The Premier's comments this morning in *The West Australian* show from a scientific view the nonsense that he has been speaking. In *The West Australian* this morning the Premier, on one of his many policy changes on this issue, talked about the drum lines in the metropolitan area being withdrawn in a couple of years and maintained only in the south west. He said —

I'm hoping that we might be able to back off on this policy on metropolitan beaches maybe after a couple of years if we have got the numbers in control, ...

He then goes on —

The point I was making was in the South West, certainly in the earlier parts of summer, there seems to be a concentration of very large sharks, it's a more difficult coast-line to manage and I suspect that the program may well continue on a medium-term to longer-term basis in the South West, ...

The Premier was therefore talking about the government having the numbers under control—that is the first point. The Department of Fisheries has a shark fact file on its website that answers some questions. I first draw members' attention to the answer it gives to the question, "Is the number of sharks increasing?" The shark fact file on the fisheries department states —

There is no evidence that the number of dangerous sharks is increasing. In fact the numbers of some species are lower now than in the past.

Helicopter surveillance and increased vigilance in reporting shark sightings may support a perception that there are more sharks off our coast.

The fact file continues —

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Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Jan Norberger; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Matt Taylor; Ms Josie Farrer; Mr Dave Kelly

Is there an increase in the number of white sharks (white pointers or great whites) off the Western Australian coastline?

The department's own website states —

No available data suggests that numbers of white sharks are increasing, either in WA or in other parts of Australia.

The Premier is therefore saying that he will get the numbers under control, but there is no scientific data to say, firstly, that we even know the number of sharks and, secondly, that the Premier has any capacity through this program to get the numbers under control. In the second part of that quote the Premier talks about the south west being a more difficult coastline to manage. I know that the Premier has the nickname "The Emperor", but is he saying that he can manage our natural coastline? Is he able to control our coastline? Clearly he is not. The government has not been able to give basic information to show that there is any science to back up this policy.

Presumably, if the government thinks that taking sharks out of the environment will make us safer, it would have some understanding of how many sharks it wants to remove to make the environment safer. On 19 February, therefore, the member for East Metropolitan Region, Hon Alanna Clohesy, asked the Minister for Fisheries —

How many tiger sharks did the government calculate needed to be removed from the marine environment to reduce the risk of shark attack to a level the government considers is acceptable?

Mr R.H. Cook: That's a very good question.

Mr D.J. KELLY: It is a very good question: how many sharks need to be taken out of the environment to make the environment safer? The answer from the minister was —

The deployment of drum lines is a public safety measure that was introduced following the seventh shark-related fatality in three years. The government does not apologise for putting people's lives before sharks.

There was no answer to the actual question but just another vague comment about why the government has put this policy in place.

Clearly, the government has no scientific research to back up this policy. It cannot answer even simple questions on how the policy will work. All we get are vague references to putting human life before sharks. As I said, I find that particularly offensive and insulting, particularly to people who have been involved in these attacks. Many people who have been directly affected by these attacks do not support the cull. Is the Premier saying that these people do not value human life?

What has Labor said we should do? We have said we should do more of what we know works. Tagging of sharks is a very effective way of keeping track of what is going on. We should be doing more aerial patrols. Aerial patrols are a very worthwhile practice to keep our beaches safe. Beach surveillance by Surf Life Saving WA makes our beaches safer. We have also proposed that the government encourage the use of such electronic devices as the shark shield. The Leader of the Opposition put that proposal forward a few days ago. It is interesting to note that the government ridiculed that proposal. Labor has suggested that those persons who are most at risk, divers and surfers, take an element of personal responsibility into this debate and consider deploying some of these electronic devices, which appear to provide some degree of safety. We have been ridiculed for that suggestion. I thought that the party on the government benches was the party of responsibility—but no! Labor very sensibly suggests that people can take a degree of personal responsibility about this issue and utilise these devices—and the government ridicules us.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Absolutely!

Mr D.J. KELLY: I welcome the Premier back to the chamber for this debate.

