

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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## **PREMIER'S STATEMENT**

### *Presentation*

**MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Premier)** [3.04 pm]: I rise today to provide the house with an outline of the government's policy and legislative priorities for the forthcoming year, the second year of the second term of a Liberal–National government in Western Australia.

Once again the start of a new year has been marked by a number of serious bushfires in the hills and eastern and south eastern suburbs of Perth. I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the career and volunteer firefighters and the many hundreds of support staff and volunteers who have helped the communities affected by bushfire both during and after the fires. A bill to amend the Emergency Management Act will be introduced in late 2014, which will, among other things, focus on risk mitigation and responsibility for fuel load reduction. Despite the challenges of living in a hot, dry state, Western Australians know that our lifestyle, our climate, our unique environment and our economy make this the best place in Australia to live and raise a family.

Quite simply, Western Australia leads the nation.

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; Western Australia continues to have the lowest unemployment rate of all Australian states. But we do not just lead Australia economically. Across a whole range of areas we are being admired and emulated by other states and territories—in health, education, disability services, mental health, housing and agriculture. It has been a concerted effort by this government over the past five and a half years to make decisions, put in place policies and, where required, legislate to improve the delivery of services to Western Australians. It is why Western Australians voted to retain a Liberal–National government at the election last year. It was a resounding endorsement of the first term of this government, and I thank the voters for the privilege of a second term.

The election saw 23 new members begin their parliamentary careers and, as a result, the government made the decision at the beginning of this thirty-ninth Parliament not simply to reinstate legislation from the thirty-eighth Parliament but, essentially, to start anew. This was a fair and right thing to do.

**The economy:** Over the past five years, Western Australia has experienced a sustained period of growth. Since forming government, we have enjoyed annual growth rates averaging five per cent. Western Australia attracts 28 per cent of the nation's business investment and we account for 47 per cent of the nation's merchandise exports, more than New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland combined.

**The resources sector:** An enormous amount of construction activity is still going on in the resources sector in Western Australia. Currently, \$146 billion worth of projects are either in construction or going into construction. These include the Gorgon gas project, Australia's biggest resource project, which is 76 per cent complete; the Wheatstone LNG project, which is still only a quarter of the way through construction; continued iron ore expansions for Rio Tinto, BHP Billiton and FMG, involving new or expanded rail and port infrastructure as well as the construction of new mines; and the Roy Hill project, which should commence full-scale construction in the very near future. Last year, 10 major resource projects opened in Western Australia and 13 expanded their operations. This is a sign of great confidence in this state.

Iron ore production will double and LNG production will treble this decade. This is a great period of industry expansion. It is likely that investment over the next 10 years will take the Western Australian mining industry close to its long-term and mature levels of production. This year, the government will continue to streamline mining law to ensure the sector is supported by a modern legal framework. This will include additional amendments to the Mining Act and amendments to provide for the establishment of an online biodiversity, water and cultural heritage database.

**Building on our natural advantages:** As members know, the heavy reliance on our natural resource base leaves our economy exposed to the vagaries of commodity prices and movements in the Australian dollar. The Liberal–National government will continue to work hard this year to create the right environment to build on our natural advantages to grow other parts of the economy. This is already happening in established industries such as agriculture, with projects like the Ord River stage 2. It is also happening through the application of science in less well developed areas such as aquaculture. The government will open an aquaculture zone in the Kimberley this year and progress a zone in the midwest, as well as introduce the Aquatic Resource Management Bill to modernise the management of Western Australia's fisheries system.

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The government will focus on harnessing our competitive and natural advantages in the areas of agriculture, medicine, mining, biodiversity and radio astronomy.

Infrastructure and service demands: Last year around 81 000 people—more than 1 500 a week—came to Western Australia. This huge population growth has resulted in increasing demand on services and infrastructure, such as schools, roads and hospitals. With a revenue base that is volatile and, in the case of GST receipts, dramatically falling, this is putting pressure on state finances. With respect to the GST, this state saw an absolute decline of \$477 million in GST revenue this year. Next year the forecast is a decline of \$629 million. It is at the stage where this is having an impact on the state's ability to deliver services in areas like health and education. As I have said previously, this is the biggest financial issue facing Western Australia and the Treasurer and I will continue to push for a fairer deal for this state.

The Liberal–National government has seized the once-in-a-generation opportunity presented by this period of economic growth to rebuild the state. We are proud that we have made the bold decisions to sink the rail line through Northbridge and the CBD, to get on with the waterfront project in the city, to effectively rebuild the public health system throughout the whole state, to create liveable towns and cities in the Pilbara, and to widen and extend the freeways. Western Australians are now seeing these and other projects that are transforming our towns and cities come to fruition. Of course, it all costs money and we have seen state debt rise to pay for these important projects. However, I would point out that our current debt of \$20.25 billion is by no means astonishing compared with other states: Queensland's debt is at \$31.3 billion; Victoria is at \$34.6 billion; and New South Wales, \$40.09 billion. Nevertheless, the government recognises that we need to keep debt at manageable levels and address the imbalance in the state's revenue and expense growth. To do this we are making some important changes.

Firstly, reviewing our capital spend, which has resulted in some projects being pushed out. Already we have trimmed back \$2 billion in capital expenditure. Secondly, identifying government-owned assets that can be sold, including discrete infrastructure owned and operated by our utilities and under-utilised government land. Thirdly, managing the wages growth of the public sector by capping public sector wages to the consumer price index, making the management of the workforce more flexible through a voluntary separation scheme and modernising the way the public sector operates through the Workforce Reform Bill, which the government wants to see passed by this Parliament as soon as possible. That bill will require the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission and the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal to have regard for the government's wages policy and will bring Western Australia into line with all other government jurisdictions by allowing for the involuntary severance of public sector employees who cannot be redeployed. Fourthly, identifying ways to improve the efficiency and performance of the economy through better productivity and flexibility, finding more opportunities for the not-for-profit sector, business and industry to deliver services, and continued focus on removing and reducing red tape.

Small business: The success of small business is critical to the state's economic and social wellbeing, creating job opportunities for hundreds of thousands of Western Australians. To reduce the tax burden on small business, this government will raise the payroll tax threshold to \$800 000 from 1 July this year before a further increase to \$850 000 in 2016–17. This will provide tax relief for more than 16 000 businesses in this state. The Liberal–National government believes that the best thing government can do to help small business in this state to grow is to get out of the way. We are committed to progressively reducing red tape that impedes business and gives rise to inefficiencies, inconvenience and expense.

Following its passage in the Legislative Council, this house will deal with the Consumer Protection Legislation Amendment Bill, which amends 14 acts to remove red tape for Western Australian businesses and which changes the criteria that apply to small retail shops. Once again, the government will set aside one week of this parliamentary year for Repeal Week to remove laws and regulations from the statutes that have become redundant or are an impediment to competition and small business getting on with business. The report of the independent committee established to review the Liquor Control Act includes recommendations to further assist small businesses in the hospitality industry. The government is currently considering its response to the review and is aiming to introduce legislation this year.

Social responsibility: As I have said, Western Australia not only leads economically; it also leads the nation in many areas of service delivery and infrastructure, notably in areas that support the state's most disadvantaged and vulnerable people.

Health: The government is rebuilding our public hospital system with a \$7 billion investment into 80 different projects in more than 100 towns and cities across this state. This includes more than \$4 billion on nine brand-new hospitals and healthcare facilities. Almost every public hospital and health facility in Western Australia will

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receive an upgrade through this unprecedented investment. The \$1.7 billion Fiona Stanley Hospital will open this year and the related reconfiguration of Fremantle Hospital will be finished. Construction of the outstanding \$1.2 billion Perth Children's Hospital will continue as we approach its opening in late 2015, the same year the new Midland public hospital will be completed.

The "Report on Government Services" released last month showed that Western Australia leads the nation in managing patients in emergency departments within a four-hour period. We were the first state to introduce the four-hour rule.

This year will also see the completion of the new WA Institute for Medical Research building on the Fiona Stanley Hospital site. This is in addition to the recently completed research facility at the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital site in Nedlands. The state has contributed \$50 million to these two new hubs for medical research, which are set to become centres of excellence where our best medical and research minds can come together to find new ways to treat, prevent and manage a wide range of medical conditions.

Education and training: Once again, under a Liberal–National government, every classroom in every public school had a teacher for the start of this school year and around 660 new graduates started their teaching careers in a public school in February, the most in more than a decade. After a decade of no growth, 19 000 additional students have enrolled in Western Australian public schools between 2010 and 2013. This year it is anticipated that public school enrolments have grown by almost 10 000 students. One of the government's most significant reforms is the independent public schools initiative that is now being used as the model for the federal government's rollout of independent public schools across the nation. There are now 264 independent public schools in Western Australia.

Western Australian government schools are the best resourced schools of any state in Australia and our teachers are the highest paid of any state. Providing the best possible educational opportunity for every boy and girl relies on much more than just increasing funding. We must continue to strive to improve standards across teaching, the curriculum and support services, as well as ensure that the way we fund schools is fair and equitable.

Next year several important reforms will take place in our schools, including year 7 becoming the first year of high school, an improved Western Australian Certificate of Education and changes to the way schools are resourced. Preparation and planning for these reforms is now underway and we will continue to develop our own state curriculum to include appropriate elements of the national curriculum.

This year will see the first 10 child and parent centres open at public primary schools in vulnerable communities throughout the state. The construction of a further six centres will be completed in 2015. We will continue to progress our commitment for an additional 155 school health nurses—already 36 new school health nurses have been employed across the state.

The government has also commenced an independent review of the training sector to ensure our training institutions are best placed to meet Western Australia's current and future economic requirements.

Disability services: Western Australia has the most effective and efficient delivery of services to people with a disability in Australia. This government's commitment to provide an additional \$600 million to the not-for-profit sector to deliver more and better services to the most vulnerable in our community was unprecedented in this country. Most importantly, though, is that it is resulting in real improvements to the lives of people with a disability. This year the second component of that funding will continue to roll out. This will improve service delivery, particularly in regional and remote areas of the state.

In June this year, trials of the National Disability Insurance Scheme will begin in the lower south west and in the Perth hills. These trials will build on our existing disability service system and provide additional funding and flexibility for people with a disability, their families and carers.

Last year the government introduced legislation to allow for the establishment of disability justice centres. When operating, these centres will address a longstanding social justice issue—that is, the need for an appropriate place for people with an intellectual or cognitive disability who have been charged with, but not convicted of, a crime. The passage of the Declared Places (Mentally Impaired Accused) Bill will be a priority for this government.

Mental Health: This year the government will continue its focus on improving services to those people in the community who are dealing with mental health issues. This has been an area of priority for the Liberal–National government, with the appointment of the Minister for Mental Health and initiatives such as the establishment of the Mental Health Commission, funding for adult Step Up, Step Down facilities and the implementation of a statewide suicide prevention strategy. The next important step is the passage of new legislation that will further improve the lives of people in Western Australia who are experiencing mental illness. The introduction of the Mental Health Bill 2013 in this place in October last year marked the culmination of a decade of consultation

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and community feedback. The first order of business in this house will be debate on that bill. The bill includes improvements to the protection and rights of people with a mental illness, particularly those committed involuntarily, and a greater focus on the role of carers and the families of people with a mental illness.

**Child Protection:** Every child has the right to feel safe and to be safe. This responsibility should, and usually does, belong to the family. Sadly, despite our prosperity, the number of children in the care of the state is growing. Five years ago just over 3 000 children were in state care—now that figure is around 4 000. This year we will introduce amendments to existing legislation to enhance the safety and wellbeing of children, including expanding mandatory reporting requirements to include country hostels, which was a recommendation from the St Andrew’s inquiry.

This government takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that all Western Australians—regardless of their address; physical, intellectual or mental aptitude; race; age or family circumstances—are treated fairly, have access to appropriate assistance and support, and have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from Western Australia’s prosperity. Indeed, as members of Parliament, all of us in this place share that responsibility.

**Transport:** One of the most visible, and probably the most talked about, pressures arising from the extraordinary growth we have experienced over recent years is the volume of traffic on roads in Perth and in regional areas, which is why the government has committed to \$550 million in rail, bus and road projects over the next four years. This year Western Australians will see the start of work on the sinking of the Perth Busport as part of the Perth City Link project, following the completion—on budget and ahead of time—of the \$360 million rail component of the project; the completion of the \$240 million extension of the Joondalup train line to Butler; the start of extension work on Mitchell Freeway from Burns Beach Road to Hester Avenue; the continuing rollout of new railcar sets every two to three months through to 2016; more buses on congested routes, an expanded bus network into new areas and the replacement of old buses; major upgrades on our regional road network with works on sections of Coalfields highway, Great Northern Highway, North West Coastal Highway, Great Eastern Highway and Albany Highway; and the installation of 40-kilometre-an-hour flashing lights at the front of approximately 100 more schools. Planning for the Perth–Darwin national highway and the Forrestfield–Airport rail link will continue this year. Although the Metro Area Express project has been pushed out, planning for it will continue and the project will proceed. The government is committed to delivering these significant infrastructure projects to provide safer roads and better public transport choices for people in the northern and eastern suburbs. Planning and procurement will also continue for the new multistorey car park at Edgewater and a new train station at Aubin Grove—two important projects that will make train travel easier for commuters both north and south of the city.

**City Projects:** Many of these transport projects are aimed at addressing growing congestion in our capital city, which was created by the sheer number of people coming to live in Perth. But a great city is about more than just roads and rail, as important as they are to a well-functioning metropolis. The Liberal–National government made the conscious decision to not only respond to the growth of the city with critical infrastructure, but also transform the city into a vibrant and attractive place that fits our increasingly important position in the Asia–Pacific and Indian Ocean rim. This year the tangible results of those decisions will start to appear. Pre-construction works on Perth Stadium will be finished in the coming weeks, which is well ahead of schedule; and, the successful tenderer will be appointed by midyear with construction beginning by the end of this year.

The Elizabeth Quay project is on time and budget with construction of the inlet underway and work beginning on improving the Barrack Street Jetty precinct. By 2015 people will be able to enjoy promenades around the inlet, public parkland and cafes and restaurants at Elizabeth Quay.

Development of the land around City Link will continue, with three office towers currently under construction on the former entertainment centre site. This year work will also start on the new city square and markets next to the Horseshoe Bridge. Eventually this area will be home to 3 000 residents in addition to hotels, offices, shops, bars, restaurants and new public spaces.

Improvements to Chinatown are well underway with a new entry statement on Roe Street completed for the Chinese New Year celebrations. The next stage of the project will see improvements to public thoroughfares between James and Roe Streets, as well as to individual shopfronts. The Scarborough Beach redevelopment is also advancing, with public works due to start later this year.

**Tourism in Perth:** Over recent years Perth’s business and leisure tourism potential has been curtailed by a shortage of hotel rooms. Since the implementation of the state government’s hotel incentives policy in 2011, there has been a significant increase in hotel development and refurbishment applications, including the Westin Hotel on the old Fire and Emergency Services Authority House site, the old Treasury building and a

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soon-to-be-announced hotel at Elizabeth Quay. This shows that although Perth is an attractive option for hotel investors, there was need for government intervention due to the market failure in the sector.

**Local Government Reform:** Reform of local government in metropolitan Perth is underway. The local government sector and most people in Parliament acknowledge—if not publicly, then privately—that this is long overdue and that Perth simply cannot sustain 30 local councils. The government believes reducing the number of local governments to around 15 will improve service delivery to ratepayers, reduce bureaucracy and achieve cost savings. The Local Government Advisory Board is currently considering 34 proposals for change, including 12 proposals from the Minister for Local Government. Recommendations on these proposals will come to the minister by midyear.

**Regional Western Australia:** This period of transformation is happening in not only the city—the Pilbara Cities project, through \$1.2 billion in royalties for regions funding, has delivered better roads and infrastructure, improved health facilities, provided new schools and given better access to government and community services in towns and cities throughout the region. The recently completed Karratha Senior High School, Pelago Towers and Pilbara underground power project are testament to this, while planning on the \$200 million Karratha health campus will be finalised this year. Today people in the Pilbara can expect to live in communities in which entertainment precincts, sporting facilities, parks and recreational areas are on par with those in metropolitan Perth. This is fitting for a region that has made such a significant contribution to the Western Australian and national economy. In the south, the brand-new \$120 million Busselton health campus will open later this year. Major enhancements of a number of other health facilities will happen in 2014. These include Broome, Carnarvon and Exmouth Hospitals, plus dozens of hospitals, medical centres and nursing posts across the wheatbelt, south west and great southern covered by the Southern Inland Health Initiative.

Planning for the Anzac Centenary celebrations is well advanced, with the \$5.8 million restorative works on Mount Clarence in Albany due to be finished within the next few months and the jointly funded \$10.5 million National Anzac Interpretive Centre on Mount Adelaide to be completed in time for the first convoy commemoration in November this year. In Augusta the new \$34.6 million boat harbour is taking shape, with completion set for mid-2014. The redevelopment of the Esperance waterfront is well underway and is also due to be finished by the middle of this year.

**Agriculture:** The extension of the massive Ord irrigation scheme, as part of Ord stage 2, is continuing, with land being cleared in the Ord Valley to create viable agricultural land supported by new roads and irrigation channels. In May, the Katanning saleyards will officially open. The 92-year-old saleyards were rebuilt with a \$17 million investment. The new saleyards will be capable of trading more than 1.2 million sheep a year.

In the wheatbelt, while most farmers have enjoyed a record harvest, some in the eastern wheatbelt are still experiencing financial stress. In early 2013, this government introduced a state assistance package worth \$7.8 million to support businesses and rural communities in the wheatbelt after a number of years of poor seasonal conditions, low returns and, for many farmers, rising debt. This package funded counselling services, financial support grants and community grants to help farmers restructure their businesses. The Liberal–National government will continue to invest in agriculture in Western Australia, with additional funding for biosecurity, research, development and infrastructure.

This year, the government intends to address the long-running issue of private property rights for farmers and other landowners whose land is compulsorily acquired or has its use restricted by government building public infrastructure. Legislative amendments will be introduced into Parliament to ensure that just compensation is provided to landowners adversely affected by government actions.

**South west native title settlement:** Last year this government made a historic offer to settle native title claims across Perth and the south west of Western Australia. If accepted by the Noongar people, this will represent the most comprehensive agreement of its kind in Australian history. The Liberal–National government is working closely with the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council to conclude negotiations, with the view to reaching an agreement with Noongar native title claimants in the middle of this year. As part of the offer, the state government will present this Parliament with a bill that recognises the Noongar people as the traditional owners of the south west of Western Australia. 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 am grateful for the indication of support for its passage from members opposite. I intend to make a statement on the Noongar Recognition Bill and table a draft of the bill in this house in coming weeks.

**Environment:** One of the most significant conservation achievements of the Liberal–National government has been our Kimberley science and conservation strategy. Negotiations will continue this year to formalise marine parks at Roebuck Bay and Horizontal Falls and to extend the proposed North Kimberley marine park to the

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Northern Territory border. Creation of these new marine parks will increase the total area of the state's marine park system from 1.5 million hectares to over five million hectares. Work will also continue on meeting our election commitment to deliver the nation's largest terrestrial national park through ongoing negotiations with traditional owners in the Kimberley.

The Parks for People program will continue our investment in affordable family nature-based holidays. The government has committed \$21 million for new campgrounds and camp facilities in 16 parks, state forests and conservation areas, with a particular focus on the south west and midwest. The Fitzgerald River National Park improvement project will open later this year. This joint state and commonwealth project was initiated in 2009 in response to the closure of the BHP Billiton nickel mine in Ravensthorpe and will see enhanced tourist access and facilities, including upgrades to roads, visitor facilities and coastal walk trails in the park.

In line with the government's commitment to reform approvals processes, there will be further improvements to environmental legislation. These changes will build on reforms introduced during the last term of government. Most importantly, the Wildlife Conservation Act 1950 will be replaced with new biodiversity legislation that better reflects the need to protect our unique flora and fauna, including significant increases in penalties for harming endangered species.

Heritage: The conservation of our built and cultural heritage will also be a focus with the introduction this year of a new Heritage Bill. Remaining substantially unchanged for more than two decades, our current heritage legislation no longer reflects modern standards of heritage practice. The government has focused on practical conservation of our heritage through projects such as the old Treasury building, the Kalgoorlie courthouse and the Sunset Hospital site. We will progress the Sunset Reserve Transformation Bill this year to enable the redevelopment of this historic site, which has languished unused since 1996.