I said that the government should do more of what it knows works and should not go off on a policy frolic such as introducing drum lines. Drum lines were not recommended by either the fisheries department or the Bond University studies that the government commissioned. Drum lines were introduced in a very hasty fashion. They were ill-conceived and are incredibly expensive. We are paying a contractor in the south west \$5 800 per day to manage those drum lines.

There is scientific research on the effectiveness of culling sharks. There is great research around what happened in Hawaii where a lot of sharks were culled. That research showed that it did not reduce human fatalities or attacks at all.

Mr C.J. Barnett: What about the stats from New South Wales and Queensland?

Mr D.J. KELLY: I will come to that, Premier.

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We could give the Premier the benefit of the doubt because it was done hastily, and although it may be incredibly expensive, at least he did it with the best of intentions. I was prepared to give the Premier the benefit of the doubt until I saw him parading the hooks before the media. It is a shame that he thought that was a positive media image. This is a serious issue and it is disappointing that the Premier of all people saw it as a way to boost his personal image.

The Premier has told us to look at Queensland and New South Wales where drum lines work. I will say a couple of things about that. Queensland and New South Wales do not use only drum lines; they also use nets. There is kilometre after kilometre of nets, with an individual net being 186 metres long. There are multiple nets. In Queensland 600 sharks are killed each year. Even if people support the cull, this program—a few drum lines—is nothing compared with what happens in Queensland, I suppose. In supporting the cull, the Premier has introduced into Western Australia a Queensland and New South Wales's lite version of the program. The Premier's program and the Queensland program are not comparable, because Queensland does it on a much higher scale. They cannot be compared because they are not comparable. The second thing is that it is often said that once Queensland and New South Wales introduced the program, there were no fatalities at patrolled beaches. New South Wales and Queensland still have fatalities, but the claim is that they are not at patrolled beaches. The Premier should look at the record for patrolled beaches in Western Australia. The Premier has put drum lines at 10 metropolitan beaches in Western Australia. There is already a high degree of patrolling on those beaches. The record for those beaches is almost as good as the record for beaches in Queensland and New South Wales. Of those 10 beaches, there has been a fatal shark attack only at Cottesloe. We acknowledge that that was a tragedy, but it is the only beach at which there has been a fatal shark attack. The other patrolled beaches have never had fatal shark attacks. The Premier can say that Queensland's patrolled beaches have not had a fatality since the 1960s, but the record here, with one exception, is as good.

Mr C.J. Barnett: There are possibly two; there is Cottesloe and North Cottesloe.

Mr D.J. KELLY: The second incident to which the Premier referred involved a gentleman by the name of Mr Martin. He was not swimming in close proximity to the beach in the same way that general beachgoers swim in close proximity to the beach. He was hundreds of metres offshore on his morning swim. Apparently he used to swim to a buoy 500 metres offshore, which is what he was doing when he was taken.

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

Mr D.J. KELLY: That is right. That was a tragedy. But he was hardly the average beachgoer swimming between the flags.

The Premier's use of glib remarks to justify his policy does not stack up. Another thing that upsets people about the policy is the secrecy that surrounds it. The government will not release the catch results.

Mr C.J. Barnett: We did!

Mr D.J. KELLY: The government waited three weeks until the day before Parliament was sitting when it knew the opposition would ask for the catch results.

Mr C.J. Barnett: We will release the final figures at the end of summer.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Hopefully, the Premier will tell us today what was caught this morning at Leighton Beach and put under a tarpaulin. I hope the government will release that information today.

Mr C.J. Barnett: We have released some and we will provide an update at the end of the season.

Mr D.J. KELLY: The Premier can do that today.

I draw the Premier's attention to the inconsistencies surrounding drum lines and the Rottnest Island swim. The organisers wanted the drum lines removed because they thought the beach would not be as safe. The Minister for Police talked nonsense the other day when she said that swimmers might swim into them or boats might get fouled on the drum lines. At least the Premier was honest when he said that it was actually because sharks would be attracted to the drum lines. The Rottnest Island swim organisers do not like the drum lines, which is why they were removed. It is interesting that they were taken out five days before the event. A beachgoer who goes for a swim today at Cottesloe Beach is, under the Premier's reasoning, not as safe as he was three days ago.

I will move on because I am conscious of the time.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr D.J. KELLY: Several dozen tiger sharks have been caught despite the fact that they are not responsible for any of the seven fatalities that the Premier said prompted his policy—not one—yet that is all that has been caught from the target species. Something like 26 tiger sharks have been caught in three weeks. If tiger sharks

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continue to be caught at the same rate for a full summer, approximately 300 tiger sharks will be killed, which is a significant dent in the tiger shark population. If tiger sharks are not responsible for the fatalities that the Premier is so concerned about, why are so many of them being killed? He should think about that. Three hundred animals will be killed in a full summer if they continue to be killed at the existing rate.

Where will this issue go? No doubt the campaign will continue. The community is not going anywhere and will continue voicing its concern about this issue. I ask the Premier to not vilify the campaigners. He was not in the chamber when I said earlier that he should not suggest that people who are opposed to the cull do not share a desire to protect human life. That is very offensive, especially when people against the cull are the family of shark attack victims. To say they do not respect human life is very offensive. The Premier should not continue to suggest that someone who is opposed to the cull supports violent behaviour. Throughout this debate the Premier has attempted to smear those opposed to the cull with the view that they are supporting criminal or intimidating behaviour. If the Premier looked at website or Facebook pages that support the cull, he would find some pretty offensive comments. In this day and age, Facebook pages harbour offensive comments about many issues. The Premier should listen to what the community has to say and should not vilify people.

I look forward to the Environmental Protection Authority making a decision on whether it will do a full assessment of the program. It will be hugely unfortunate if it does not, because it is such an important issue that has attracted huge community concern. The EPA should do a full assessment. We look forward to the Senate election. The Premier's federal Liberal counterparts will be most concerned if the shark culling policy is still in place.

I move on to another matter. On 6 November 2013, a Department of Housing unit at 19 Braithwaite Road, Lockridge, caught fire, resulting in pretty terrible injuries to one of its tenants. One resident showed great bravery and pulled another resident out of the burning unit, which probably saved his life. I want to particularly mention Ricky Bromfield for his great courage on that day. I am told by the Department of Housing that all residents have been relocated. I have some concerns about that, but the issue I want to raise today is what will happen to the site at 19 Braithwaite Road, Lockridge. It is an empty two-storey block of units that has been fenced off and looks very ugly indeed. It is an eyesore and is highly vulnerable to becoming a centre for antisocial behaviour in the electorate. I wrote to the Minister for Housing asking that the department make a quick decision and act. The units should either be demolished so that something else can be done with the site or the units should be refurbished so that people can again live there. I am concerned that the Department of Housing will leave that site derelict for a long period, which would be a complete disaster for the people of Lockridge. I have written to the minister and I am not saying that he has been slow to respond; the letter was sent halfway through January. However, I raise with the government today that it must not let that site lay dormant for too long. The Department of Housing has a track record of leaving sites derelict for long periods, which should not happen. The people of Lockridge have worked hard to improve living conditions in the suburb and they should not be burdened with an eyesore because of government inactivity.

I move now to the issue of local government amalgamations. The Minister for Local Government has indicated that he is going to try to circumvent the amalgamation process by using the notion of boundary changes to effect the amalgamation of the Town of Bassendean with the City of Bayswater. If that is the outcome, it would be a very bad decision. It is very disappointing that the people of Bassendean and Bayswater will not have a say on the issue. It would also be a tragedy if the minister uses the boundary realignment method rather than the amalgamation process. I say that for an additional reason. Under the boundary realignment process, Bayswater will effectively take over the Town of Bassendean from 1 July 2015. This means that from 1 July 2015 until the local government elections in October 2015 the people of Bassendean will have no representation on their local council. That would be very unfortunate and it would not be fair to the people of the Town of Bassendean. The minister should stop playing games with this process; he should withdraw his proposal to use boundary realignments to achieve his council amalgamations and he should follow not just the letter, but the spirit of the law.