Sport and recreation, and culture and the arts: The Liberal–National government is particularly proud of the development of key sport and arts facilities and events, and grants and programs to get more people involved in sport and the arts since we have been in government. We have worked hard to make Western Australia a vibrant place to live, work and play. As mentioned, the Perth Stadium is underway. This facility will be a world-class asset enjoyed by generations of Western Australians. The government has also completed the redevelopment of the nib Stadium for soccer and rugby, while work on the state netball centre is well advanced. The redevelopment of Arena Joondalup will also commence this year.

The government is also continuing its commitment to support sport at the grassroots level. The highly successful KidSport program is giving thousands of Western Australian children the opportunity to participate in organised sport. The government made a commitment during the election campaign to extend the KidSport scheme into the arts through a new scheme, KidsCulture. This year, pilots for KidsCulture will start in Stirling and Albany.

Every great city has a great museum, and this government is committed to delivering a new museum for the people of Western Australia. Expressions of interest for the contract for the construction of the building will be sought later this year. The museum is due for completion by 2020.

Safer communities: The Liberal–National government makes no apologies for its tough approach to law and order. We have addressed issues of concern to Western Australians such as more police on the beat; hoon drivers; out-of-control parties; assaults against police officers; the whereabouts of sex offenders, domestic violence offenders and arsonists; and better support for victims of crime. Over the past five years, allowing for population growth, overall reported crime has dropped by 18 per cent. But there is always more to do to make people feel safer in the community. Regrettably, many Western Australians do not feel safe in their own homes. This is of particular concern to elderly and vulnerable people. One of the first bills this government will introduce into Parliament this year will be legislation to impose harsher sentences for violent home invasions. The Criminal Law Amendment (Home Burglary and Other Offences) Bill will create minimum mandatory sentences for serious physical or sexual offences that are committed during the course of a burglary. For adult offenders, this will mean a minimum mandatory sentence of 75 per cent of the maximum term. The bill will also close the loopholes under the existing "three strikes" laws that allow serial burglars to avoid jail time.

The Liberal–National government has focused on protecting those who protect us—police officers and other public officers who are at the front line in fighting crime—by introducing mandatory sentences for assaults against police, ambulance officers and transit guards. And the laws are working. The number of assaults against police officers since the laws were introduced has fallen by 28 per cent. The government wants to go further by progressing two pieces of legislation introduced into this Parliament last year: to extend mandatory sentencing to include assaults on youth custodial officers; and to ensure offenders serve the mandatory minimum term of imprisonment for an assault on a public officer.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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To address antisocial and dangerous behaviour in the community, this year the government will introduce into Parliament: amendments to the Road Traffic Act to give police the power to immediately confiscate vehicles from hooners for the most serious hooning offences; amendments to provide for alcohol interlocks to be fitted to vehicles driven by serial drunk drivers; and the Graffiti Vandalism Enforcement Bill to give courts the power to impose clean-up orders and the Public Transport Authority the authority to ban serial offenders from public transport.

Prisons: The result of the Liberal–National government’s tough approach to crime is that more people are in Western Australian prisons. Again, we make no apologies for that. Over recent months, there have been a number of problems in our prisons, most notably several prisoner escapes. This poses an unacceptable risk to community safety, and the government makes no excuses and accepts responsibility for that. Immediate measures have been taken to strengthen security procedures to prevent a repeat of these incidents. A review of all policies is also underway, including the assessment of prisoner security ratings, especially the assessment of minimum-security prisoners and transport arrangements. More broadly, this government has embarked on a process to lift standards within the state’s prison system with an emphasis on leadership, integrity and improving the workforce culture within the administration and operation of our prisons. The command structure for the Department of Corrective Services has already undergone some important changes, which is a step towards tackling some of the difficult issues facing our prison system. Importantly, the passage of the Custodial Legislation (Officers Discipline) Amendment Bill, introduced last year, will bring greater accountability and integrity to the workforce and align prison officers with the Public Sector Management Act.

The lobbyists bill, to enhance the integrity of interactions between government representatives and lobbyists, and to increase public confidence in government decision-making, was introduced but not passed during the thirty-eighth Parliament. A bill including amendments agreed to during debate on the 2011 bill will be introduced this year.

The Corruption and Crime Commission amendment (misconduct) bill: as the government has foreshadowed, a bill to amend the Corruption and Crime Commission Act will be introduced this year. The bill will transfer the oversight of minor misconduct by public officers from the CCC to the Public Sector Commissioner, redirecting the CCC’s priorities to its core police oversight role and to more serious misconduct matters. Later in the year, the Liberal–National government plans to introduce a bill that will provide the CCC with powers to investigate and act upon unexplained wealth and to create an offence for the rebuilding of fortifications.

The royal succession bill: Members of this Parliament will this year deal with an historic piece of legislation that will change the rules of royal succession. The Western Australian succession to the crown bill will form part of Australia’s national response to the United Kingdom’s changes whereby the firstborn child of a monarch will be heir apparent regardless of gender. The changes also remove the rule disqualifying a person from succeeding to the crown due to their marriage to a Roman Catholic or if they had failed to obtain the consent of the monarch to their marriage.

It would be remiss of me to not mention the issue of sharks, which has dominated the media and barbecue discussions over the summer. The government remains committed to a \$22 million program of shark mitigation initiatives, including aerial surveillance, tagging and monitoring, increased beach patrols and additional applied research into shark deterrents. In addition, the government has put in place a drum line program at popular beaches and surf spots in the metropolitan area and the south west, designed to target large, threatening sharks and improve public safety. We did not implement this policy with any sense of glee, but the government has a responsibility for public safety. It is plain and simple; seven deaths in three years from shark attacks demanded action.

To conclude, 2014 will be a busy year for the government and members of this Parliament. As a government we are committed to building our economy and striving to keep improving the quality of infrastructure and the delivery of services throughout the state, and to ensure that Western Australia continues to lead the nation. As members of this Parliament it is timely to remind ourselves that we are in a privileged position. Each of us is charged with a responsibility to represent the interests of our constituents and to advance the great state of Western Australia.

I wish members well for the forthcoming year.

[Applause.]

*Consideration*

**The SPEAKER:** The question is —

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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That the Premier's Statement be noted.

**MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [3.43 pm]: I rise to comment on the Premier's Statement. It is interesting that we should reflect for such a short moment on the issue of sharks, yet it has dominated such a large part of the public debate to date. Indeed, some of the Premier's difficulties with this debate could have been avoided if he had used the words that he had just used, "that he took no glee" from the debate on sharks or the measures that his government has implemented, because it was a gleeful looking Premier we saw on the television, grinning through the chains and hooks that he was displaying. It was unfortunate that that was communicated to the community. It was the wrong message to the community. Although we all share the Premier's concerns about shark attacks, I think we are equally concerned that we get this policy measure right. Part of that is to make sure that there is science behind the policy. There is little science, little to show for the costs associated with the government's program and little justification for it.

I would like to discuss what I think is an emerging trend with this government—the ongoing tendency of ministers not to take responsibility for their own actions but simply to provide a commentary on what they believe the performance of their departments to be, implying that somehow their own responsibility as ministers is divorced from that of their departments. We might reflect on the statements made by the Minister for Corrective Services over the summer in which he said he was appalled by the performance of the Department of Corrective Services. We might reflect for a moment, as I will at some length, on the Treasurer's comments—his lengthy commentary on the performance of the Department of Health, but this is somehow not a reflection on the performance of the Minister for Health. It is important that the Premier took the time to remind members of our responsibilities as members of Parliament, but it is also important that we take the time to remember the importance of the responsibility of ministers; ministers of the crown should take responsibility for the conduct of their departments.

I want to talk about the unfolding train wreck that is the commissioning of the Fiona Stanley Hospital and the engagement of private contractors for the delivery of hospital services at that campus. There has been lots of debate on this issue, in this and the previous Parliament, but one element has been missing in that debate—the Minister for Health. What is missing is the Minister for Health's acceptance of his role in the decisions that were made, and his responsibility for his department's conduct in managing the commissioning of the Fiona Stanley Hospital. A key decision to privatise the services at the Fiona Stanley Hospital was made by this government in July 2009. These services were defined as everything from garden maintenance through to patient care at the orderly level. We have a government that decided to privatise hospital services in a manner it saw as befitting its ideology and its ongoing suspicion of inefficiency in the public sector.

To justify its decision, the government engaged a small consulting firm in Perth, called Paxon Group. Paxon consulting group was engaged to put together a public sector comparator. The public sector comparator contract was put together under three separate contracts, all of which fell under the threshold required for the government to tender the contract for the consultancy. I am not sure why the government decided to split up the contract to avoid the tendering process in this way. I am not sure why the government did not see fit to allow the likes of PricewaterhouseCoopers, KPMG, Ernst and Young, or the host of other large accounting firms that have been in this field for many years and bring international expertise to the process, to tender for the work. I am not sure why the government saw fit to manipulate the contract process so that it would not have to be tendered in this place. Certainly, the Public Accounts Committee in its evaluation of the contracting process thought that it was a highly unusual decision and observed that the Department of Health had compromised the public sector comparator as a result. The short time lines in contracting with Paxon and putting together the contract for Paxon meant that Paxon was not subject to competitive tender. The service specifications were put together as part of a service matrix rather than as part of a proper services specification. The department did not finalise the public sector comparator before the request for submissions for the services privatisation contract at Fiona Stanley Hospital was completed. Serco Australia and the other bidder were bidding for a contract at Fiona Stanley Hospital before the public sector comparator was finished.

The Public Accounts Committee identified some significant shortcomings in the way that the government made the decision to privatise this hospital. That was the first decision by this government in relation to Fiona Stanley Hospital. Later, as I said, the government put the contract out to tender, but only three companies nationwide put tenders for a multibillion-dollar contract before the government for consideration. One of those tenderers fell out, so in the end there were only two bidders. One was Brookfield Multiplex, which was associated with the construction of the hospital. I guess it was already in the space and it thought it was a useful one to go for. The other bidder was Serco. It is interesting that the government put out to tender the biggest private sector contract in its history—ultimately, it has come down to a \$4.3 billion contract over 20 years—and it had two bidders. I have no argument with Serco, and I put that on the record here and now. Serco is a commercial company on the



Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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lookout for profits. It is very efficient at it. It is almost the world leader at hunting out these sorts of public sector contracts and bidding aggressively for those contracts to secure the business. It is one of the best. It has secured significant contracts in the United Kingdom and the United States. Until recently, it was one of the top 100 publicly listed companies in the UK. I note as an aside that it has fallen out of the top 100 since then. More importantly, it is a significant company with a great deal of success in securing government contracts.

One of the key reasons that a government would go into this sort of contract would be to outsource the concept of risk associated with the asset. That is always the driver for any government when it privatises a service.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** And ideology.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** And ideology, indeed, member for Cockburn. In theory, setting ideology aside—as I said, this government has a great fondness for privatisation—the key reason a government would go into this sort of contract would be to transfer the risk. It might be the financial risk associated with the development of an asset, it might be the financial risk associated with securing the debt, or it might be the operational risk associated with the delivery of those services. Indeed, the key risks that the government wanted to transfer were the risks associated with the information and communications technology. The Public Accounts Committee found that this particular scope of the contract was found wanting. In 2011 the signals were starting to be put up about the system to warn the Department of Health, but, more importantly, to warn our learned friend opposite, the Minister for Health, that there was something wrong with the contractual processes. The Public Accounts Committee stated —

Despite representing a significant proportion of the total cost of the Facilities Management Services Contract, and belonging to the higher risk band, the ICT components were not taken into account when calculating the discount rate used to analyse bids.

The Public Accounts Committee said that, at that stage, there was significant undervaluing of the ICT risks associated with what I will from this point forward refer to as the Serco contract, but the government continued to move forward with the Serco contract. In July 2011 it announced that Serco was the successful bidder for the services contract at Fiona Stanley Hospital. I would have thought that at that stage we would have seen in the background a long deliberative process that the government used to analyse, develop, shore up, negotiate, finalise and settle the contract with Serco. We now know through evidence put forward to the Education and Health Standing Committee by a range of people, including the former Under Treasurer, that what we saw in the background was a department and a government struggling to deal with the time lines associated with this hospital and a government obsessed with the privatisation of this hospital and obsessed with going to the March 2013 election saying that everything was on time and on budget and would be delivered according to its previous announcements. I would have hoped that due diligence would have been done effectively so that government departments had every opportunity to examine this contract, identify the risks associated with it and properly negotiate those risks out of the contract. It is very disturbing to hear that that is in fact the antithesis of what was going on behind the scenes in the department. The Public Accounts Committee report of 2012 stated that the department was jammed between time lines and the negotiators from Serco. I think, at this stage of the process, Serco was playing the Department of Health bureaucrats like a fiddle, knowing, as it does, the process of negotiation for contracts and the limitations with which departments work and the time lines that they are jammed against and knowing that it could leverage that little bit more out of the contract. We now get the feeling that the department is totally incapable of stopping the process and negotiating the best possible outcome for WA taxpayers. We now know through the testimony of Mr Marney that that was in fact the case. In his evidence to the committee, Mr Timothy Marney said that the department had just two weeks to review the contract in its entirety before the contract was settled by cabinet. He said —

Given the magnitude of the contract, both in terms of the importance of the services to be delivered, financial implications of the contract and even the duration of the contract, it would normally be the case that Treasury would be involved over a six to 12-month period as part of a working group or steering group to formulate the procurement process, assist with the evaluation and so on. My recollection is that in June or July, prior to the contract going to cabinet for approval, we were given our first look at the contract.

That is an extraordinary admission by the government that it did not have the capacity to review this contract. I remind the chamber that this is a \$4.3 billion contract for our newest flagship tertiary hospital that was being examined at the last minute, in haste and without due diligence by the Department of Treasury, which is there to protect taxpayers' funds. He said, rather famously now —

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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I can honestly say on behalf of the public interest we were pissed off, because the magnitude of that consideration is such, and the complexity of the financial arrangements within the contract are such, that it should have had much more exposure within Treasury and indeed across government procurement than what it actually had.

So here we have a department rushing into a contract with a large multinational company, which I said that I thought at that stage was playing it like a fiddle, and merrily putting in place a contract to meet its political deadlines and ideological imperatives, and fundamentally failing the taxpayers of Western Australia.

That brings me to the issue of the delays associated with this hospital. The government took a dirty secret to the 2013 election, and it was the issue of whether that hospital was running on time. In July 2012, the Birmingham report, as referred to by the Treasurer earlier today, was published.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr R.H. COOK:** The Birmingham report referred to significant problems associated with the commissioning of the hospital. The government and the minister have talked long and hard about the construction of the hospital. We know that was going well; that was handled by someone else—namely, strategic asset management from inside the Department of Treasury and Finance. It was the minister's own department that was failing. In his evidence to the committee last week, Mr Marney said quite clearly that it was not a problem with the asset that caused the delays at Fiona Stanley Hospital; it was the planning, configuration and design of clinical services that were causing delays, and fundamentally it was the responsibility of this minister to make sure that planning ran to course. In September 2012, the interagency working group was put together because it had to reconfigure the whole governance of this project to make sure it was running on time.

I think at that point of the political cycle the minister must have stopped going to any sort of health functions at all. If he had gone, he would have had every cardiothoracic surgeon, health bureaucrat and clinician in this state saying to him, "Don't you know your hospital is in trouble? Don't you know you're not going to have the workforce there? Don't you know you're not going to have the clinical framework in place? Don't you know you're not going to have the reconfiguration of services in the South Metropolitan Health Service aligned? Don't you know you're not going to have the transition of services to that hospital in place?" Everyone was saying it, and in December 2012 we learnt who else was saying it—none other than Dr David Russell-Weisz, the director who was actually responsible for the commissioning of Fiona Stanley Hospital. Therefore, just about everyone in the health sector was saying it will not be delivered on time, and the director of the actual project was saying it will not be ready on time, yet the minister put out a brief ministerial statement in November 2012 saying, "The workforce development for this project is going swimmingly, and everything is fine. It's going to open on time in April 2014." Nothing could be further from the truth, and this minister knew it.

In December 2012, Dr David Russell-Weisz told the director general in writing that it would not be delivered on time. So the director general, against the advice of his director and every other part of his department—he refers longingly to a report in February 2012 that suggested the ICT shambles could be extracted out of the fire—goes to his minister and supposedly says to him that everything is under control; in December 2012, "Everything is under control, minister." Yet, we now know, through the testimony given to the standing committee last week, that it was a complete shambles and in a shambolic state.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** That's not what he said. You are verballing him. I read what he said, and that's not what he said.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** Who?

**Dr K.D. Hames:** The Under Treasurer, last week, that it was in a shambolic state.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** I was not quoting the Treasurer; I am saying that it was in a shambolic state.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** I'll look at *Hansard* tomorrow because I don't believe you.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** I am saying that the Under Treasurer painted a very clear picture of a department scrambling to get things into place, unable to actually get the clinical services in place, and that it was the minister's failure by virtue of his department that is responsible for this. The Under Treasurer said that from September 2012 he had concerns about the cost, but it was not related to the phase-in delay, it was just about the transition of the system as a whole and the preparedness of Health to commission the hospital. He said he felt the preparations that were underway at that point were substantially undeveloped already at that point and probably way behind schedule.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** That bears no reflection on the words you put in his mouth five minutes ago. You'll see; we'll cross-reference *Hansard* with what you said to what he said.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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**Mr R.H. COOK:** Mr Acting Speaker, I might at this stage just seek your guidance. It has just been brought to my attention that I have been making reference to an uncorrected proof of evidence, so I just seek your guidance.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr N.W. Morton):** The advice I have, member, is that you cannot make reference to uncorrected *Hansard*, so I advise you to not do that.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** I certainly do not want to quote from it, and I thank you for that guidance.

We now have a very clear picture of a department in complete failure in its capacity to deliver this project. At the end of 2012, in the lead-up to the 2013 election, it was patently clear that the department was not going to deliver the services. It did not have the workforce in place, it did not have the clinical framework in place, it did not have the transition arrangements in place, it did not have the ICT arrangements in place, and it had failed to transfer the risk associated with that ICT because of the stunted and mismanaged contract process with Serco. Fundamentally, what we were going to see was a failure of the department to deliver this service. Those are the significant failures of the Department of Health that the Treasurer referred to yesterday in backing up the testimony of Mr Marney last week to the standing committee.

I return to my original theme: Who will take responsibility for the blowouts associated with the hospital? Who will take responsibility for the penalty payments that have been given to Serco because the department—aka the minister—failed to deliver this project? Who will take responsibility for the failure of this government to transfer the risk associated with ICT? Who will take responsibility for the in excess of \$300 million blowout associated with Fiona Stanley Hospital? I remind members that one of the great benefits the minister trumpeted that was associated with the Serco contract was that it would save us \$300 million. Yet we know that through the mismanagement of that contract and the mismanagement of the commissioning of Fiona Stanley Hospital, we already have \$300 million racked up in cost overruns, penalties to Serco and incompetence associated with the commissioning of this hospital.

It is time the Premier took his ministers out for a lesson in Westminster accountability. It is time for the Minister for Health to take responsibility for this hospital project. It is time for this minister to take responsibility for this hospital costing the people of Western Australia many hundreds of millions of dollars not because it is a complex hospital, not because it is the most beautiful thing since sliced bread, as the minister tells us, but because of his incompetence. He failed to pay attention to detail when the contract was put in place, and he failed to make sure that he safeguarded the taxpayers of Western Australia when he went about commissioning this hospital. This is not a failure because of the complexity of this hospital; this is a failure of this minister. He failed to even go so far as to defend his department. He has been absent over the last 24 to 48 hours while the Treasurer picks his department to pieces. It is shameful that it takes a former director general of Health to issue his own media statement today to defend his department and his actions because this minister is incapable of defending his department himself. He cannot defend his department because he knows he will therefore contradict the Treasurer, and he cannot contradict the Treasurer because he knows that to go head-to-head with the Treasurer is to admit that he is wrong. If he was to admit he was wrong, he would have to admit that he has failed, and failure as a minister results in one course of action. I leave the minister to reflect on what that course of action is.

I want to spend the last few minutes of my time reflecting on local issues—that is, the pressures associated with outer metropolitan suburbs struggling to get the sort of public infrastructure they need as they grow. In particular, I want to draw Parliament's attention to the lack of public transport in the Baldvis area. This week two young students from the new Baldvis Secondary College were advised by the Department of Education that no bus will be available for them to get there. There are no adequate bus services in their area despite the fact that they are covered by what is called the public transport zone. These young students, both of them girls, are required to walk, in one case, over three kilometres along busy roads with no footpath, in a bush setting, simply because the government has yet to roll out public transport in that area. I remind the government that people in areas such as Baldvis, which is one of the fastest growing suburbs in Australia, and certainly in this state, are struggling simply because the government has not provided the right sort of public infrastructure for them to be able to get around and work in that community. If the government is going to develop a local high school, it has a moral obligation to make sure there are public transport services for those kids to get to that school. If not, orange bus services should be provided so that students can get to the school. It is not good enough to say to those students that they are on their own and that they can take the risks of walking down busy roads without footpaths with the dangers associated with walking alone in a bush environment. The government has an important responsibility to ensure that it delivers those services.

I have campaigned for a long time on the issue of public transport in Baldvis. It is sadly lacking and it is time that the government caught up with the needs of the people in the Baldvis community and made sure that they

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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have the necessary public transport services to ensure they benefit from services that people in other suburbs of Western Australia take for granted. I also remind members that people in these outer suburbs struggle for a range of public infrastructure needs. It is high time that when the government develops these new suburbs, it makes provisions for public transport, footpaths, mobile phone coverage and other communication services necessary for people to enjoy these communities. It is simply not good enough for private developers to lay out an entire community and leave these people in isolated community dwellings without the capacity to enjoy the benefits of public infrastructure.

**MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park)** [4.14 pm]: I rise to respond to the Premier's Statement. What a summer it has been! One would have thought from the Premier's speech that it has been a lovely summer without discontent and without incident. I note that the Minister for Corrective Services is in the chamber. I will come to you very shortly "Schmackos"; do not worry! What a summer it has been. I think back and I cannot believe that the midyear review was so far away. It is almost forgotten that the document that highlighted the fully funded, fully costed lie came after we rose. So much has happened since then that I almost forgot all about the midyear review. The Minister for Culture and the Arts is back! I thought about him a bit over the summer. I went to a lot of the Fringe World Festival events and some of the Perth International Arts Festival events, and they were fantastic, but the best fringe show in town was the performance of the government. The best fringe show in town is what you guys were up to! I could not tear myself away from the train wreck every night. There were prisoners escaping every single day; it seemed to never, ever end. Then there was the shark cull strategy, which I thought was a wonderful example of how not to go about implementing policy. It was a tremendous example of how not to go about making a decision and having it implemented. Premier, I must admit that it was a pearler. When I saw the lovely photo of the Premier and the shark hook—the Premier remembers the photo—I thought the Fringe festival had got some pirates of Penzance! There was certainly an element of that. All the Premier needed was an eye patch to go with his look of glee at his big hook, which he then firmly stuck in his foot when he ran around actually implementing the policy.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Can I have a look at that photo?

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Yes, I will see whether I can get it to the Premier. I will need it again, but I will give it to the Premier in a minute.

**Mr C.J. Barnett** interjected.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I will need to use it again.

Another highlight of the summer is the Public Transport Authority phone app. Now, because none of the things in the fully funded, fully costed promises are being built, the government is giving us a virtual response. People get in their car, get on the app and it refers to maps. Riverside Drive is still open on the government's app. As I think I said on Twitter, the problem with the app is that there are two versions—the "election 2013" version and the "reality 2014" version. The Premier has to update the app to the "reality 2014" version, because now we have not only an app that tells us, "Guess what, you're stuck in traffic"—thank you for that very useful information!—but also the designer himself said on Twitter how wonderful it was and that now the ability for a person to add routes as they drive has been added. The Premier nods his head, but for some reason I thought that there was something wrong these days with someone driving their car with their phone in hand changing the route on an app. I heard the Minister for Police saying how outrageous it was for a person to drive while playing on their phone. I knew the revenue issues were problematic in government, but now it has a policy deliberately designed for Western Australians to get on their phones while they drive their cars.

The Minister for Tourism's comments last weekend were tremendous: "You know what? This whole tourism thing is way too hard; get out there and do it yourselves, Western Australians. I am sick of doing everything with no money; get out there and do it yourselves!" Apparently Western Australians are travelling the world saying, "Gee, we live in a crap place." That is the whole premise of the tourism minister's policy. We all have to go out and promote Western Australia because it is way too hard for the government. What an extraordinary time it has been over the summer.

Then of course there was the Minister for Corrective Services. I want to reflect on this issue, because I heard the Premier say that the Liberal-National government was proud to be tough on crime. Let me reflect on one thing for a minute. There is a guy doing 15 years for a serious drug offence; this is a bad guy. He is not an exemplary prisoner 14 and a half years into his sentence. He was sentenced for 15 years and he escaped while walking a puppy in Wilson. Let us reflect on that. When I think "tough on crime", I think of people doing hard labour. I do not think of a guy doing 15 years who escapes while walking a puppy. Wilson used to be in my electorate and it is a lovely part of the world to go for a stroll. The best thing about it is that he still has not been found. We still do not know where he is. Did we find the puppy?

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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**Mr J.M. Francis:** Yes.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Thank God! I am a massive fan of *The Great Escape* with Steve McQueen and that Triumph motorcycle. He escapes on it by jumping over the fence and away he goes. Who would have thought that a puppy would be the latest version of the Triumph! Here it is. When my daughter heard that the guy who was serving a jail term of 15 years escaped while walking a puppy, she went and got this toy puppy.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr N.W. Morton):** Member for Victoria Park!

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I will leave the toy puppy here because all around Western Australia the families of prisoners are cooking cakes so they can put toy dogs in them because that is how prisoners escape now—they take a dog for a walk! Yet here the Premier is saying that his government is tough on crime and tough on canines. What an extraordinary summer we have had. I could not believe it.

Then, of course, right at the end of summer, Parliament is about to resume. The Premier would have been thinking, “Oh, God, it must be over.” Then Tim Marney goes before a couple of committees and pulls down the pants of the government yet again. That showed me—before I come back to that in detail, and deal with some of the issues the shadow Minister for Health, the member for Kwinana, outlined—that when government is failing in policy implementation, it is decaying. When it cannot get right what its members say and what it does on just those key issues, we know there are some problems. I know it is tough for the Premier doing it all by himself; I understand that. He sits up there at Hale House demanding this and demanding that. Cabinet members are running around in circles in the cabinet room. I do not understand how he gets things done.

There have been a number of examples in which policy implementation has failed fundamentally, and I want to go through six or seven of them. I will start with the wages policy, because I have spent a long time in this place talking about the first-term wages policy. The Treasurer stood up and said, “I’m in charge of wages policy; I am the tough Treasurer, so I’m going to make sure that wage increases will be kept to either CPI or, at a maximum, WPI, and there is an FTE cap.” That policy should have delivered a maximum growth in wages of 21.2 per cent, but instead that failure of the first-term wages policy delivered a growth in wages of 37 per cent.

Do members remember the Premier’s net debt cap of \$20 billion announced just after the 2010 budget? What has happened since then? Unbudgeted extra revenue since the cap was imposed by the Premier has been more than \$6 billion. It is not for want of revenue; it is a problem with the spending side of things. I will quickly respond to the issue raised again by the Premier because, as I knew he would, he has been blaming the need for spending cuts on the GST. There has never been a budget shock from GST, members, as I have said before. The difference between what the government had budgeted for GST return and what the actual GST return was over four full financial years has been \$22 million or 0.02 per cent of our revenue base. There has never been a GST shock. The Premier has always known what our GST returns will be. The Premier’s problem has been that he has always spent money on the revenue he wished he had, not the revenue he actually has.

Therein lies the problem and why he has four strategies to deal with spending. There is the capital works audit. Incredibly, after designing a capital works program for six years, the Treasurer says that it is now no longer affordable. Over the past six years, the Treasurer and the Premier have been designing it. Now the capital works program is no longer affordable. I did not hear about the sale of assets when the Treasurer spoke of the fully funded, fully costed component of the election campaign. We know how successful wages policy was in the government’s first term and farming it out to the Industrial Relations Commission is likely to have some more success, but we will see how that goes. The final strategy is to identify ways to increase the performance and efficiency of the not-for-profit sector and the economy. I thought that area involved “putting people first” and in 2008 the Economic Audit Committee was supposed to do all that, but we have walked away from that and moved on from it. Members should not let the Premier bluff them about there being a budget shock because of GST revenue. We always know how much GST we will get; the Premier’s problem is that he always spends according to the revenue he wishes he had. If that is the case, members opposite should admit that this is a massive spending government; they should not run around pretending they are a bunch of conservatives.

Another example is the 457 visa school fees policy. What an extraordinary failure of public policy implementation. In its budget the government shows \$122 million of revenue, but three or four months later, in the midyear review, the government takes it all out again. What an appalling failure of public policy management. I refer to evidence given by Hon Peter Collier to the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations on 24 September 2013. The chair of the committee asked the Minister for Education the following question —

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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What role did the department have in developing the figures? Earlier you said that there are 4 500, but the budget said 8 600. What role has your agency had in developing these figures in the budget papers?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** None.

He was sitting in cabinet, of course, but we know that that is not relevant any more. He said, “None.” Then the Premier wonders why he had to take \$120 million of revenue from the budget. We all remember the debacle around the reduction in the feed-in tariff—that key strategy, the fiscal action plan—which lasted a total of, from memory, about 15 hours. Despite the government specifically rejecting funding for particular programs, the Department of the Attorney General says, “Oh, what do we care; they’ll back us up with money anyway”, and it still entered into contracts. What culture is being created in government from cabinet down? It is extraordinary to think that a government department could ignore a specific decision of government. The Treasurer said that leave liabilities would be capped at September 2010 levels, but it has continued to increase and increase. As the former Under Treasurer said in evidence last week to an upper house committee, “Well, that’s what happens if you don’t do anything about it.” Big announcements and bad delivery have always been the way of the government. No-one takes charge of the delivery of what is announced from cabinet. That has always been the fundamental problem of the Barnett government. I quote Tim Marney, “If you do not do anything about it, nothing happens.” What the Treasurer and Premier have never understood is that the job does not finish when they crack a gag in here or spit out a media release. They have to then go to departments and do the hard work. That is what they do not do; that is why the finances are in such diabolical shape.

I have to talk about the Metro Area Express—the fully funded, fully costed MAX—which was to be operating in 2018 but has been deferred to the never-never. I want to remind members how appallingly badly the MAX strategy and development policy has been handled. I say to members opposite who came into Parliament in the last election that the Premier rushed out to announce MAX on 2 September 2012. Do those members know why? The Bigger Picture advertisements were about to start about a nice light rail, so the announcement had to be made very quickly. That was on 2 September and on 3 September, the Treasurer was interviewed on 720 ABC radio. The first question he was asked was: how are you going to pay for it? The answer from the Treasurer was —

It’ll be paid for by—I’m assuming, or I imagine ...

The presenter interrupted with his next question, “Has cabinet endorsed it?” to which he replied he did not know. When asked how long it would take, the Treasurer said, “12 to 18 months I’d imagine.” In 2012 it was going to take only “12 to 18 months I’d imagine”, said the Treasurer and Minister for Transport. The questions continued with: what is it going to cost? I quote the Treasurer, who said on radio —

I think it will be over a billion dollars or at least a billion dollars or more than a billion dollars ...

That is the hard work that went into MAX by the Treasurer and transport minister. Ultimately, like the shark cull strategy, which probably did not go beyond more than a picture of the Premier holding a big hook, the media strategy was far more important than the actual delivery of the policy. That is why MAX has failed. I again remind members of the tremendous dorothy work from the Minister for Transport. After MAX was announced in September 2012, on 18 September he came into the chamber and was asked by the member for Morley a dorothy dixer about MAX. In September 2012, the transport minister said the following about MAX —

There is a lot of positive support for it right across the community. There is some frustration that it will take some time to get off the ground.

When the Leader of the Opposition asked when it would start, the transport minister replied, “Once again, it will start in 2016.” He then went on to attack the Labor Party’s light rail proposal by saying that it is fully funded from a funding source that has no money in it. That was the Treasurer. Perhaps instead of coming in here and enjoying the punchline he should have been wondering how he would pay for MAX light rail. Again, he had no focus on delivery. Again, in June 2012, he attacked Hon Ken Travers, which the Treasurer likes to do, when he stated —

When Hon Ken Travers was asked when he would start work on this plan for a light rail, he said that how quickly it can be built comes down to the state of finances. The fully funded plan now has no money.

It says something when the Treasurer of the day critiques the opposition for saying that it depends on the finances of the state. The problem is that the government made fully funded, fully costed election promises that it ultimately had no intention of delivering.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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I remember distinctly the Premier's statement following the Labor Party's press conference in February last year, Valentine's Day, in which the opposition announced its savings to help pay for its Metronet proposal. Out popped the Premier saying, "These are important projects. The opposition is just walking away from important projects that we are going to do." I can tell the Premier what the opposition did. It was honest with the people of Western Australia. The opposition realised that not everything could be done because debt is at a level which means it cannot be done. If I as shadow Treasurer knew that, the Premier and the Treasurer surely knew. If I knew, the Premier knew and, therefore, he deliberately deceived the people of Western Australia.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** No.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Yes, absolutely. The government cannot say something is fully funded and fully costed and then suddenly walk away from it when it gets re-elected.

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr N.W. Morton):** I ask the member for Victoria Park to withdraw his comment "deliberately mislead".

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I think I said "deceived". I withdraw.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** When the Liberal Party tells a lie at the election, it has to be held to account. That is exactly what the opposition intends to do. I will remind members of the words "fully funded, fully costed" in every speech I make between now and 2017.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** You have three years to do it.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Squawk, squawk, squawk! You will be gone.

**Mr C.J. Barnett** interjected.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Squawk, squawk, squawk! Come on, pirate!

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** When MAX is dead, we get the line to the airport, Mr Acting Speaker, which the Treasurer is no doubt familiar with. The Treasurer pops up and says, "You know what? It's going to be all underground. We are going to do a 12 kilometre tunnel out to Forrestfield." That is his response to the crumbling ruin of the government's credibility in respect of public transport. I remind members of what the Treasurer has committed to over the years. I am still waiting for the floating of Orrong Road. It is still not floating and congestion is getting worse. The Treasurer promised \$100 million for the Busselton airport. We are waiting for the Busselton airport upgrade. I remember a speech to the Committee for the Economic Development of Australia in which he promised, as opposition leader, a state-based maternity leave program. He has promised the lot, colleagues. Do not believe a word he says because he never intends to deliver on them.

I want to spend the better part of my last 13 minutes talking about risk, something that the member for Kwinana has spent some time on. Ultimately, I want to tell the Minister for Health about the problems he will have with the Serco contract. For the life of me, I do not understand, when the Premier says it is the most complicated contract in the history of Western Australia, why it is a 20-year contract.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** I don't think he said that.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I wrote it down. He did.

**Dr K.D. Hames** interjected.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Shush! No! It is the most complex contract in the history of Western Australia yet it is for 20 years. Any right-minded government or private sector organisation would give a shorter period to see how it operates. The government has locked away a 20-year contract based on a flawed public sector comparator.

The public sector comparator is in the report referred to by the shadow Minister for Health, and that is the sixteenth report of the Public Accounts Committee, dated June 2012 and titled "Building Foundations for Value". It is a bipartisan report with no dissenting report. Labor and Liberal members all agreed with this particular report. Interestingly, the committee looked at how the Department of Health formulated the public sector comparator. The PAC found that there were four versions of the public sector comparator. They all depended on length of contracts and what was included in that particular public sector comparator. If the public sector comparator is wrong, the contract will be wrong. I make that point now.

The PAC report states at page 78—

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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One of the key intellectual principles underpinning the use of PPP-type contracts is the notion that project risks can be transferred to parties best able to manage those risks.

Mr Sebbes from the Department of Health made the key point in evidence to the Public Accounts Committee on 24 April 2012 when he answered this specific question that was put to him, which stated —

In order to handle that complex integration of the two systems, my understanding from talking to IT people is that you would have a detailed contractual arrangement to know how you share the risks by integrating the two systems. Can you provide us with a copy of that? Is it in the major contract, is it a separate document, or is it a document that is still being worked up?

Mr Sebbes replies —

It is incorporated into the contract. The principle of that is that Serco need to match up with whatever system we provide on the day.

The chairman of the committee responds —

So what you are saying is that you will be able to shift the risk totally to Serco with them having to match to your patient administrations system.

Mr Sebbes' answer is, "Yes".

The Department of Health was fundamentally wrong, and I will take members through a couple of issues. A complicated part of that PAC report is about what is known as asset betas. According to the PAC report —

Asset betas are used in some finance calculations as a measure of systematic risk and they are central to the development of the discount rate to be applied to the private sector bids. Asset betas are defined in the IA Guidelines, which provides for a consistent approach to the application of systematic risk in PPPs in Australia. The asset beta defines asset types according to 'very low', 'low' or 'medium' risks.

Medium is the highest form of risk available. It has become less complicated because they are all formulated by Infrastructure Australia on an agreed set of principles across the country. The information and communications technology risk was medium, at 0.9. The very highest level of risk was allocated to ICT.

There were the two final public sector comparators. There was August 2010 and June 2011. That is the same month the contract was signed and the same month the Minister for Health put out his media statement saying that the Serco contract would save hundreds of millions of dollars.

Stick with me, members, it is complicated. In August 2010 the public sector comparator excluded ICT. It was not there; it was not part of the deal. The June 2011 comparator obviously included it. For some reason, the commercial advisors, Paxon Group, came to the conclusion that when the ICT components were included in the public sector comparator, developed in July 2011, an asset beta of 0.3 was utilised, indicating that Paxon Group—commercial advisors—took the view that the risk profile of the project had decreased despite the inclusion of the ICT components. Health was operating under the assumption that if the ICT components are included in the public sector comparator, and therefore in the contract with Serco, the risk was lower than if they were excluded. It is a perverse suggestion. Everyone in this house must recognise that, and the PAC report made that point. The report states at page 94 —

This is a counter-intuitive shift that is not supported by the evidence or the guidance contained in the IA Guidelines.

That means that the Department of Health never understood what it was doing or the level of risk in the public sector comparator and, therefore, it never understood what it was trying to achieve in the contract with Serco that the minister rushed to sign in July 2011, and then claimed in his media statement it was going to save Western Australians hundreds of the millions of dollars. We just do not know whether that is true, which is why Tim Marney made this point in his evidence in response to a question from the member for West Swan, which states —

... one could argue that the Serco contract has complicated things to such an extent that it has increased the risks and increased costs to government.

Mr Marney responds —

One could argue that. Whether or not one is correct, you would have to actually go back and I think re-run the public sector comparator on the actual contract that is now in place.



Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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Remember that the public sector comparator assumed by Health is different from the risk allocation that was signed in the contract with Serco. Mr Marney's answer continues —

But it would be fair to say that the extent of risk transfer and therefore the extent of benefit of going down this path has changed relative to the original public sector comparator.

Not only the extent of risk but also the level of risk has changed. In my view the Department of Health, to be frank, was advised hopelessly by the Paxon Group, and it was ultimately out there alone because Treasury was not involved to the extent necessary.

As I said, that is why in a unanimous report the Public Accounts Committee, which comprises both Liberal and Labor members of Parliament, agreed to the finding at page 94, which reads —

... the Department of Health did not have sufficient understanding of the work of its commercial advisor ...

Therefore —

... Treasury needs to apply a greater level of scrutiny to the work being carried out by commercial advisors ...

Minister for Health, that finding was made with bipartisan support. Finding 47 reads —

... the ICT components were not taken into account when calculating the discount rate used to analyse bids.

Members should think about that. The Department of Health had no idea of the actual risk profile of the information and communications technology components it was seeking to transfer to Serco. Serco hopelessly, completely and utterly out-negotiated the government on the ICT risk. Hence recommendation 4 reads —

... Treasury needs to ensure that the asset beta —

That is the risk measurement —

used for projects ... reflect the risk associated with ICT projects when calculating discount rates.

The Minister for Health now says that we will get \$500 million in savings from the Serco contract. The government has already lost \$330 million, right? But the reality is —

**Dr K.D. Hames** interjected

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Already \$330 million has been spent. The savings are disappearing.

**Dr K.D. Hames** interjected.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Shoosh! The minister will get a chance to get up.

The savings are disappearing rapidly. The minister does not seem to accept that the public sector comparator was flawed and therefore the contract with Serco was also flawed. Taxpayers are on the hook because the very base work was not done correctly. What worries me is that the Minister for Health does not seem to understand that. The Public Accounts Committee worked all this out in 2012. The government is saying that it takes responsibility, but it will be a big new hospital that everyone will love. If the government is not going to learn from its mistakes and get the basic stuff with the public sector comparator right, this situation is doomed to be repeated. Members opposite can say that it will all be okay when we cut the ribbon and put up the plaque and that it will all be wonderful, but that is an appalling way to manage the state's finances. It is not because of goods and services tax, members, and it is not because of any external issue with the economy. The reality is that revenue has increased by nearly 40 per cent since the Liberals have been in power. The problem is that its expenses have increased by 53 per cent. If the government is to average recurrent expense growth at 10 per cent a year, keep doing it and debt will keep going up, but do not come in here and pretend for a minute that it is all because of the GST. As I said at the very beginning, there has not been a GST shock.

Yesterday Tim Marney highlighted the fact that the Premier's career-long antagonism towards Treasury is now destroying the way this government goes about implementing public policy. This is all about the Premier's career-long antagonism towards Treasury. I go back to the letter from John Langoulant that I have quoted time and again. In 1998, John Langoulant, the then Under Treasurer, wrote to the Premier and Treasurer, Richard Court, fingering the member for Cottesloe for his slack attitude towards finances and because he made promises regardless of the state of the budget and regardless of what cabinet said. The same thing is happening now but on a much larger scale. The member for Cottesloe has form. If members opposite are going to silently lead from behind, at some point these chickens will come home to roost. I can tell members now that regardless of which party wins in 2017, it will be a couple of tough terms because the government cannot destroy the flexibility of

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

---

future governments to the extent it has done so without a reckoning. The government should not think for one minute that it can sell this and that to get away with it. The government's problem is a bad governance process that is centralised in Hale House. Cabinet is not involved and does not care. Treasury is finally trying to flex some muscle to get back in on the game. But I tell you what, members—that horse has bolted.

**MR P.B. WATSON (Albany)** [4.45 pm]: It is very hard to follow a speech like that.

**Mr D.A. Templeman**: Do you need some props?

**Mr P.B. WATSON**: No! It is interesting, because when I go for a walk in the morning, I take my dog down by the magnificent entertainment centre that we built along the foreshore. I am always checking people to see whether the dogs have tattoos that read "prison". There is a prison in Albany, but unfortunately the dogs down in Albany are a bit bigger than that. We have big dogs. It is good that the government is tough on crime.

The member for Victoria Park addressed a lot of issues. The first issue I want to talk about as shadow Minister for Sport and Recreation is the athletics track. A great track was laid a few years ago over four years. After two years, a new one has been laid, which is two years ahead of schedule. The government contributed 56 per cent of the cost of the new track while the track's manufacturer contributed 44 per cent as compensation. I have been told that the reason the track deteriorated was the pigment that was put in when it was laid. One would surely think that that is the responsibility of the contractor, but Western Australian taxpayers have paid for 56 per cent of the cost of the new track. I will be asking questions about that in Parliament because it is a concerning issue. It is great to have a good track. I will be coming up for the international meet at the track on the weekend. Congratulations to Athletics WA, which is organised by Stephen Stingemore, who is an old running mate of mine. He was in the police force for many years but he retired and was the acting chief executive officer of Athletics WA. Athletics WA will hold the Australian all-ages cross-country championships in Albany later this year, which will be great for Albany. Those who will be running range in age from small kids through to veterans. I am sure that if they are interested in signing up, some members would qualify as veterans!

I often have a crack at Virgin Australia and the old Skywest but apparently Virgin is putting on six new flights to bring people to Albany. That is the type of thing we have to do in regional Western Australia to encourage people to visit our towns. I congratulate not only Stephen Stingemore and Athletics WA, but also the board members of Athletics Australia and Virgin because a lot of effort has gone into this event. I am aware that some people wanted the event to be held in Bunbury. However, member for Bunbury, common sense eventually prevailed and it will be held in Albany.

I turn to the Anzac commemorations. Since attending the sod turning for the national Anzac Interpretive Centre on Mount Adelaide in October last year, I am pleased to see both the construction of the centre and upgrades to facilities on Mount Clarence proceeding well. At the sod turning it was encouraging to hear the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC, Senator Hon Michael Ronaldson, say that the centre will be completed on time and on budget.

As we all know, Albany marks the beginning of a fateful journey for the first Anzacs as they departed Albany on 1 November and 31 December 1914. For many soldiers Albany was the last piece of Australian soil on which they would walk. I refer to a story in the Albany Historical Society's *Members' Magazine*. I congratulate Andrew Eyden and the group who do such great work. An article in the summer 2014 edition reads —

The display of warships at the end of October 2014 now appears to be inevitable. However, there is still time to persuade the organisers to place a greater focus on the Army participating in the event to commemorate the memory of those 40,000 soldiers; that two Convoys departed from Albany, not just one; that Albany played a significant role throughout the War and that New Zealand's partnership is not overlooked. After all, without the New Zealanders there would be no ANZAC.

Major Fred Waite, author of the book "The New Zealanders at Gallipoli" describes the arrival of the New Zealand Convoy in the Sound; as follows:

"... the Australian transport ships rode on the calm water of King George's Sound packed with the adventurous spirits of the First Australian Division. The cheering and counter-cheering, the Maori war cries and welcoming coo-ees would have moved a stoic. Young Australia was welcoming young New Zealand in no uncertain manner in the first meeting of those brothers in arms soon to be known by a glorious name as yet undreamed of.

The Albany Historical Society's *Members' Magazine* states also —

This spirit of mateship between Australia and New Zealand should not only be remembered but encouraged and promoted by the Commemoration.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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This is a huge thing for not only Albany but also Australia, New Zealand and the other countries that took part. Albany was also where the first dawn service was held in 1918 by Chaplain Padre White, who served as chaplain with the 44<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Australian Imperial Force. He celebrated a requiem mass for the battle dead at St John's in York Street. After the service, he and some members of the congregation climbed to the summit of Mt Clarence. It was also from this vantage point that the people of Albany had gathered in 1914 to look at the convoys of ships that had gathered in King George Sound to transport the men to Egypt. As Padre White looked out over King George Sound, he was reported to have said, "Albany was the last sight of land our troops saw of Australia. Perhaps we should commemorate in this way every Anzac Day."

The National Anzac Centre will be a magnificent facility that will tell the story about those service men and women who left our shores. Importantly, the centre will be not only a museum of the First World War, but also a place of reflection on the service and sacrifice of the men and women of the Australian and New Zealand forces who departed from Albany in the first and second convoys that left for Europe and ultimately Gallipoli. As the place where the Albany journey is deemed to have started, such a centre would for many people be a place to commemorate, contemplate and educate.

The City of Albany's council, along with its CEO, Graham Foster, as well as the Albany Heritage Park's general manager, Dean Lee, are to be congratulated for the work they put in towards making the project work so well. I have also had discussions with the city council about further plans it has for other areas in and around what are now the forts. They will fit in well with the attractions of the forts and the National Anzac Centre, and I will be fighting to make sure they get state government funding to help with these works. The council is not just focused on Mt Adelaide and Mt Clarence for the centenary of Anzac; it has also sourced Lotterywest funding to enable an overdue upgrade of the historic section of Stirling Terrace and to construct a town square on the grassed area between the town and library. The council has also started talks with the owner of the former Commonwealth Bank building opposite the town hall about purchasing it. This building has been vacant for eight years and has become an eyesore, blighted by graffiti and vandalism. Congratulations to the state government and to the City of Albany for all the work that they are doing for this most important event.

One thing I just thought of when I was up walking in Kings Park this morning seeing everyone on pushbikes is transport. Transport will be a huge issue in Albany. Accommodation will probably be the biggest, but transport will also be a big issue, given all the people visiting Albany. I thought perhaps we could put more bike racks around town. A lot of people around Albany ride bikes, and maybe we can encourage people, even the tourists who come down, to ride bikes. However, we have to provide the bike racks to facilitate it.

What must rank as one of the dumbest cost-cutting decisions made by this government—we now know that list is a long one—is the issue of providing only 20 days of paid relief for electorate office staff. It started with a directive to members from the director general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Peter Conran, on 31 July that members will get no paid relief for their staff for any period of less than 20 continuous working days. I wonder whether members opposite can tell me about any other workplace in Australia in which there is this situation of not providing relief for their staff. I cannot understand why members on the other side do not want to look after their staff. Just the other day we had a situation in the member for Collie–Preston's electorate, just next door to his office, where someone robbed a bank. If the assailant had come into his office, there would have been only one person there that day because there was no relief provided. I have told my staff that if anything like this happens, just put a sign on the front door to say the reason this office is closed is that the Barnett government does not look after their staff. Members can say—pardon?

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Your staff.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** It is my staff, but we want to provide a service to our community. Actually, I have a bit of information here that probably will help the Premier. This was done with no consultation with either the presiding officers or members. Then after the expected backlash, we got another circular in September advising that each member will now have a bank of 150 hours in which to manage paid relief. Yet, only two months before, we read in *The West Australian* that the salary costs for the 218 staffers working in the office of the Premier and 16 ministers had grown by \$578 916 compared with before the election. Nearly half of that had gone to 10 senior people, including ministerial chiefs of staff, Mr Barnett's director of government strategy, Narelle Cant, and the director of government media, Dixie Marshall. There is 75 hours of paid relief for each full-time equivalent electorate office staff member to use for personal leave and annual leave.

Often electorate office staff have to deal with difficult people, and sometimes people who are threatening or even dangerous. Being in the office by themselves when an incident like this happens can be quite distressing for the staff member involved. I remember when I first got into this job and I walked into the office—it was Hon Kevin Prince's office—it had this huge bench at the front. I said that we did not want it; we wanted to have

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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proper contact with the people. The state police said no, we had to have it. One day, a young gentleman came into the office and there was only one person at the front; someone was down the back. This guy came in, smashed the front office and jumped the fence. Luckily, my staff member was able to go down the backstairs. Given it was lunchtime, she was the only one there. She ran down the backstairs because she could not reach the emergency alarm because we did not think people would do such a thing. This guy started throwing things around, smashing up the office. I cannot understand why the members on the other side have not supported us; it is a huge issue.

If people set up a business and did not provide safety for their staff, something would happen. I just want to know who will take responsibility for it. People say that Peter Conran has made the decision, but I thought that the Speaker was our employer. I have always thought that. The Premier can shake his head. I am sure he has plenty of staff and does not need to worry about it. However, he should get out to the marginal seats or the rougher areas. It is all right in Cottesloe, but he needs to get out to some of those rougher areas and deal with the people who are on amphetamines, who have Homeswest issues, who have nowhere to live and are desperate. What can we do when we have only one person in the building because we do not have staff? It is an absolute disgrace. The Premier can sit there, look and smile and all that, but this is a huge issue. Sometimes the Premier talks about his legacy. This is a legacy for him. If anything happens to any of those staff, the buck will stop with the Premier.

The savage cuts to school funding have hit my electorate hard, as they have for other members. This year will see Albany Primary School lose \$159 820; Little Grove Primary School, \$67 000; Flinders Park Primary School, \$164 000; Spencer Park Primary School, \$131 000; Mount Lockyer Primary School—of which I am on the board, and the Premier should see all the cuts we have to do there just to survive—\$154 000; Yakamia Primary School, 170 000; Albany Senior High School, \$204 000; and North Albany Senior High School, \$204 000. These are just figures, but I will tell members something about how this is affecting communities.

We have three very small schools out of Albany—namely, Wellstead, Manypeaks and South Stirling. Two of those schools are in my electorate. A guy who used to be a music teacher at Scotch College has semiretired down there. He goes around working part time at those small schools, and every child at those schools can play a musical instrument. Before he got there, they could not. When attending the assemblies at the end of the year, every one of those children in those small schools can play a musical instrument. Then what happens? His job has gone. These are the little things that do not get looked at when a government says it will do all these cuts because it has a better system. These schools had someone who is as important and talented as Ross who can get this out of children, but he is gone. I will go to the school assemblies next year and there will be no-one playing musical instruments. Ross scraped and borrowed to get those musical instruments; it is an absolute disgrace. This is all on top of increased enrolments, with no increase in teacher numbers and a cut in education assistants. On top of this, we have seen massive increases in TAFE fees, which will hit students and apprentices hard. I know parents who have children who want to be apprentices but they can no longer afford to send them to TAFE. We will need apprentices. Once the mining boom has finished, all these people will come back to Perth but they will not have any training. They went up there to make quick money but when the jobs dry up, they will have to come back and we will not have the apprentices to fill the gaps.

Albany has a shortage of aged-care workers and those trained in hospitality. Young people who were thinking about skilling themselves to enter these industries have now been hit with fee increases. This relates to training for our teachers and everybody else. These cuts that are being made mean that people cannot go into training. They cannot go to Perth. It is all right for people who live in Perth; they can go to training at Subiaco or in the city. But for those in the country, they cannot travel. They cannot go to Bunbury. There used to be a district education office in Albany and people used to go there to train. When the principals have to meet the district education boss, they have to drive all that way and they have to provide relief, which they have no money for because there have been all these cuts. What is the sense in it when people need every opportunity to get the right training so that they can improve their job or their career prospects or re-skill to work in another industry if they lose their job? It is just another short term-focused revenue-raising exercise by this government, with no thought of the long-term impact it will have on providing a better skilled workforce.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Recently, I wrote to the Minister for Transport on behalf of taxidriviers in Albany who were angry that they had received a 5c increase in flag fall and a 3c fare increase per kilometre. They showed me that fuel made up 30 per cent of their costs and that the price of unleaded petrol is seven per cent more and the price of liquefied petroleum gas is 13 per cent more than in Perth. Members can imagine their response when the minister replied that the increase that they got was more than the increase that Perth drivers got and that the statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics showed that it was cheaper to run a vehicle in Albany than it

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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was to run a vehicle in Perth. A quick Google search shows that the prices of tyres and batteries are lower in Perth. My advice to the minister is that the next time he visits Albany, he should hire a car and not catch a taxi.

Another issue for taxidriviers is the lack of security cameras in their taxis. Why can regional taxidriviers not have the protection of cameras in their vehicles just as Perth drivers have? Drivers in Albany have been subject to assaults, fare evasion, drunken behaviour and abuse from passengers, yet the government has refused to install cameras. In Perth the cameras are provided by the taxi industry development fund, which does not apply to regional taxis. Why can the minister not use royalties for regions money to install these cameras and provide the same level of security for regional drivers as for those in Perth?

The Minister for Transport also wants to centralise the operations of the Bunbury, Albany and Esperance ports so that they will be controlled from Bunbury. I do not know how the other two ports shape up, but I do know that Albany is a past winner of the Lloyd's List Australia Australian port of the year award, it has the very best CEO in Brad Williamson and, in the previous financial year, it made a record profit of \$6.353 million and had a rate of return of 9.75 per cent. What is going to happen? Everything is going to Bunbury, so we will see.

I got an email the other day from Rod Vervest, who runs the Perth International Arts Festival in Albany, about Kulcha. It states —

G'day Peter. This news attached is appalling and tragic for thousands of people in the music industry and particularly for the multi cultural community. We need to focus the cull on the real predators in this State starting with the most dangerous one! As the monuments to greed and futility are built with money we don't have, the truly enduring things that bind WA together are being culled. The Arts including our festival here are under assault. The benefits that organisations like kulcha bring to the community for the comparative pittance it takes to run them, is felt very deeply by many, many people. This benefit is that very human day to day unseen immeasurable greatness that one dimensional arrogant ... completely fail to see. That's what arrogance does and I for one am completely sick of it. I firmly believe we must save Kulcha if not today, then certainly tomorrow when care for Western Australians is restored.

That is just one message, and I have had lots of other comments about Kulcha. We cannot just build these great big monuments for people and not look after culture and the arts.

The future of the vacant Esplanade hotel site still waits for a solution after the Premier said during the election campaign that he would fix it and then told local ABC radio that something would happen by August last year. Now we hear that talks between LandCorp and the owners about buying the site have stalled and that the government will issue an improvement notice over the property as the first step to compulsory acquisition under the Planning and Development Act. I do not want to make this into a political issue. All I want is to get the Esplanade hotel site developed, and that is what everybody else wants. We want a suitable development on the site, preferably a hotel. If we cannot have that, maybe a bistro at the front and tourist accommodation at the back. If the threat of compulsory acquisition does not work to force the owners back to the negotiation table, the move to compulsory acquisition will mean it will get bogged down and dragged out by legal proceedings for years to come. All I want is the Premier to send someone up there, or drop in to see the people on his way to Africa. He could get one of his senior public servants, whom he pays so much, to sit down with these people and ask them what they want to do. It would cost \$2 000 or \$3 000 to send someone up there to sit down and talk. I know that the group the Premier was dealing with that were dealing with the Singapore owners no longer talks to the Singapore owners. Surely there is someone in the state government, such as in the tourism agency, who could go there and say, "Let's do something." I know that the Premier is trying something, but he is going at it like a bull at a gate. He should sit down and talk to these people. I know that there are people in Albany who are willing to pay \$9 million, but \$13 million is too much. We do not want it to get dragged out in the courts. This is the last thing the people of Albany want. LandCorp is busy trying to get a developer to build a hotel on the Albany waterfront, which I think will eventually happen from what I have heard from LandCorp, so it sees it as a race between two sites to get a hotel first. I know that Ross Holt from LandCorp said that there was comprehensive community engagement with the people and business community of Albany to find out what they would like to be developed on the Esplanade site, but I checked with the City of Albany and it does not know anything about it. Middleton Beach is Albany's premier beach and the area has the highest density of tourist beds in Albany. There has always been a hotel on the Esplanade site, and most people I speak to have the opinion that there should be another one. I spoke to the estate agent who is dealing with it and he said that they no longer build hotels in regional areas. It is no good saying that the land will be repossessed and the hotel rebuilt if it is not viable, because the state government will be using our money. We do not want that to happen.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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Moving year 7 students to high school is still a big issue in regional towns in my area, including in places such as Wellstead and Manypeaks. I know that some families who have three children, the oldest of whom will be in year 7 next year, will bring the whole family to town instead of spending \$20 000 a year. We will lose three children from, say, Wellstead Primary School, not just one child, because the younger ones will also come to town and dad will come in on the weekend. It is a huge issue; \$20 000 a year is big money, even though the Leader of the National Party today said they were giving \$2 500 to people who have children who board. Congratulations to all our farmers who have had a tremendous year, but \$20 000 is still a big expense, and it costs a fortune for them to send their children to get a proper education. It is a huge issue.

We had a shark rally at the weekend—we got some great photographs of the Premier! It was a very good rally. We had one person who was there with his son who said to cull them all, but he was a shark fisherman. I was thinking: if you are a shark fisherman and you want us to cull all the sharks, what about your job? He kept saying, “Oh no, we want to cull them all, and I am saying that because I am a shark fisherman.” I think he might have spent too much time in the sun! The rally was great and more than 500 people attended. It is good to get debate going, and there will always be different views; I am against the drum lines. We get a lot of sharks out there, and I think if people realised how many went along the big trough about 150 metres off Middleton Beach, they probably would not go swimming at all. When I come to Perth and I see the shark patrol plane come over, I dive in, and once it has gone I dive out and wait for it to come again, but we do not have that option in Albany. We can go down there and we have the tremendous Albany Surf Life Saving Club there, but we do not have a shark patrol. I also think there should be more tagging, because we have the beacon off Middleton Beach and we have one further around on Whalers Beach

I am glad the Minister for Housing is in the chamber. It was good to see that the minister came to Albany the other day, although he never let us know. He did not invite us to the event. When we were in government, Terry Redman was always advised and invited to events, but obviously this government does not think the local member should be at events. We always had to let someone know when we were in town. It was good to see that in the paper, but I actually knew that the minister was there because I came back to town with the upper house member for the National Party. He came down for the day and said, “I’ll see you later on”, but I said, “No, no, we don’t get invites.” I do not know if that is something the Premier can follow up, but I think it is common courtesy, and we did it when we were in government. I know that the Premier does that when he comes to town, but some of his ministers do not and I think it is just common courtesy. We are all there for the right reason, which is to do the best for the electorate.

The other day when we were working out what I was going to say, someone said, “What would you call the government now?” I said, “Fumble, bungle and grumble”, because the Minister for Corrective Services is always fumbling the ball, the Treasurer has bungled the AAA credit rating, and the Premier is Mr Grumble. That is just something we thought we would pick up on and maybe use right throughout.

It is interesting to see the result of a reduction in staff in government services. One of my constituents got five letters on the one day from the Department of Transport on behalf of the government of Western Australia after handing in a licence plate. On the same day she got one letter that stated the refund due to her was \$153.85, another one that stated the refund due was \$220, another stating that her refund would be \$197.65, and another stating the refund would be \$80.20. She received five letters from the one department on the one day, all with different amounts. I think that is a world record and it could only happen because there are not enough staff. I think that is indicative of the government at the moment; it is all over the place. People say, “You’d be happy with the way the government is”; well, we are and we are not. I am a proud Western Australian and I want to see the state going forward, but at the moment there is no confidence in WA and no confidence out in the electorate. I look at all these new members here and think, with their one per cent, two per cent or five per cent margin, bye, bye!

**DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale)** [5.15 pm]: I also rise to reply to the Premier’s Statement. The Premier stated that we are all privileged to be in this house, and we are very privileged to be in this house serving our constituents and the state. But the holding of that privilege brings reciprocal obligations, one of which is engendering the trust of the Western Australian public. The Premier and his government can dress it up whichever way they want, but there is no doubt that there have been broken promises since the 2013 election.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Which one?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Which one? The deferral of the airport link and the Metro Area Express—MAX—light rail deferral are two. Does the Premier want me to keep going?

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Yes.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Actually, if I have time at the end, Premier, I will list some more. Also, during the election campaign did the Premier tell the public that there was going to be this great cut in education? Did the Premier tell them? Fully funded, fully costed! The Premier's promises were fully funded and fully costed —

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** The point is, you're talking about broken promises, but the record is not what you say.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** If something is going to be completed on a certain date according to an election promise and it is fully funded and fully costed and then it is deferred, that is a broken promise.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Name a few—come on! You haven't named them. You have talked about a delayed project—I will concede that; what else?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** That is a broken promise.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** You might say that; I say it is delayed. What else? Go on! Where are all these broken promises? Come on—rattle them off for us!

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, Premier; the member for Armadale has the floor.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** The trust this government has thrown away is amazing. It affects not only the Premier or the government; it affects all of us. We come into this place with the trust of the people who voted for us. This issue of broken trust is very interesting because it really affects the body politic of Western Australia. A 2006 doctoral thesis written by Matthew Harding—an Australian who is now an academic at Melbourne Law School—was published in the *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* in 2012. According to my notes, Harding states —

A trusting relationship is the product of a cycle of trust and trustworthiness: a trusting attitude and actions by one party and a trustworthy response to that trust by the other party.

Harding continues —

Trust comprises three elements: a trusting attitude; a set of trusting beliefs or expectations; and actions of the sort that one is more likely to engage in when one trusts.

I do not think the public of Western Australia trusts the Premier because not that long after the election he went on radio and said that people do not really listen to the promises made during an election. How can that engender trust in the body politic of Western Australia when the Premier of Western Australia goes on radio not long after an election and states, "But it doesn't matter; people don't really listen to the promises we make in the election"?

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Did I say that?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Yes, the Premier did, and he knows he did.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** No, I didn't.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Phil Beadle, a teacher who won the award for being the best teacher in the UK, stated, "I'm ashamed to make this statement, but I believe it is true: never believe a thing a child says to you." I wonder if we put the statement "Never believe a thing the Premier says to you" to the public of Western Australia, how many would agree with it? From the conversations I have had over the summer break, a significant majority of people would agree with that statement. The Premier can interject—because he is a bully—as I respond to his statement, during which I did not interject. He can say what he wants, but he cannot get away from the fact that he has broken promises. He kept saying, "Fully funded and fully costed. These projects will be delivered on time." He also said on radio, soon after the election on Geoff Hutchison's show on 720 ABC Perth, that the people can judge him harshly if the Liberal Party did not meet those promises. Those promises had a due date attached to them. The Premier can come into the house and say that a deferral or delay of those projects until after the next election is not a broken promise, and he can also say that people do not really listen to promises so that does not really matter. But I tell the Premier that that does go to trust, and he will be marked down if he goes to the next election as Premier, although, from the whispers from his backbench, it is debatable whether he will go to the election as Premier.

Matthew Harding's thesis states that trust is incredibly important in the political process because the public has no choice but to vote for one of the politicians it is presented with. The public votes with the understanding or expectation that what the politician has promised in the election will be delivered. The leader of a party can go to an election with a promise saying that it is fully funded and fully costed and will be delivered on a certain date, but, as we know, that is not necessarily the case. Matthew Harding also states that "trust can be slow to build and quick to destroy." The Premier can gloat and boast. Yes, he had an incredibly successful victory in 2013. I think it was the most successful victory in Western Australian history. He has the right to gloat and boast about that. It could be argued that he built up trust in his first term, but, of course, as he would know—he has been in this

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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house a long time—building trust is a long process that can be quickly destroyed. From my conversations with members of the public, that trust in the Premier and this government has been destroyed. The Premier can interject and deny what he wants, but he cannot remove the fact of what he said. What he said is there for all to hear; it is also in the written word. The Premier can go back and look at what he promised at the election and relive what he said after the election on various radio programs. He can come into this house and deny what he said, but he did say those things. As a result, the trust the voting public has in this Premier is very low. What is more damaging is that it affects all of us—that is, the general public's view of all politicians. The trust that we all seek to build with our constituents can easily be destroyed.

I will turn to an issue that I have raised in this house a number of times—domestic violence. It is interesting that whatever one's view is of the shark debate and whether the government's measures are appropriate, the Premier stated today that there have been seven deaths from shark attacks in the last three years. This, of course, is much more than there would have been in the previous three years. I am not sure what the figures are for the previous three years. In Western Australia, the number of women who die from domestic violence a year is much more than seven; it is over 20. In Australia, there are 130 domestic homicides a year. In Western Australia alone, there are over 20 domestic violence deaths a year. If the Premier believed that it was incredibly important to have a shark policy because of the unfortunate deaths of seven people, which is, obviously, seven deaths too many, I want to know what measures are in place with respect to domestic violence. The government went to the election with a number of promises in regard to domestic violence, and they were good policies. Two new refuges were going to be built, but my understanding—I stand to be corrected—is that they had actually been completed or nearly completed at the time of the announcement; I may be wrong there. There was talk about the Busselton women's refuge in the Treasurer's electorate. I believe there had been some trouble with the building or the expansion of that refuge. I believe the refuge will be opened this month—it may have been or is about to be opened—and it will only contain six bedrooms to accommodate six mothers and children, rather than 12 rooms to accommodate 35 women and children.

I would welcome an interjection on this point, because I cannot find anywhere where this is actually happening. The former Minister for Corrective Services and the Attorney General mentioned during the election the introduction of GPS tracking of serious violent domestic violence offenders. This is also one of the opposition's policies. I did not think that that had been implemented, but I thought the Premier mentioned today that it had been. The Minister for Corrective Services may know; has it been implemented?

**Mr J.M. Francis:** We are working on it.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** The minister is still working on it. Is there any indication of when it will be implemented?

**Mr J.M. Francis:** There are a number of complicated legal issues, but we are definitely committed to it.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** There may be a number of complicated issues, but as I think the minister and the government would agree, otherwise it would not have made the announcement, it is an incredibly important initiative, and there should be no further delay in the GPS monitoring of violent domestic violence offenders.

Domestic violence is an issue that no government worth its salt can ignore. I am not trying to say that this government's actions have resulted in an increase in domestic violence. Of course, its actions have not resulted in an increase in domestic violence. In part, the massive increase in the number of domestic violence cases is due to an increase in the reporting of domestic violence incidents that is a result of a cultural change in the police force. I want to know what the government is doing in this area. Looking at the number of deaths, it is far greater than the number of people who unfortunately die as a result of a shark attack. Although that is important—we do not want anyone to die at sea—there was an 11 per cent increase in domestic violence assaults between 2009 and 2013. I know that the Minister for Corrective Services and other ministers love holding up laminated charts in this place. They think that they are smart because they put up a laminated chart. I do not have the resources of a minister's department, so I have no laminated charts to put up. But it is an appalling measure that in 2009 there were 8 688 domestic assault incidents reported under WA Police crime statistics. In 2013 there were 14 778 incidents. That is an 11.2 per cent increase. I did comparisons with New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. I could not get the other states' data. The increase in those states is between four and seven per cent. There may be reasons for the number of incidents in WA to be higher. The point is that I am not blaming the government for the increase; I am holding the government to account on what it is doing about it. I have gone back through *Hansard* and on my reading—I may have missed one of the searches—the Minister for Police, who also happens to be the Minister for Women's Interests, has never instigated a debate or policy measure on domestic violence. She has responded to dorothy dixers. Towards the end of last year when I criticised the Minister for Police for the removal of the specialised domestic violence unit at Armadale, she received a dorothy dixer from, I think, the member for Southern River or it might have been the member for Belmont, and the minister rattled off some



Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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issues with regard to domestic violence. One would think that the Minister for Police, who holds an incredibly important portfolio in the fight against domestic violence, and who also happens to be the Minister for Women's Interests, would be much more proactive in this area than she has been.

The increase in domestic assault incidents is 11.2 per cent, but actual reports of domestic violence increased by 107 per cent between 2008 and 2013. Madam Acting Speaker, you will be interested in this one. In the metropolitan area between 2008–09 and 2012–13, there has been an 85 per cent increase in the number of reported crimes of domestic violence. That is an 85 per cent increase since the Barnett government was first elected. In regional areas, there has been a 36 per cent increase. That is a phenomenal increase. In regional Western Australia we have gone from 3 301 to 4 520 reports of domestic violence and crime between 2008–09 and 2012–13. The government's own "Western Australia Strategic Plan for Family and Domestic Violence 2009–2013: Mid Term Progress Report" contained nothing of any significance about what the government intends to do to fight this curse and this very complex area of crime. It is incumbent on this government to look at this incredibly serious crime affecting many, many Western Australians, particularly females, and to come up with a comprehensive plan to try to curb the rate of increase at least.

The economic costs of domestic violence to the WA economy and society are incredibly large. There are direct costs, which are basically costs resulting from a person being a victim of domestic violence, for example, the cost of crisis services, accommodation services, legal services, income support and health and medical services; there are indirect costs that flow from the violence such as damage to the home, issues around children having to change schools and so forth; and there are opportunity costs, which are the costs of opportunities that the victim has had to forgo because of the violent relationship they have been in. It is hard to be precise in regard to those costs, but there are reports such as the 2004 Access Economics report "The Cost of Domestic Violence to the Australian Economy" or the 2009 KPMG report "The Cost of Violence against Women and their Children" or another KPMG report called "The Cost of Violence against Women".

[Member's time extended.]

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** There are also various other statistics and figures such as the WA verified crime statistics. Looking at all these, it would not be an exaggeration to say that in 2013 the estimated cost of domestic violence to the WA economy was around \$2 billion—nationally it is up to \$9 billion to \$10 billion. Of course, I am sure everyone in this house has empathy and compassion and would like the rate of domestic violence to reduce, but if we just take things from a pure economic point of view, the cost to the WA economy is incredibly large. As we know, and as we are told by governments, there is incredible pressure to meet the demands of a growing population in Western Australia. The costs of demands incurred as a result of domestic violence to the state are phenomenal. If the government can look at trying to come up with a comprehensive report and if the Minister for Police; Women's Interests could come into this house with a comprehensive policy instead of just reacting to the statements we make on DV, it would be very, very welcome for all victims of domestic violence and their families. Hopefully there will be some movement this year, at least on the legislative program. The Premier may have mentioned in his statement, but I do not recall it, that last year the Attorney General asked the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia to conduct an inquiry into enhancing family and domestic violence laws. It has come up with a discussion paper and the final paper will come out in the next couple of months. It will be interesting to see how the government responds to it. The discussion paper is well worth a read by members of this house. As I said, domestic violence is very complex and I am not saying that the government could ever solve domestic violence. All I ask is for the government to take the matter more seriously by having a comprehensive policy and approach to try to reduce the rate of its increase. The rate of increase is phenomenal and we must all work to reduce it.

I would like to spend the last 11 minutes I have on another complex issue. I now want to talk about the issue of child welfare, child protection and state care. From my research, as of June 2012—so the 2011–12 financial year—there were 3 400 children in state care. Of those, 1 614 were Indigenous and 1 760 were non-Indigenous. In 2011–12, 166 households were commencing to be foster care families and 236 households were leaving the foster care scenario, so obviously there is a major shortage in foster care. I am sure that other members can concur with this. Anyone who goes to the Department for Child Protection and Family Support in Armadale on a Friday night will see that there is a crisis. There is a major imbalance between the number of children who have to be fostered out for the weekend vis-a-vis the number of parents available.

Colleen Egan, it would appear, has taken on a major mission, because for about the last six months she has been writing various op-eds in *The West Australian* about children and homelessness and so forth. I want to go through some of these because they relate to what I want to conclude with. An article in *The Weekend West* of 10 August 2013 entitled "What happened to Kaylee?" was about the very tragic scenario of a girl, basically a

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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little child, who was found clinically dead. Her parents, who had been members of the stolen generations, just did not have family skills. I think it was in Madam Deputy Speaker's electorate. It was a tragic scenario. Colleen Egan also wrote another article on 13 August 2013 entitled "Relatives 'not always best'". She starts the article by stating —

A former adviser to the Department for Child Protection wants Aboriginal leaders to help government overhaul the system that uses relatives as foster carers because children are being put at risk.

Associate Professor Ted Wilkes, who was the chairman of the DCP's Aboriginal Reference Group, said the "noble" efforts to keep indigenous children in their culture led to substandard care for some.

There is another article by Colleen Egan from 21 August 2013 entitled "Calls made to address foster care concerns" in which the expressions by Professor Wilkes are repeated. In that article he also states —

"We all have the noblest of intentions. We all want to do the right thing and to send our children on the right path, but we're faltering.

"There are some kids put into foster care with their relatives and it works well. But there are others where there's not proper scrutiny of the human beings involved and there is not proper support and invariably the system collapses.

...

"We cannot just say because it's a member of the extended family that's the best option. We would think that is the case, because it provides kinship, which is important, but it isn't always the case."

Another article from 16 November 2013 written by Colleen Egan states —

Advocates say that thousands of Aboriginal children, who were already at high risk of abuse and heading towards a life of crime and dysfunction, have been evicted since the disruptive behaviour policy was introduced in May 2011.

As members who were in the last Parliament will recall, we debated the three-strikes policy for tenants in Homeswest homes. We all voted for it, but of course, it has had some consequences. A lot of my constituents have told me that they are grateful for that legislation and that they want even tougher measures. However, the point is that as a result there is a consequence. As Colleen Egan writes —

But the question remains: after the bailiff has gone and the house is boarded up, and the neighbours finally get a good night's sleep, where do these people go?

Of course, Colleen Egan's focus has been on Indigenous children. I defer to the member for Kimberley to talk about the situation in the Kimberley and remote areas. This is more about the domestic metropolitan situation. Colleen Egan talked about the approach in Britain, where the British government announced that 22 000 troubled families in England have been turned around by a program aimed at addressing the root cause of antisocial behaviour and crime. I am told by police and others that there are about 100 major troubled families in Perth—they are not all Indigenous, although a disproportionate number are Indigenous—so greater resources need to be put into these troubled families to try to turn around the situation.

To show members that they are not all Indigenous families—of course I cannot refer to names, and I will change some of the facts—I refer to a case I witnessed of a couple who are drug addicts and have a number of children, many of whom have been neglected. There is also domestic violence in the household. The parents are also drug dealers. There was an issue about whether the children should be taken away from the parents. The Department for Child Protection and Family Support—I have read this—stated that while the mother's drug use is not conducive to a proper upbringing, it is not considered to be dangerous or likely to result in a neglectful situation for the children. The department told us that. Why did the department say that? I think one of the reasons the department said that is the question of where the kids would go if they were taken away. Where do they go if we do not have enough foster care? As Colleen Egan asked, is the solution to build hostels? This is not an Indigenous family, but that raises the issue of stolen generations. That is where we need to be careful. The stolen generation had nothing to do with neglect. I know this firsthand. I worked with the Aboriginal Legal Service and was in control of the stolen generation project and interviewed more than 500 people who had been removed.

The evil about the stolen generation issue was that Indigenous kids were removed because they were Indigenous regardless of whether there was neglect. Now there are children in a neglectful environment and we are not removing them. That is something we as a Parliament and the government, because the government controls the policies and programs, must look at to see how we can ensure these kids are not growing up in households in which parents are dealing in drugs. In another household a mother and teenage daughter are fighting over who

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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gets the better cocaine. That is something we as a Parliament, particularly the government, must address. It is not a stolen generation issue, which was when people were removed because of their race. That was appalling and, hopefully, that situation will never be repeated. I am looking at and I am arguing for this government to look at removing children from their parents if the parents place the kids in a dangerous and neglectful situation. That is not about a stolen generation. It encompasses Indigenous and non-Indigenous children.

There has been a consequence of the Homeswest three-strikes policy; more Indigenous than non-Indigenous children are now homeless. We must consider what we can do about that. We must do something. We cannot just wash our hands of that scenario. It is a complex issue. Maybe one of the easy solutions is to build hostels but, of course, we need to be careful because, as we know, building hostels can result in other abuse such as what we have been hearing about in royal commissions into institutional abuse, but, of course, if it is properly managed, that should not happen. It is abusive to leave these kids in abusive situations; it is appalling. When I hear about these families, it makes me want to cry because it is appalling that these children are left in situations because the department has stated that the drug usage of the parent is not a danger to the children.

**MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston)** [5.44 pm]: It is my pleasure to reply to the Premier's Statement. I want to talk about several local issues. One of those local issues was played out in a petition I presented that contained around 3 000 signatures. It is about the use of Wellington Dam. Although over many years the dam has been purified to some degree because it may be used for drinking water into the future, that has been a bit disappointing to the community of Collie. We have seen in recent times that due to the changes in regulations, Wellington Dam can be used for other things now, but, as is usual with this government, it has not taken notice of the community and it has charged forward without consulting with the community. The locals and the people on the coastal strip are stirred up about speedboats being allowed on Wellington Dam. It is something that, as I said, many people are against due to the potential to spoil the amenity of the area. Over the Christmas break, 3 000 people camped there and there were no major problems, but if there is to be a mix of V8 speedboats and jet skis, it will change the whole structure of the area.

I welcome tourism in that area, minister, and people camp around the back of the dam, but there probably should be more structure in that area also. Allowing speedboats to use the dam will cause interaction between those groups. I fail to work out how things sometimes work within government departments. Even this week a person took a small, non-keel sailboat on the dam and was threatened with a fine, while the government is working towards allowing speedboats on the dam over the Easter weekend. I believe that should not happen for several reasons; in the first instance, the water in the dam has been wasted for many years because this government took away the \$30-odd million that was promised for a salt mitigation program. Some of the money, I think \$15 million, was federal money and some was state money. The money was for a program that had been proven up and was ready to go so that we could turn that water into reasonably fresh water that was good enough to drink. The mining industry there has developed a dewatering program that involves pumping, I think, 40-odd gegalitres a year down the river. Again, that could have been used with the salt mitigation program to turn the water into very cheap water for household and drinking use. One of the basic reasons the dam usage has been changed is that the government has ripped out that \$35 million and used it elsewhere. It is criminal, in a way, to think we have wasted an opportunity and now we will try to cover it up by allowing ski-boats in an area where they should not be allowed. They will be operating in the middle of a national park that has about 150 000 visitors a year, and that includes the people who stay in the backwaters. They are peaceful camping areas where people arrive quite a bit before the Christmas break to set up their camps in the so-called better spots, or what they consider to be their spot. Why bring speedboats into a jarrah forest in a national park and ruin the peace and quiet that people enjoy?

Over and above that, the minister of the day, Mr Redman, made some very strong statements about what would happen when the changes were introduced. In *Hansard*, his answer to a question without notice on 5 December 2013 states —

... there is some concern from the local community about whether speedboats and waterskiing should be allowed on the dam. That will be left up to the local community, the local authority and the relevant government agencies to resolve. I think that is an appropriate step. Local decisions will resolve that issue.

There has been no contact with the shire or local groups such as the Collie River Valley Marketing Group or the visitor centre. In fact, today I have sent an invitation to the Minister for Environment to come down to have a look before the decision is finalised. It is deception at its worst for the minister to say one thing in here and not follow that through down the track. It makes the local community angry. We should remember the reasons why

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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the local people do not want it there. One reason is the noise and another is the mix and match of people that it will not fit.

There is also an area known as Lake Kepwari, and I have probably mentioned that name in *Hansard* more times than any other in the 12 years I have been here. It is hoped that Lake Kepwari will become a dedicated waterskiing area. Why would the two areas not be kept apart? One area could be used for low-key, low-cost, very nice passive camping and the other area for waterskiing. That has not happened because the government has not taken control. It has stood back and not pushed Lake Kepwari forward. Lake Kepwari is two kilometres long and one kilometre wide. It is in a mine void and contains some of the best water for waterskiing because even on the windiest of days the forest around it keeps the water to only a slight ripple. They are exactly the conditions that waterskiers want because they can do barefoot waterskiing or hard slalom waterskiing and really get stuck into it because there is plenty of room. The idea is to build chalets around the area and develop a very solid tourism area, which I have called the “Collie after construction” and “Collie after coal”. We realise that the coal industry has to change and that there is only a certain amount of coal. We should be building a future for the Shire of Collie 30 years before the coal is finished. This is one way to do that and we need to start now. We need to look at other facilities that can be built. Manjimup is an example of a town that has changed over the years. It had a tobacco industry that went down the drain. It had the number one timber industry and had to adjust again. Collie needs to do the same and Lake Kepwari is a key area, but the government will not listen or help.

It is disappointing to think that the government just blunders forward because during an election campaign someone says, “We’ve got a million dollars. What will we do with it?” They said they would allow waterskiing on Wellington Dam without thinking even one step forward. It was a thought bubble that came from the Liberal Party and now we have to live with it and follow it through because it was an election promise. That is probably the only election commitment the government will honour in my electorate, yet it is something that the community does not want. Is that not ironic? The government made an election promise to do something that the community does not want because the government did not consult with the community. It is still doing the same thing.

I would like to table some photos that show the reasons that the locals believe there should be no waterskiing in the dam. This photo shows a stump in a dam. I have a series of photos but will be very quick. The water level in this photo is very low, but the photo shows what that stump looks like when the water level is high. People will be hurt beyond belief if they run into that at 30 or 40 kilometres an hour. It is unrealistic to think that just because an area has been pegged out for waterskiing and has a couple of buoys to mark the end of the waterskiing area that people will not ski outside that area. The markers will be there but skiers may get up one morning and look across at a blast-off area that every skier dreams about. There is no way in the world that they will stay inside that area. They will be as foolish as we have all been in our younger days, and someone will get hurt. Then someone will say that the waterskiing has to stop after we have spent money on putting in the infrastructure. Keep the money and use it for other infrastructure and amenities around Wellington Dam, such as toilets and passive recreation.

There is also a future plan to establish walking trails for about 70 kays so that people can walk from Collie and around the dam. Wild camps will be established near some of the best views in the south west. It will be about a four-day walk. Walking is something that people are doing more often than ever before. People love to get out on walking trails in the bush and enjoy wild camping. It is certainly something that I should be doing, but do not intend to do in the short term or the long term. It is probably something all members should be doing.

The photos show stumps and old bridges. This telling photo shows the water in the dam at a very low level and it shows hundreds of stumps in the area. People have read in the paper that they can waterski on Wellington Dam so they are already out there in areas such as the one shown in this picture. It is a disaster waiting to happen. The local people know that problems will arise and they do not want to sit back and wait until something happens. They want to be proactive and to look after an area that they respect, admire and utilise on a daily basis. The erosion caused by boats and the wash on the riverbank is the same.

There is also the danger to cars. People may not be aware of what the embankments are like around Wellington Dam. It looks good, but many locals have been caught crossing that brown mark where the bank drops off. A car can simply disappear into the mud and then a guy with a kangaroo car jack will have to get it out.

I plead with the three departments involved—the Department of Environment Regulation, the Department of Transport and the Western Australian Tourism Commission—to listen to and work with the community to try to develop Lake Kepwari as a dedicated waterskiing area. The passion is missing from the government, not from the community. People illegally waterski on Lake Kepwari after finding a way through the bush to drop their boats.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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**Dr K.D. Hames:** Why don't you fix all the stuff you are talking about—clean it up and cut the stumps down in Wellington Dam?

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** This area should have passive activities such as rowing.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** Why not just get rid of the stumps and they can use it?

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** It is a major job. In the late 1960s or early 1970s, a King's cup regatta was held there and it was a major job to try to get through those stumps. The army practised using explosives there and very heavy machinery and winches were used, but it was very slow and tedious work. A bulldozer cannot be driven down there to push out the stumps because it will disappear in the slurry. The minister is dead right. If it was as simple as that, it would have been done, but it was a major job previously. I am not sure what year they tried to run the King's cup, which ended up being a disaster because a cyclone came through and blew everything away. That matter has been looked at. Why would people not go out to a two-kilometre man-made lake that is 75 metres deep right up to the edges? There is still work to be done. It is not a national park so why not utilise that area and build chalets, camping areas and overnight, long and short-stay accommodation and build businesses there similar to those in the Karri Valley Resort in Manjimup? That is where the ideas are coming from, and we have seen what has happened at Karri Valley.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Collie–Preston, do you want to table those papers?

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I will table them.

[The paper was tabled for the information of members.]

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I move to the topic of weeds in the south west, which is a fast-growing problem, and I do not mean that in a silly sense. Weeds such as cotton bush have taken off because there are no dedicated people to spray them.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** It is all over our farm.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I have seen it along the coastal strips as well. Cotton bush is an attractive plant but it can grow taller than I and when it is fully mature its stems can be thicker than a human arm.

*Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm*

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Before the break I was talking about weeds in the south west. One of the major weed problems we have down there is with cotton bush. As I said, it is quite an attractive bush that attracts butterflies; they seem to have some attraction to it, but I am not sure why. Many, many butterflies can be seen feeding off the bushes on the top of hills. I think the bushes extrude something and the butterflies feed off the nectar that comes out of the seed pods. The seed itself can be picked up by the wind and carried a long, long way because it is shaped a bit like a parachute. Reportedly—it certainly has not happened to me—people fishing at sea off Bunbury have had the seed drop into their boats, so that shows how far it can go. The bush drops its seeds during the summer period and the seed is easily blown away. It blows from the top of the hills and scarps down onto the flats. A lot of people do not like to spray, although cotton bush can be tidied up with a spray, so they pull it up by hand. That is an onerous and very long job. I know one family who spent hours and hours pulling it up only to see it pop up again with the next rains. Fire does knock it over. If there is a heavy fire, the seed does burn, so it does not stay in the ground as such.

The other side of this problem is absentee landholders. I do not think they always do it intentionally, but they do not understand their responsibility to work very hard to try to eradicate or at least contain this bush. Cotton bush is just so invasive. I have seen from the highway cotton bush growing jungle thick in a subdivision in Baldivis. I am sure that a lot of people did not know what it was and so did not take any action to control it. The final straw is that the topsoil from subdivisions such as this is picked up and taken elsewhere to be used for other purposes, but this topsoil would have been full of cotton bush seed, so it is spread not only on the wind, but also manually. Absentee landholders have been a problem. There are five-acre blocks in Darkan where people do not look after the weed problem because they do not understand it, so education has been lacking.

One of the bigger problems is the lack of people in the department to do anything about this problem. There is no focus whatsoever. We used to have the Agriculture Protection Board, which had a focus. The cuts that have been made by this government have certainly caused some problems. There have been enough problems to prompt the Auditor General's report, "Managing the Impact of Plant and Animal Pests: A State-wide Challenge". The Auditor General said in his report —

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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An effective state-wide pest management framework is not yet in place. Specifically, there is no integrated state-wide plan, and information on the impact of established pests is limited. The prioritisation of some established pests and programs over others is not always clear and DAFWA conducts little or no enforcement activity to ensure landholders control pests on their land.

Individually, these issues raise concerns about whether resources are effectively used and targeted and whether landholders are controlling established pests on their land. Taken together and over time, they expose the state to an increased risk that established pests will spread and have a growing impact on agriculture, forests, the environment, social amenity and public health.

That says much about where this problem sits as far as the government is concerned. The government has now put \$600 000 out for what I would call an auction in some ways. First to come out of the \$600 000 was a consultancy fee to try to establish some groups to take control of their own destiny. I see that as a problem because it is government cost-shifting and it will end up being worked through a shire council. Moving it from one area to another to get it off one's books is not the way to go. Things such as weeds have to be tackled on a statewide basis. Whether it is cotton bush or any of the other invasive weeds, of which there are many, we have to have a statewide approach. I do not think it will work to just hope that community groups will work through this in conjunction with the shires. What happens is that the groups start off very enthusiastically, but then it breaks down because some people do not do the right thing and the next year it has grown back in the paddocks and they have to start again right from scratch. I am certainly of the view that even though there have been groups formed in both the Peel and south west regions, that it is not the way to go. There has to be dedicated funding and a dedicated approach to tackle these weeds.

The problem weed around our area at the moment is cotton bush. Another that is springing up that has a very pretty flower is the Cape tulip. A lot of people would know about Cape tulip from earlier times, but these days people find it a quite attractive flower and in some cases plant it in their gardens, but it is very toxic to stock and affects farm production. The same problem occurs with cotton bush; it reduces the production rates of farmers. Let alone the cost involved in spraying the weed, if a farmer cannot have cattle or sheep in a paddock because of this weed, he will lose productivity.

In 2002–03, one compliance notice was issued for every 71 inspections, but by 2011–12, one compliance notice was issued for every 2 260 inspections. People are not being pulled up for doing the wrong thing. This means that a landholder was 30 times less likely to be issued with a compliance notice in 2011–12 than a decade earlier. In the same period, the number of times the Department of Agriculture and Food hired a contractor to conduct pest control on a landholder's property and recovered the cost from that landholder went from nine to zero, so there are no compliance rules in place. At a recent meeting I was told that the department does not want to use compliance rules or to fine people for not doing the right thing. I came to the conclusion quite some time back about why I do not speed to Perth anymore; it is because I get fined and it costs me a quid. The same should happen to these people who do not do the right thing with the weeds that are on their property. If someone were fined once, very quickly community members would wake up and say that they had better do something or they will be the one getting the next fine. It is very similar to the situation with firebreaks. If people do not manage their firebreaks, they get a fine. What happens? Ninety-nine per cent of people put in their firebreaks before the cut-off time. Why do we not go back to giving out a few fines and making sure that people do the right thing? We need to educate them on what they are looking for so that they know which weed to spray. We do not want indiscriminate spraying; that is not what I am asking for.

What I am asking for is a targeted approach backed up very strongly by the government issuing noncompliance notices. If people do not do it, fine them. I do not have any problem with that. But do not shift the responsibility onto the shire, which will impose a levy on all landowners. If I lived on the fifth storey of a block of units, why should I pay a levy to get people to spray to reduce the amount of cotton bush that is around? That is not the way things are done. I do not know why a farmer whose farm has been infected by someone else should have to pick up the excessive cost. It is the same with blackberries. My electorate officer recently spent \$3 000 spraying blackberries on her property. That spraying can be done on one's property but there should be help from DAF. When the Auditor General complains and says to people that the minister has dropped the ball and close to 300 people from the Department of Agriculture and Food have left, we can understand why there are problems. Over the past couple of years, 30 people have left the Department of Agriculture and Food in Bunbury. How will we find these people? The government should not handball this problem. That is what it is doing; it is looking at ways to cost shift and put the onus on someone else, and that is not the way to go about it.

I remember Kim Chance started the movement to get rid of or change the direction of the Agriculture Protection Board. Unfortunately, once it got swallowed up in the big picture, funding became more important and it went

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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elsewhere rather than towards programs to keep the starlings at bay. We spoke about weeds, the rabbit-proof fence and the dog-proof fence. All those things are funded bit by bit and we have to go begging to the government instead of having dedicated funding. We should have dedicated funding for these issues right across the board because if we do not, we will have problems with cotton bush one year and wild dogs the next. We will be going around in circles and chasing our tails.

I have received several letters from different shires saying that they do not want to be involved as much. The department has been saying that it will give the group that has been formed some money and then it can convince the shire to match that money. It is only a once-off. That \$600 000 for weed and pest control will go nowhere as it is supposed to cover the whole greater southern farming district—that is, from Moora to Albany. People spend more on Roundup for their domestic lawns each year than we do on sprays. Cost shifting is not the answer; it is about having the focus, working with groups, putting letters out and compliance or fining people for noncompliance. I hope that someone will listen to the concerns of the farmers down there.

I move on to something said by the much-loved Prime Minister of the day that really made my ears prick up. He used the words “closing the gap” about Aboriginal people and the position they are in in our society at the moment, and spoke about how we can close the gap. I listened intently. I thought he was on the money on some issues and probably dreaming on others. This government has let the Prime Minister down badly, and they are on the same side of politics. Given the cuts to education, the Koolbardi Early Childhood School in my town has closed because it does not receive any funding. The Koolbardi kindy is one place where Aboriginal preschoolers in the main could go and we knew that they were being trained and getting ready for school the next year. Due to the cuts at Amaroo Primary School, that preschool has now closed. It is an absolute tragedy for those kids.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** Who was funding it?

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** It was funded through the school system.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** By the education department?

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Yes. We have the Prime Minister saying that this is what we should do and we have the state government saying that it is not doing it. Where is the connection? There is something missing. Many of those kids start off with a bright sparkle in their eyes. As life goes on, we see them go down and there is no sparkle left. This problem will not be fixed in a day, and I am not asking for that. If we can start at the bottom, we have a chance. That is not being done in my town. There are around 300-odd Aboriginal people in the Collie community. It is important that support is given to those children. Some of it is about their health education, some of it is about them getting a decent breakfast and some of it is about having normality in their life because some of these kids come from very disadvantaged backgrounds and school is a blessing for them, even at that young age. Looking at it from an educational and social perspective, where is this government taking us? We will see a disaster in 10 years the way this government is headed, because we cannot cut education and we cannot cut kindy programs. We must look at it in a holus-bolus sense, and include the Prime Minister.

**MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn) [7.16 pm]:** Given that the member for Collie–Preston was just talking about matters to do with education, I will continue on that theme, except I will refer to the more senior levels of education beyond primary and secondary—that is, the tertiary levels of education and the actions being taken by this government to effectively thwart the aspirations and career paths of a significant number of Western Australians through the increases in TAFE fees and the changes that are being made to TAFE in Western Australia. Everybody in the chamber is well aware of the increases to TAFE fees; they were highlighted in the budget in September last year. I criticised the government endlessly between the release of the budget and December, pointing out to the house the scale of the increase in TAFE fees for new students enrolling in 2014. The response from the then Minister for Training and Workforce Development was summarised by the previous Minister for Training and Workforce Development when he indicated that the Department of Training has to contribute to the budget bottom line like every other government department. That basically spelt out very clearly for this side of the house and for the general public that the TAFE fee increase had very little to do with the excuse given by the current Minister for Training and Workforce Development when he spoke to a local community newspaper and said that fees have not kept pace with increases in the cost of training. It had very little to do with that excuse and significantly more to do with the disastrous budgetary situation that the Barnett government has got itself in over the past five and a half years, culminating in the disgraceful debt situation that was highlighted by last year’s budget and the projections in the *Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement*.

In addressing the financial situation that the government finds itself in, it has made it abundantly clear that it has put up prices, and fees in the case of TAFE, and it has to cut its costs. What that means for new students

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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enrolling in Western Australian technical colleges in 2014 is that their TAFE fees have effectively jumped to three new standard prices: \$400 for people doing certificate II and III courses; \$2 500 for certificate III and above courses; and \$8 000 for people taking up to diploma and diploma and beyond courses. That is how the three brackets were introduced to state training providers as of 2014. That was not going to be the fee structure for 2014. Last year I highlighted in this house and to the media the cost of courses for 2014. For example, an enrolled nurses diploma would have jumped from \$600 to \$9 500. In response to opposition and media criticism of the significant jump in TAFE fees proposed by the Barnett government, changes were made in late December, after Parliament rose and before the new TAFE year began in mid-January, to pull back the extraordinarily high TAFE fee increases across the various certificates and diplomas, which I highlighted in this house and to the media, to more standardised, slightly lower TAFE fee costs. That happened—with no public announcement—as a result of intervention by the former Minister for Training and Workforce Development because of criticism by both the opposition in this house and the media. That was of little succour to students themselves. They still turned up wanting to enrol in the course on which their hearts were set, only to find that instead of paying \$600, for example, for a diploma course, they had to pay \$8 000. The government responded by saying that TAFE costs had not kept up with price increases. That excuse was not given by the former Minister for Training and Workforce Development who, as I said, told this house that prices had to go up because the department had to pay its way along with every other government department. It was going to pass on its budgetary problems to students by making them pay higher fees.

The government was not honest. It did not walk out of this house and tell students who were re-enrolling in 2014, “Sorry; we’re in a difficult situation. We’ve got budgetary problems and everyone’s going to have to wear the cost of that, including you, so your fees are going up.” It never said that. It never used the words that the new Minister for Training and Workforce Development used when he told a local community media outlet that TAFE fees have not kept in line with general price increases. That was not explained to them either. The first the students knew of increases in the price of TAFE courses was when they walked through their college door or saw it online in early to mid-January. Neither the former nor current Minister for Training and Workforce Development gave an explanation—the TAFE colleges did not either—justifying the price increases. Students were simply told that that was the new cost structure and if they wanted to enrol, that is what they would have to pay. The silvertails on the government benches probably think, so what, \$8 000 is not that much for a diploma and students should just pay it. It may not be much to them, but it is an awful lot of money to 19-year-olds and 20-year-olds who want to change career paths after working in low skilled jobs and who, for the first time in their lives, have the money to better themselves by undertaking a higher level education qualification. It is a lot of money to the students who walked through the door of their TAFE college only to find that their course would cost 500 per cent more than they had expected when they planned their career change. That happened over and again with state training providers in metropolitan Perth and regional WA.

As was pointed out in an article in *The West Australian* of 10 January 2014, students were more than upset about the fee rises; they were broken-hearted. When Tim MacDonald from *The West Australian* went to Central TAFE to interview students who were enrolling in a course of their chosen career path, he reported that they were walking out in tears because nobody had told them about TAFE fee increases. It is one thing for a government to argue for and justify TAFE fee increases. As we know, the increases have occurred because of the budgetary situation in which the government finds itself. It could be argued that TAFE fees have not gone up and that they needed to rise in line with other price increases in Western Australia. Some may believe that those excuses are justifiable; I do not. However, the government needed to communicate to the students who pay the fees. Nothing was explained to the general public about TAFE course fee increases. Nothing was explained to the students who enrolled in January 2014. That is absolutely inexcusable. Students felt shanghaied by the government because they did not know anything about TAFE fee increases. Some students were broken hearted because they expected to pay \$600 only to be told that their course would cost \$8 000. When the government of the day makes a decision, for crying out loud it should tell people about that decision and explain why it has made that decision. The government failed to do that with the TAFE fee increases. The first students knew about it was when they walked through the door of their TAFE colleges and were slammed with huge fee increases.

As I explained, there are three bands of TAFE course fees—the \$400 band, the \$2 500 band and the \$8 000 band. They are capped for a particular band of courses. We knew about the \$400 cap only in January, because it certainly was not explained to this house how it was going to work, given that the decision had been made only after the house rose. However, we were told by the previous Minister for Training and Workforce Development that people on lower incomes will still be supported and that a cap will be in place on the fee increases for some courses. That is true; the \$400, \$2 500 and \$8 000 caps are in place, but the \$400 cap applies only to students who enrol in the year in which they turn 17. If a student is 18, hard luck! He or she then falls into the next band and will have to pay \$2 500. If a student is not 17 in that year and has enrolled anyway, he or she is still not



Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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eligible for that cap; it applies only to those people who enrol in a particular course in the year in which they turn 17. That information was not passed on to this house, despite the number of times we questioned the former minister about the application of the new TAFE fee increases. Certainly, no students were advised or were aware of the nature of these caps, whom they apply to and the limitations on how they apply until they walked through the door of TAFE colleges in January this year. Again, it is an absolutely unacceptable misleading of the general public, particularly those Western Australians who want to enrol in TAFE to create a career path for themselves.

We will look with interest to, and will ask various questions of, the minister throughout the year to find out exactly how many students have enrolled this year. Obviously, the midyear review projections contained concerns; the 2013–14 *Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement* actually indicated as such. I quote from page 39 of that projections statement in which Treasury raised concerns about the training entitlement model —

There are a number of risks associated with the entitlement model, including:

- uncertainty over the growth in training enrolments and the response of students to price increases; and
- the viability of the State Training Providers ... as a result of increased competition.

That is what Treasury indicated. In its midyear projections statement, it identified risks associated with the training entitlement model; namely, that TAFE fee increases would actually push people away from undertaking courses and that the manner in which the new entitlement model is being rolled out may impose significant risks to state training providers through increased competition, which, once again, would reduce their income. Through their income reduction, state income would be reduced as well. In fact, if members look further into the figures provided by Treasury, they will see an indication of the decline, which Treasury predicted, in operating revenue from state training providers. In the August budget in 2013–14, revenue of \$144 million was estimated, but the December midyear projection statement highlighted an estimated income of \$125 million. That grows with the increases in the TAFE fees, which rise from the seven per cent increase that has now been applied this year to the TAFE fees. That is not a consistent seven per cent, as I pointed out; the band that has risen to \$8 000 from \$600 is more like a 500 per cent increase. However, on top of that, there will be further increases to TAFE fees in the out years, which are estimated to take them significantly higher than what I have just explained. In its midyear projection statement, Treasury acknowledged that the impact of that may lead to a decline from its August estimate of state training provider revenue in 2016–17, in the out years, of \$280 million to the December estimate of \$165 million. That is a significant decrease estimated by Treasury.

We will be asking further questions of the new Minister for Training and Workforce Development about the number of students who will be enrolling this year, the impact of the TAFE fees on Treasury estimates to see whether they line up, as well as the overall impact on the provision of critical skill base training for Western Australians that is needed in the future.

**MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro)** [7.36 pm]: I rise this evening to bring an issue to the attention of the house and, in particular, the government. It is good to see the Premier here and I hope that the police minister is listening from her office. I intend to not only illustrate the distress and, indeed, anger that is felt by a particular group of people in the electorate of Warnbro, but also give details of an incident that illustrates a significant problem that must be acknowledged by the government and the Minister for Police, in particular. The minister has herself addressed this issue in the electorate of Warnbro and surrounding electorates as well, and suggested that she would resolve the problem. She has denied the potential solutions that were offered by the opposition at the time of the last election, suggesting prior to and post the election that they were not worthwhile, not justified, and that she actually had the solution. Her credibility and the credibility of this government are on the line. This is a very specific distressing incident that I will outline.

Many members of this house no doubt in the past have heard me outline the lack of the provision of policing in the electorate of Warnbro and the policing vacuum that lies in the suburbs between the Rockingham and Mandurah police stations—that is, in the southern and eastern suburbs of Rockingham and the northern suburbs of Mandurah. Some 50 000 to 60 000 people reside in these suburbs and there is no police station nearby. There is no constant presence that is offered by a police station, where police are in transit to and from a police station during the start or end of their shifts. There is nothing like that. For years now, this has been a serious issue. In 2007, when I was running in the by-election, WA Labor, the then government, promised a police station at Secret Harbour halfway between Rockingham and Mandurah police stations. In 2008, in its budget, WA Labor allocated \$10 million and purchased land at Secret Harbour for the police station to be built. The money was in the budget. In September 2008, the Barnett government came into office. Fearing that money may be shifted in the next budget, I approached, both privately and publicly, the then police minister who gave an assurance in the

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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local media to the people of Rockingham that the Barnett government would honour the commitment to the police station and it would go ahead. However, the minister subsequently broke that commitment; the Barnett government chose to shift the money out of the budget and use it elsewhere. Subsequently, a couple of years down the track, it sold the land. That is the history of the land and the police station commitment from Labor. WA Labor then went to the last state election promising that were we to win the election, we would build a police station at Secret Harbour. We reaffirmed our commitment. This police minister addressed the issue directly. She went to Rockingham and met with a number of residents associations, but she met in particular—it is noteworthy—with residents from the Singleton Residents Association. A number of people took her at her word when she said, “You don’t need a police station. What you need is a better policing presence. I have heard your concerns about antisocial behaviour and violent behaviour and a number of serious incidents, including out-of-control parties, violent assaults, robberies and serious issues such as bombing of ATMs.” The current Minister for Police said, “I’ve heard that, but don’t listen to the opposition. What they are saying about the need for better policing in the form of a police station—a hub, if you will—between the Rockingham and Mandurah hubs is wrong.” That is what the minister said. She said, “I will look after you. Trust me.” She smiled at them and they believed her. It was reported in the local media. The *Weekend Courier* of 1 February states —

Ms Harvey visited Rockingham yesterday and met a handful of community groups, residents associations and local Neighbourhood Watch as part of a forum at the City of Rockingham.

She was there; it was political. She was there with the individual who was my opponent in the election. She was addressing an issue that we had raised. The newspaper report continues —

Ms Harvey said her visit to the area was to find out what policing issues were facing the community and its residents.

Those issues should have been known, because the year before the Commissioner of Police went down to Rockingham and held a public forum. It was made very clear to him by many community members, including people from the Singleton Residents Association, that there was a serious issue and there was not adequate policing between Rockingham and Mandurah. Nevertheless, Ms Harvey went down there during the election campaign. This was reported in the newspaper, which states —

The construction of a police station in Secret Harbour was high on the agenda with Secret Harbour, Singleton and Golden Bay residents, but Ms Harvey said the Government supported the police ‘hub’ policy.

“I think it is more important to have more police officers responding to calls than investing in more infrastructure,” she said.

The point is that a police hub could be built at Secret Harbour between Rockingham and Mandurah. There is more than adequate population to justify it. Having a police station or a police hub does not preclude better policing or more policing on the ground. In fact, it provides a greater likelihood of an increased police presence. That is what happened during the election campaign, and they were the assurances that the police minister gave to residents’ associations from Singleton, Golden Bay and Secret Harbour that had all met with her.

Post the election there was another forum. This time the minister attended with the commissioner and this one was in Mandurah. It is noteworthy that she was invited by me to come to the electorate of Warnbro because that is where the concerns lay about the lack of a police station, and she did not respond. Instead, she went to Mandurah with the police commissioner, where again she assured members of the community who raised their concerns. It is noteworthy that the Singleton residents were front and centre with raising their concerns about the lack of policing between Rockingham and Mandurah. She assured them that there was no need. Sitting beside the Commissioner of Police, she heard him say that he had no plans to build a police station between Rockingham and Mandurah, and he would not be able to build a police station large enough to cater for a 24-hour service. I do not know where he got that from. It is an interesting observation; I am thinking that the commissioner has a few questions to answer too, because he assured these people that he would provide a proper service to them between Rockingham and Mandurah. He sat beside the police minister immediately post the election, in which it was a serious issue. The issue was raised and addressed by the minister of the day, and the commissioner sat beside her and backed her up with the suggestion that he could not possibly build a police station big enough to hold enough police. Frankly, I find that unbelievable.

That aside, the incident I want to talk about illustrates the problem. It illustrates and confirms just how out of touch the Barnett government is and just how deceitful were the assurances given to particularly the people of Singleton, but also the entire populations of Rockingham and Mandurah that lie in that space—that policing free zone—between the Rockingham and Mandurah police stations. It extends from the suburbs of Warnbro and Port

**Extract from *Hansard***

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 18 February 2014]

p140f-192a

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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Kennedy. Recently, Warnbro was the site of a horrible assault on a liquor store attendant, who was bashed in the face with a bottle. At Port Kennedy we have had bombings and multiple assaults. At Secret Harbour there have been violent assaults and a service station was robbed. There were a couple of ATM bombings over the road from my office. In Golden Bay there is an outrageous amount of graffiti, antisocial behaviour and out-of-control parties. This incident took place in Singleton, which has had many incidents that were not quite as serious as this, but they were of a serious nature.

On 24 January, on the Australia Day weekend, a small group of people at the Singleton Social Club were enjoying a sundowner. In fact, this event received a couple of small, inaccurate reports on Channel Seven and Channel Nine, I believe, which reported it as a party that was breaking up; it was pretty quiet and there was a bit of out-of-control behaviour. That is not what happened. Some Singleton residents were enjoying a sundowner at their Singleton Social Club. That had finished. The time was about 11.20 pm. A small handful of people were left to close and clean up. They were about to close the doors when a group of 30 or 40 people, many of whom were juveniles—they ranged from teenagers all the way up to 20 years old, and some older ones who were 21 or 22 years of age—descended upon the area out of the darkness on foot and on bikes, and began to abuse this small number of people. When I say “small number”, I think it was in the order of 10. Three of them were women, one of whom was quite pregnant. They became very abusive. I am sorry; this happened before 11.20 pm; the first phone call to the police was at 11.20 pm. This happened sometime after 11 o’clock. It was night-time and there were lights, but it was dark outside away from the lights. These people descended upon this group, began abusing them and surrounded a small number of the men in the group, who numbered no more than six or seven anyway. They surrounded the group, began to abuse them and tried to bait them into responding; they tried to bait them into a physical response so that they could then, I guess, in their minds justify how heroic they were by attacking them.

Because the adults were responsible people, had not been consuming incredible amounts of alcohol and were sober enough to realise the threat of the situation and the stupidity of the individuals who were abusing them, they ignored it, despite being sworn at, abused to their faces and surrounded by these people. The louts then upped the ante and began hitting them. A number of these men were hit. One man who did not respond—he did not fight back or offer any sort of resistance—was punched in the face so that his teeth cut into his lip. Another man was cut on the head. They then took shelter inside the Singleton Social Club premises. They locked the doors; they barred the doors. They are those double glass doors that we see in many of the little halls around this state. They locked and barred them.

What occurred then was almost beyond belief. At 11.20 pm there was a call to 131 444. It was very specific as to the location. The caller gave good directions as to where they were and who it was—quite reasonable—and they were informed that the police had already attended. That is because earlier that evening there was an out-of-control party just down the road in Singleton from which the individuals concerned were moved on by the police. The police showed up and they moved them on. No arrests were made; the police did not pursue the individuals. They filtered their way down the street and found their way to the Singleton Social Club. These people were apparently both drunk and on some form of drug, because they started to rip up bricks and paving and they smashed the glass windows and doors of the Singleton Social Club. They screamed at the people inside and continued to bash their way in, to the point that they actually broke through security doors on the outside of the glass doors and got into the hall. They forced the people inside, who by this stage had begun to fear for their lives, to take shelter in a smaller room at the back of the hall.

I will go through the telephone calls that were made in a moment and the responses the victims received. Some of the threats that were made to the victims were very specific. They screamed at them, “We will kill you. We’re gonna get in there and we’re gonna kill you!” They specifically targeted the women. I will not say what they said about the pregnant woman because she may read *Hansard* and I do not want her to know some of the threats that were made. I met with some of these people, but not that particular woman. The men were very fearful; when they got into the backroom, the mob pushed their way through. By this time, there were fewer of them—a hardcore group of about 20 people. They smashed their way in and began to smash the metal roller door on the servery and bend it out of shape while they screamed at the victims. At this stage the few men on the inside were defending the women. They looked around for fire extinguishers and anything else they could grab to defend their lives and the lives of the three women.

I have met with these people and they are traumatised. It was a harrowing night. What happened in response to their calls for help and in the subsequent investigation has been even more harrowing and has damaged them even more. My view—I have seen a bit of this sort of thing—is that they are suffering post-traumatic stress syndrome. It is the government’s responsibility to provide the victims with counselling. Apparently, there is no easy way to access that sort of service, but that is another matter.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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I will now outline the phone calls that occurred. One was made to 131 444 at 11.20 pm. At that stage they were trying to be reasonable; they realised it was not a 000 call at that point. They were told that the police had responded, but by the look of it the police had responded only to the out-of-control party. At 11.28 pm, another phone call was made to 131 444. The victims asked what was happening with the response and told the call centre that they had rung eight minutes ago. By this time, the situation had escalated and they were seriously concerned. The call centre operator said, according to my notes —

“The response time is out of our control. It is done on a priority. It obviously isn’t a priority.”

Three people made three separate calls; it was not the one person. It was obviously a serious incident as multiple calls were made. These are only the ones I know about. I know a lot of other 131 444 and 000 calls were made. When the woman who rang at 11.30 pm asked where the police were, the call centre operator asked for her location. When she responded with “Singleton”, they asked where that is. They were obviously wondering whether it is in Victoria or wherever the other Singleton is; I am not sure. The call centre’s response to her concerns that the police had not arrived was, according to my notes —

“I’m not driving the car. The police are on their way.”

Then they hung up.

[Member’s time extended.]

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** This 000 call was made while 20 drunk and high thugs smashed their way through windows and glass doors and threatened to kill people. They threatened women, one of whom is pregnant, with physical assault. All this was conveyed to the police via both 000 and 131 444 calls. The response was pretty much, effectively, “We’re too busy. Go away.”—hang up. It is not acceptable. It is not good enough. The police response took 18 minutes. Members might think that sounds reasonable; that sounds okay. But consider this: these people thought they were going to die. That is a very long 18 minutes. I think the reports may have been filtered and an assessment made that maybe these people were exaggerating and were not really in a life-threatening situation.

I do not normally criticise the police. Members will know that until very recently one of my brothers was a senior police officer. I have friends and relatives who are police officers. I admire and respect them for the job they do. However, the response on this night was not good enough. The police got there in 18 minutes. That was slow, in my view, but they got there. When they got there, it took some time to convince the people on the inside of the building that it was safe enough for them to come out. They did not believe that they were safe, but eventually they came out. They looked up at the sand dune going up to the east from the Singleton Social Club and could see a number of perpetrators standing in the shadows, just outside the light coming from the Singleton Social Club. They could hear them heckling the police and the people whom they had just threatened. The victims of this crime said to the police, “They’re just up there. Go and get them.” The officers who responded treated the victims with disdain. Basically, they were told to calm down and settle down as the officers needed to take statements. The officers got out their notebooks, but they did not really take statements. They did not pursue the individuals on the night. I understand other cars were in the area so maybe other cars followed it up. In fairness, I cannot say that other police did not follow up the attackers. However, I can say that the way these victims were treated by the police on the evening did them more damage. They were treated as though they were the problem and as though they may not be telling the truth. They were treated as though they were exaggerating and should not necessarily be believed. It was not adequate. It was not good enough. It certainly was not in accordance with the Minister for Police and the Commissioner of Police’s assurance that the people of Singleton and all those people who reside in the vacuum of policing between Mandurah and Rockingham would be given proper support and proper policing. It is extraordinary.

What happened afterwards is also of concern. When the victims were told to report to the police station at a later date to give their statements, they felt, in some cases, as though their concerns were once again being dismissed. Not all of them felt that way; some of them were treated well, but some were not. These are direct quotes of what the victims told me about what happened when the response occurred, according to my notes —

“The chance of a conviction was missed that night.”

That is because the police did not prosecute the case immediately and —

No statements were taken at the time.

I understand that is a policy matter and these police are not the ones who take statements, but it meant that the police did not get the information while it was fresh in these people’s heads. They did not ask for descriptions or anything of that nature. One of the victims gave a very good description of the clothing worn by one of the

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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attackers who was most violent and one of the ringleaders. That would have sufficed for a chase to try to apprehend the individual on the night. Instead, the police did not chase them. This person got away with it. Another comment made to me was, “That night is one of huge neglect.”

One of the victims made that observation about the police. I know the police did not do this. I know they mean well. They are over-tasked and under-resourced. However, this is not acceptable. The move-on policy was roundly criticised by all the victims with whom I spoke. The move-on policy has not resulted in any arrests. None of the out-of-control party promises that the Barnett government made about two years ago were kept. There was no bus and no-one was thrown into the clink. No parents were called in the middle of the night. That will become relevant later. The victims thought the move-on notice that allowed the attackers to wander off into the darkness created the problem; it resulted in this riot and more victimisation of people who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. When people reported the incident, some of them were again treated as though they were exaggerating or were not being accurate. One woman made a statement that she saw an individual smashing his way through the glass door. The police officer asked her whether she could recognise him. She told the officer, “No, I don’t know him. I’d never seen him before. It was dark. I was fearful.” The police officer said, “You heard him coming through the door. You didn’t actually see it. You didn’t witness it.” He changed it for the purposes of a later court case, were it to ever occur. That was the justification that he gave her. I do not think that sounds right to me. It certainly sounds as though the victims were not taken seriously.

I can tell the house that a number of the individuals who had been rioting and threatening were recognised on social media by the victims and were reported to the police. The police said that they know who those individuals are, and they know where they live, and six of them were identified. However, because no arrests were made on the night and no-one was detained, all six of them were given alibis by their parents. That is very disappointing. So despite the fact that some of the victims are willing to give evidence in court about some of these individuals, it is very likely that because there was no follow-up on the night and these individuals were not apprehended before they managed to get home—I imagine many hours later—there will be conflicting claims by witnesses and these individuals will not be able to be prosecuted. These individuals lived not in Singleton but in Secret Harbour, and they were on foot and on bikes, so they could have been caught. One of the ringleaders was described as wearing a bright lime green—I will not specify the exact colour, because I cannot recall it, but the witness gave a very good description —

**Ms M.M. Quirk:** It was a very distinctive colour.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Yes; it was very clear and it would have stood out at night-time. It is extraordinary that the opportunity was not taken on that evening to apprehend these people. I understand that the police are overwhelmed with tasking a lot of the time and are very stretched. But that just reinforces my argument and, I think, the argument of the people who live between the Rockingham and Mandurah police stations in the southern and eastern part of Rockingham and the northern part of Mandurah.

I will now read out a letter that I think perfectly encapsulates the sense of betrayal on the part of Singleton residents about the response by the Minister for Police and this government to the policing issues in their area. Remember that the residents of Singleton met personally with the Minister for Police before the election and they were assured that this sort of thing would not happen and they would get a better policing service. This letter is from Brian Preston, a gentleman whom I greatly respect and a former office bearer of the Singleton residents’ association. Brian recently brought some of the victims to my office to talk to me, because he is concerned about their welfare. The minister has a copy of this letter, because it was written to her, and other members also have a copy. I will read it into *Hansard*. The letter states —

Dear Minister

Hopefully you will have been briefed about the ghastly and cowardly attack on the residents of Singleton at the Singleton Social club on Friday the 24th January 2014. I hope you can appreciate how seriously the community is treating this incident.

This incident was also reported on Channel 7 and 9 news bulletins.

It was NOT just a group of youngsters showing off, but an orchestrated attack by a 25+ group of SCUM teenagers (most of whom are known to the police) who sought to not only damage the Social Club but to also inflict terror and serious injury to whoever got in their way. This group also boasted of their behaviour on facebook.

I hope you make the time to listen to some of the eye witness accounts. I can tell you they are harrowing, and in a modern society ordinary men and women going about their law abiding business

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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should never have to experience such things. I doubt if many of your serving police officers have been subjected to such abject terror.

This incident has clearly caused distress to those subjected to the attack. This incident is also not isolated, as was demonstrated by the cancelling of the evening movies and the Christmas carols in Secret Harbour, because of similar antisocial behaviour that has been on-going in the surrounding areas.

Yes, another public meeting could be called for to discuss policing in Singleton, but when does the rhetoric stop and the action start.

Once again the Singleton community has been let down. We have previously expressed concern about the level of police servicing the community and this quite extreme example of anti-social behaviour has absolutely brought the matter to a head.

You and your Police Commissioner have repeatedly told me that building more police stations is not the answer, you'd rather use resources to have more police on the streets doing their job, well where are they?

I fully support the police, but it is plainly obvious to me that they seriously lack the necessary resources from your government to properly carry out their duties.

Yours sincerely

Brian Preston

a Singleton resident

Hear, hear! I thoroughly endorse everything that Brian has said. I did not come into this place to unnecessarily repeat my observations about not only the broken commitment to a police station by the Barnett government, but also the removal of any hope that a police station will be built at Secret Harbour between the Rockingham and Mandurah police stations. I did not want to repeat that on its own. This is a serious issue. It cannot be addressed by public meetings at which the Commissioner for Police waves people away and the Minister for Police smiles nicely and tells people that she cares for them and empathises with them. That is not good enough. The government needs to respond to the challenge. The Premier and the minister need to do something about this matter. It is not good enough for the people of Western Australia to have platitudes thrown at them whenever they beg for assistance on community safety. The Premier made a statement today about the government's commitment to law and order. Here is a test. What is the Premier going to do? We do not need more public meetings with more platitudes. The Premier and the minister need to make a real decision—an important decision—and divert resources to where they are required. There is a big gap in policing between Rockingham and Mandurah, and it needs to be addressed.

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah)** [8.06 pm]: In my contribution to the Premier's Statement, which was delivered in the house earlier this afternoon, I will be focusing on six key areas, including, at the end of my contribution, some comments about the local government reform agenda of the Barnett government. I will start with some local issues that are of particular concern to me and my constituents in Mandurah.

The first is related to the comments made by the member for Warnbro about community safety and policing in the Peel area. In late 2013 and into January of this year, a police operation was conducted in the Peel district, which includes Mandurah and Dawesville and north to Rockingham. That was a response by the Commissioner for Police to the ever-increasing crime levels in the region.

I, like a number of people in my community, attended a community meeting in August of last year at which the commissioner gave some sobering statistics about crime levels in the Peel region, including the suburbs that the member for Warnbro highlighted, namely Singleton and Golden Bay, and also the northern localities of Mandurah, including Lakelands and Madora Bay. The statistical information that was given by the commissioner highlighted some major concerns, ranging from petty crime to major crime, including assaults on persons. The statistics showed that the Mandurah–Peel area has sustained a significant increase in crime over a sustained period. I welcomed the operation that the police commissioner conducted in the Peel. The statistics from that operation demonstrated that a number of crimes at source had been addressed. There were numerous—I think it numbered in the hundreds—arrests and follow-ups with warrants and the like. However, that highlighted very clearly that the police resourcing in our area was, and continues to be, woefully inadequate.

Putting more than 80 officers into that area for a period of three to four months allowed them to do work including following up warrants that had not been issued for over a year. That demonstrated that a lot of the

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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police men and women working in the district were simply not getting to a lot of the work because of the overload of general policing and significant policing concerns.

We in this Parliament have to face up to the fact that the southern corridor down to the regional city of Mandurah continues to be and will continue to be a major area of population expansion. What we see there is an expansion of population but a lag in service provision. The services are not even close to keeping up to speed with the growth in population. What we also have to very clearly understand is that major social and economic indicators indicate that the southern corridor stretching from Fremantle down to Mandurah and the Peel contains significant pockets of poverty, significant pockets of family dysfunction and significant pockets of social and economic deprivation. I want to highlight one area in particular. It is an astounding statistic that is not being addressed by this government, yet remains one of the great blights on families in the Mandurah and Peel area—that is, the prevalence of domestic violence.

Unfortunately, Peel has the highest regional incidence of domestic violence, yet there are very few services that can meet the demand and deal with the blight of domestic violence. Our agencies and the non-government agencies are absolutely overwhelmed by the impact of domestic violence. That is not just on the direct victims of domestic violence, but of course, the other victims—the children who witness this appalling social disease. Until this government understands that we need to have a comprehensive program addressing domestic violence in the Peel region, the problems that emanate from this scourge will continue. It must be understood that we have a significant number of schools in the Peel area that are classified as low socio-economic status—SES—school communities. There are a high number of dysfunctional families and a high number of families that have been hit very hard by this government’s attack on their household budgets. Many of the families on low and fixed incomes are simply trying week by week to make ends meet, and many of them are failing.

Many of the additional services that are required in places like Mandurah are not being delivered in a timely manner. These services include counselling for victims of domestic violence through to people who are experiencing financial hardship. There are people in Mandurah and the Peel region who now wait many weeks and sometimes months to get an appointment for financial counselling so they can at least start to address the debt that many of them find themselves in. This leads to huge issues with the basic needs of their lives including, of course, safe and appropriate accommodation, and this is why we see many agencies reporting the ongoing number of families, people with young children, in search of shelter.

It is my view that the government needs to put a major focus on the Peel area. It is also my view that the Peel is the first region to feel any economic downturn. When there is a downturn in the economy, indeed, it is the Peel region that faces and experiences the impacts of the downturn almost immediately. If there is a statistic that talks about mortgage defaults or people seeking access to crisis services, the Peel region is over-represented. I plead with the Premier and the government that there must now be a refocus on the Peel. The reason is this: the Peel region is going to be asked to accommodate a significant part of the state’s population growth in the future. The “Outer metropolitan Perth and Peel sub-regional strategy” section of the “Directions 2031 and beyond: metropolitan planning beyond the horizon” document includes projected populations and where people will live over the next 20 years. It highlights the Peel region as one of the areas where a lot of that population growth will need to be accommodated.

If we are going to continue to promote the place as a vibrant area to live, work and recreate, we must have the infrastructure in place and, hopefully, as much as possible ahead of this tsunami of population growth. Already in Mandurah we have experienced an annual growth in population of four to five per cent over a significant period of years. We have suburbs that did not exist five years ago and now have a population of 2 000 or 3 000 people. One is the Lakelands community in the northern part of Mandurah. One basic element that I have written to the Minister for Transport about on a couple of occasions is general safety. We build these suburbs and allow them to be developed and the infrastructure is supposed to come afterwards, but people become frustrated and angry when they—the people who live in Lakelands, for example—cannot get in and out of their suburb safely. When I talk about safety, I mean people who usually need to leave the suburb for their work each morning or for intermittent periods if they are fly in, fly out workers. These people want to get in and out of their suburb safely.

I have a major concern with Catalina Drive, which is the main entrance into Lakelands from Mandurah Road. I plead with the government; I want the government to address the issue of safety, and that includes the need for traffic lights at the intersection of Catalina Drive and Mandurah Road. This is a major thoroughfare into the Lakelands locality, and there have been too many near misses. This locality already has two big schools. A lot of parents drive in and out of Lakelands to take their kids to Mandurah Baptist College. There is also the new Lakelands Primary School which opened with kindy and pre-primary this year but will be a full school catering

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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for years K–6 next year. The infrastructure has to come before we have any more kids and parents using that busy road. I plead with the government to, as a priority, address the safety of the people who live in Lakelands and also come into Lakelands because of the two schools. We urgently need traffic lights there.

As well, Main Roads Western Australia and developer Peet Limited need to advance funding for the extension of Madora Beach Road through to Bella Vista. This is a connector road and would allow another safe, controlled traffic light intersection that would give people easy access to Mandurah Road. I am gravely concerned that a major accident where someone is killed or seriously injured could occur. There have been a couple of car crashes on the approach to that intersection. I am really concerned that unless something is done urgently, we will have a death or deaths at that intersection. That is the tragedy—it sometimes takes a major accident before something is done. My plea on behalf of the Lakelands community is that government, Main Roads Western Australia and the developer need to address that safety issue immediately.

Another issue I want to mention is the impact of education cuts. A large number of families in my electorate have school-age children; many of those families are struggling financially. The schools that those children go to are bearing the brunt, like many schools in Western Australia, of the Barnett government's cuts to education. Some of these schools have some of the most vulnerable kids in the region. Many children attend specialist programs; programs that have been designed to give that little extra attention to them, to address some of their needs. For some children, it is behavioural needs; for others, it is developmental delay or it is extra support in literacy and numeracy. The fact is that a number of schools in my electorate that can least afford it now have to annually absorb cuts to programs and to their education budgets. There are very clear examples. I sit on four school boards in my electorate and all of them are experiencing cuts. One, Coodanup Community College, is experiencing cuts of over \$300 000; for Riverside Primary School it is nearly \$200 000; and for Dudley Park Primary School it is nearly \$180 000. The kids who go to those schools come from a variety of families, but a number of them are kids who need specialist programs or even that little bit extra that the school provided through the programs they had been delivering, whatever the area of need. The education cuts estimated in Mandurah alone—that is Mandurah and Dawesville—is approaching \$4 million. That is a lot of money. It is money that was being spent well on quality programs, but now those schools have to find those cuts. It means ultimately that teachers and the programs have to be modified or cut altogether. That is the last thing I want to see happening in the schools that I have mentioned.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I also want to talk about the importance of the Peel–Harvey waterways; an issue that is very dear to my heart. The Peel–Harvey waterways remains the jewel underpinning the economic, social and environmental health of the region. The Peel–Harvey waterways, over many decades, has experienced a range of challenges, be it nutrient level impacts in the waterways system or expansive urban growth. A number of studies in the last 10 to 15 years have highlighted that urban development is having the greatest impact on the ultimate water quality of the Peel–Harvey system. A report, which I have quoted a number of times in this place over the last four years—which came out in late 2009 or early 2010—raised significant concerns about the river systems that feed the Peel–Harvey, including the Serpentine River. In one report, that river was actually qualified as being biologically dead. It was scientists who made that comment. Of course we know that the Murray River has ongoing issues regarding erosion and water quality. Through Ravenswood and the urban development plan for the areas east of Mandurah, between Mandurah and Pinjarra, we see that significant urban development is still to come, and, as I said, we know that urban development will impact even more greatly on the waterways as we go.

The Peel–Harvey system is the largest body of water in Western Australia. It is larger than Sydney Harbour. It is a significant recreational and environmental asset, but it also underpins the economic and social attraction of the region. Less than 100 kilometres from Perth, one can be in a waterways playground and experience fishing or boating, or witness the migratory birds that frequent the place on their Asian flyways. All of this is an asset, but I believe that we are not doing enough to protect that asset. The problem is if that asset is allowed to degrade and become even more threatened, it is a reality that that will threaten the very health and wellbeing of the region, not just environmentally but economically and socially as well. It is why the opposition will introduce a private member's bill—the shadow Minister for Environment will also assist in the preparation and presentation of it—to genuinely look at protecting the Peel–Harvey system, to put it up there amongst other great natural assets in the state and underpin the importance of its protection because of the demands we are placing on it through population growth. If we are expected to accommodate the increased populations that the 2031 planning documents propose, we have to protect our most important asset—that is the Peel–Harvey system. We will introduce that bill later; I hope we will get government support.



Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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Perhaps the Minister for Health or the Minister for Environment could give us an update on the proposal, which was an election promise by the Liberal Party, to establish a committee to do certain things. My understanding is that the election promise included the allocation of something like \$400 000 to establish a committee. We have had too many committees and too many reports about the health and wellbeing, and the future health and wellbeing, of the Peel–Harvey system. We now need genuine commitment, and I am talking millions of dollars, to protect the Peel–Harvey system. It is a prime area to receive funding from royalties for regions. I have banged on in this place about the statistics of how poorly the Peel region has done from royalties for regions. I will not go over that again because the actual data is there for all to see. Out of all the regions in Western Australia, the Peel has consistently been neglected in royalties for regions funding. If there was even one area of major investment by royalties for regions, it should be in the protection of the Peel–Harvey system. We are talking millions. We are talking about finally gazetting and establishing the Peel region park. I am glad that the Minister for Planning is here, because that is part of his bivouac along with the Minister for Environment. We need to firmly establish, with dollars, the Peel region park. I believe we need an overall governance body—not a committee that has interest groups; well-to-do people but not departments—that actually has the teeth to do something and has the statutory responsibility.

We need a governance model that will require actions to take place, but for those actions to be monitored and reported on, and for those departments to be accountable for their responsibilities. The problem with the governance model at the moment is that the Department of Water has some responsibility; the Department of Planning has some responsibility; the Department of Parks and Wildlife has some responsibility; and then some other peripheral groups also have an interest including local government authorities—the City of Mandurah and the Shire of Murray being the two key ones. We need a governance model that will give teeth to action. Then we need an action plan. It has to be a sustained action plan over a period of years that is fundamentally focused on protecting the system and mandating urban-sensitive design principles. Then we need to ensure that we are continually monitoring the health elements of that system. We know that a number of indicators, as have been highlighted by a number of reports, are showing signs of vulnerability and/or decline—whether those signs be in water quality, fish stocks or impacts on wildlife and native flora and fauna.

Gazette the proposed Peel region park, fund it, and make it come from royalties for regions. I hope the Minister for Regional Development is listening. It would be the biggest, most significant contribution that he as Minister for Regional Development and Leader of the National Party could make to my region, and I would welcome it and I would applaud him. We did not do it when we were in power, and we should have. It is the most frustrating thing for me that my own side, while in government, did not recognise the importance of preserving and supporting the Peel–Harvey system. We did not! The Minister for Regional Development has the chance to do it and royalties for regions can be the funding source that actually does this—and I will applaud him.

The other issue I want to finish on in the five minutes I have is local government reform. I am glad to see the Minister for Local Government in the chamber this evening. The Premier was right in his statement this afternoon: I do not think there are many people here who are not opposed to local government reform.

**Mr J.H.D. Day:** Who are opposed!

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I support local government reform—I have said it in this place on a number of occasions.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** I think your words were not quite right.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am sorry?

**Dr K.D. Hames:** You said you are not opposed. I think you mean —

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am not opposed to government reform at all.

I think we should be looking very closely at our third level of government to ensure that it delivers what the people of Western Australia deserve and to set ourselves up, as we face a tsunami of population growth, with the best processes in place to do that. The problem that the Premier and the minister have is that they made certain promises before the election and have systematically broken those promises. The minister's latest attempt to circumvent the provisions in the Local Government Act to prevent communities from having a say through the Dadour provisions is a significant issue, because he is proposing boundary changes rather than amalgamations.

**Mr A.J. Simpson:** Mine's only a proposal.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I know that it is a proposal, but it is another abuse of the trust that the sector has given the minister and his government over a period of five and a half years. Many local governments were actively happy to work with this government and with the minister's predecessor because they believe in reform, but throughout the process, unfortunately, the minister has constantly changed the goalposts. I know that the

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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minister has conversations with various mayors and leaders of councils in which he tells them one thing and they leave the meeting thinking they have been heard. And then systematically the minister makes an announcement or puts in a reform submission that is counter to what he has told them—they tell us this. That is where the trust has been betrayed.

The minister and the Premier have never answered two key questions. The first is about the analysis that backs up the minister's approach to local government reform. The minister has never been able to demonstrate to this house or to the sector that he has come to the realisation that we need X number of councils—he seems to be focusing on around 15 or 16 in the metropolitan area—with a comprehensive, stand-alone analysis that says, "This is why we are going down this road, this is what we actually propose and this is the basis on which it is backed up." The second fundamental question the minister has never answered is the cost of reform to councils and to ratepayers—never! In the last few days we got a couple of reports on estimations of cost.

These are real questions that we have to ask. If the minister has an analysis that is being done by the department, he has to be up-front and honest with the sector and to taxpayers about what it is going to cost, because there is nothing in the forward estimates. I think there is a \$2 million allocation in this year's budget but there is no indication in the forward estimates of the overall cost of the local government reform process.

I finish by saying this: the members of the National Party might have thought that they got a couple of concessions from the minister in the amendment bill that is before the upper house now. I say to members of the National Party that their communities are next.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** No.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes, they are, and I will tell them where it will start.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** Nor are we outside.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Member for Dawesville, the government will start with us and with the greater Bunbury area. That is what the government will do.

The minister already has a plan for Mandurah and Murray to come into the metropolitan region scheme potentially as one option. I would be very interested to know whether that is the minister's plan, because I tell him that he will be met with very strong opposition from our communities.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** It wouldn't get my support.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Good! We need the member for Dawesville's support to prevent any attempt to have us absorbed into the Perth metro area. I am glad we got that on the record, member for Dawesville.

**MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee)** [8.37 pm]: I am happy to get up so early in the evening for once to make my contribution to this general debate about the Premier's Statement. I would like to take the opportunity to round out on my own electorate. It is not often that we get the time to speak to our own patch unencumbered, I suppose, by the constraints of a bill before the house.

I will start with the police and citizens youth club in my electorate, the Fremantle Police and Community Youth Centre, which is in the locality of Hilton in my patch. I have talked about the centre in this chamber several times in the past and I will continue to get to my feet to support it. That is principally because of personal experience. It was the PCYC that I went to as a young fellow and I enjoyed all the benefits of the various sports, recreations and distraction and diversion programs that are undertaken there. The Fremantle PCYC in my patch is, I believe, the best in the state—I have not visited them all but I am reliably informed by various people that it is indeed. It was made better—not the least by an amalgamation onto the same lot with the little district town hall that was next to it—with the use of some \$4 million of federal money that was delivered through the lobbying of the federal member for Fremantle, Melissa Parke. I take this opportunity to highlight the fact that when we do work together at the local, state and federal levels, we can actually get real outcomes. It is therefore an outstanding facility there that attracts all sorts of different recreational and sporting opportunities. One of the most important attractions is the drop-in centre. On any given day the drop-in centre has around 70-plus young people come through its doors to use the games room and to interact with the staff. Unfortunately, it is no longer the case that they are supervised and can interact positively with a uniformed police officer. They now deal with a young social worker, and there will not necessarily be consistency and continuity so that the staff can understand individual kids. The two senior constables who were manning the police and community youth centre in Hilton until recently, when they were pulled out by this government, could name each of those 70-plus kids; in fact, they could name their families and know where they lived and what the issues were with those young people. Unfortunately, that has gone. We will not see the effect of the cuts in the PCYC this year or even next year, but slowly over time these various cuts, the little nicks and tucks here and there, will have an effect and impact on my electorate.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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The most obvious impact from the cuts in the PCYC in Hilton, which sits in the centre of the suburb and adjacent to Hilton Primary School, has been on the community garden. The community garden has been on that site for several years and up until recently the most noticeable advertisement for it was that it had not suffered from vandalism. It is an open community garden, with only a low one-metre fence around the school, and it had never suffered from any vandalism whatsoever. A lot of young people come out of school and go straight to the drop-in centre, which is fair enough. They have had positive interaction with the police officers there, but for some reason a certain amount of control was lost when the police officers at that centre were replaced by youth workers, who do not always have the full attention of these kids. The problem with that is that the only response to poor behaviour at the drop-in centre is to close off privileges; so the drop-in centre closes and the kids pour out of the PCYC and roam the streets frustrated and looking for something to do. Unfortunately, that was when we started to see the vandalism that has occurred at the Hilton Harvest Community Garden. The PCYC has had to address that. I am on the board of the Hilton Police and Community Youth Centre and it has been a great privilege to work with the manager Rebecca Slavin and her team, who do a tremendous amount of work, particularly in youth diversion programs.

I also got to know Brad Robbins, a former Wildcat, who has been instrumental in putting together a great program called Street Ball. I see the Minister for Sport and Recreation nodding. I have raised this very positive program with the minister. That program diverts kids on a Saturday night to play basketball. It is the hook, if you like, from where the kids will receive some leadership training, they are given a feed and generally they will have a very positive interaction. There have been upwards of 70 to 90 kids, from as young as nine through to 16 and 17. The program does a fantastic job with those kids. Who would not think that with a former Wildcats captain running the program? It is great to have him and the group there. Unfortunately, the program is funded for only one year. I am particularly keen about this program and I have had some very good and positive interactions with the office of the Minister for Sport and Recreation. I know that the minister is aware of the issue and the opportunity it presents. There has been a great amount of data collected that shows how many times the kids attend the program and where the kids are from. It is saddening to understand how many dysfunctional families those kids represent, and how many kids in that cohort are known to the Department for Child Protection and Family Support and have been involved with DCP from one end of the spectrum to the other. These are not privileged middle-class kids looking for something to do on a Saturday night. These are kids who are challenged in so many different ways and are really looking for positive role models and opportunities. The Street Ball program that runs out of the PCYC is very much in the vein of what the PCYC can do with a good set of infrastructure.

More broadly, PCYCs are going through a period of renovation as an organisational body. While I have been sitting on the board of our little PCYC I can see there is a long way to go, not the least of which relates to financial management. It has taken nearly eight months for our PCYC to get a reconciled set of books with the headquarters of the PCYC head office. That is unacceptable because it leaves too many of our people exposed to the risk of an allegation of misappropriation or misuse of funds. I do not think that that organisation is as fit for purpose as it could be at the corporate level, but certainly it is in every other area in what it does on the ground because of the tremendous efforts undertaken by good people—volunteers and paid professionals inside the PCYC. The PCYC organisation will forever have my gratitude, having gone through a PCYC as a young man and having had positive interactions with the local police who were involved with it at