Another issue that is very important in my electorate, as the house will remember, is that last year the government made a decision to build two disability justice centres situated less than one kilometre apart in the community of Lockridge. That was a terrible decision by the government; not because those facilities are not needed, but because the government threw out its own criteria and located those centres in a residential area close to not one, not two, but three schools. Today, in the chamber, I say that the campaign being run by the community against the location of the two disability justice centres will not go away. I am sure that the government is hopeful that people in my electorate will give up and just cop it. I say to the government that this will not be the case because the people in my community have very strong feelings on this issue and the campaign will continue.

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I turn to funding cuts to schools in my electorate. Anzac Terrace Primary School will lose \$163 000; Ashfield Primary School, \$31 000; Bassendean Primary School, \$108 000; Beechboro Primary School, \$130 000; Cyril Jackson Senior Campus, \$255 000; East Beechboro Primary School, \$125 000; Eden Hill Primary School, \$80 000; Lockridge Primary School, \$72 000; Lockridge Senior High School, \$455 000; West Beechboro Primary School, \$143 000; and Hampton Senior High School will lose over \$400 000. They are enormous amounts of money to be taken out of school budgets. Government members should hang their heads in shame over the education cuts made to schools in my electorate. The parents and citizens associations, parents, teachers and students feel those cuts very, very deeply. To have those amounts of money taken out of school budgets is an absolute injustice. Government members rabbit on about economic management—we all know what that means to this government—yet here they are taking money from some of the most vulnerable schools and in particular some of the most vulnerable students.

I again say thank you to the members of the Bassendean Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service, which was graciously closed by the Minister for Emergency Services at the end of last year. Over the summer break I attended a dinner to thank them for the work they have done. I have to say that it was a sad occasion after 102 years of service by that brigade, but I wish Captain Mike Smith and his team well. They have started a social club that will continue to meet in the electorate and carry on the camaraderie that has built up over time. They would have dearly wanted to help fight the fires over summer but, of course, the minister's decision meant they were unable to do so. That was one of the saddest things I had to do over summer.

Amendment to Question

Mr D.J. KELLY: Finally, I move —

That the following words be added after “noted” —

and that we regretfully note that over the last two years Western Australia has become a less safe place to live.

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland) [12.48 pm]: It is certainly true that the community of Western Australia has become less safe over the last two years. The Premier tried to put a very different gloss on this yesterday but when one actually examines the real facts—statistics that I have taken from the Western Australia Police website—one can see that the real picture is very different. The fact of the matter is that for five and a half years we have been told day after day just how tough this government is on crime. We heard it yesterday when the Minister for Police was praising herself at interminable length about how tough the government has been on out-of-control parties. Not for one moment did she mention that last October a 19-year-old was killed at an out-of-control party at Doubleview, which I believe is in her electorate. He was attending a party where there were 60 partygoers. She can tout a solution to things, but 19-year-old Callum Pinner died on a street verge that I believe is in her electorate. Has she found a solution? Was that legislation the miracle cure? No, it was not. At the time I said that it needed to be backed up by police resources. That is where this government has failed. It has failed to properly resource our police.

From time to time we also hear from the Premier how tough the government is on crime. In fact, a Liberal policy document for the 2013 election —

[Quorum formed.]

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I was just about to quote the Liberal Party policy document, which states —

Under the Liberal-led Government, overall crime has decreased by 9%. The Liberals' commitment to more police —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): Members if you need to talk, please take your speech outside, but you may want to keep the quorum before we have too many people walking out of the room.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I will start that quote again —

Under the Liberal-led Government, overall crime has decreased by 9%. The Liberals' commitment to more police, tougher laws, and a strict approach to parole has seen police make impressive gains in the fight against crime.

That was said at the election, but what did the Premier say in his statement a couple of days ago? He said 18 per cent in his statement. So, between what he said in last year's election policy and this year in *Hansard* as part of his speech, the government had made impressive gains, and crime was now down by an impressive 18 per cent. Perhaps the Premier would like to explain to the house just how those figures were calculated, because police figures reveal that over the past three years total selected verified offences have increased from 185 128 in 2010-11—I have taken these figures from the police website—to 192 536 in 2011-12, and they are up by

Extract from Hansard

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another 6 000-ish in 2012–13 to 198 402. In my book, 198 000 is more than 192 000, and 192 000 is more than 185 000. That would seem to demonstrate, unequivocally, that total offences are going up. So, perhaps the Premier would like to table the figures that show crime has gone down by 18 per cent.

But let us focus on the crimes the government says it is most concerned about—crimes against the person; the assaults it says it has tough legislation to actually impact on. Let us have a look at those figures for the past three years. In 2011 there were 32 247 reported crimes against the person. In the calendar year 2012 there were 33 831. That is a five per cent increase between 2011 and 2012. In the past couple of days police has put onto its website the December figures for crime, so we are now up to date with a full calendar year for 2013. What did we find? We found that when we tallied up the police statistics, there were 35 908—nearly 36 000—reported crimes against the person. That is a six per cent increase on the previous year. Put simply, over the past two years there has been an 11 per cent increase in crimes against the person. Where does the Premier get figures like a decrease of nine per cent or a decrease of 18 per cent? He blithely tells the Parliament that crime is going down while the police statistics tell a very different story. The figures go into dramatic decline roughly from the time this minister took over. The fact of the matter is that in the past two years we have seen an 11 per cent increase in crimes against the person. People are clearly less safe now than they were three years ago. People in this place might ask what I mean by crimes against the person. If we look to the police website, we will see that they include homicide, sexual assaults, domestic assaults, other assaults, threatening behaviour, deprivation of liberty, robbery and so forth. They are crimes against the person. As is traditional for police, its website breaks crimes into two groups—crimes against the person and property crimes—and then there is a total crime figure.

Let me express those statistics in another way, because we have done the math. With a total of nearly 36 000 crimes against the person for 2013, every 15 minutes in Western Australia a person was injured as a result of a criminal act; there was a crime against the person. I do not say that lightly, because that means somebody is traumatised and becomes a victim of a crime against their person every 15 minutes in Western Australia. The figures are getting worse. They have become dramatically worse in the past couple of years. I think some conclusions can be drawn about whether or not the cuts to the police budget have actually had an impact on the front line; I would certainly put to the house that they have. But while things continue to worsen, the Premier fiddles while Rome burns. He just blithely asserts that crime is going down, although we can see that in the past three years crime has actually been increasing, and crimes against the person have been increasing even more.

I quote the Premier's answer to a question from me from last year in this house —

At the last election in March of this year, the Liberal–National government had a strong program on law and order issues and a strong commitment to legislation in that area. We are six months into a four-year term.

That was when the government was six months into a four-year term. The Premier continued —

We will honour our commitments and the legislation we promised will be introduced. People can probably expect to see some of that before the end of this year.

As usual, a lot of strong words but no strong commitments. Nothing really happened, and we are still waiting for the promised legislation. Now the Premier's Statement has told us that he is potentially about to get the home invasion legislation into the house.

For members who think there might be some glimmer of hope for the government on how it has been travelling when it comes to community safety, they might think that perhaps the government's tough approach has seen a greater sanction rate; that is, more people being caught and punished for their crimes. I know the sanction rate is not the same as the conviction rate or charge rate, and it is slightly different to the clearance rate that used to be quoted in crime statistics up until about 2010. If members want to compare like with like there is a bit of sense in comparing what is comparable; that is, the sanction rates for the past three years. That is where the government has gone particularly badly. This is not some statistical bubble; I have gone to the trouble of getting a couple of graphs printed up based on police statistics. Here we can see the sanction rates for Western Australia. The blue line is the offences against the person and the orange line is offences against property. This graph shows a dramatically declining sanction rate. In 2007–2008, for crimes against the person the clearance rate was 82.9 per cent.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 466.]

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm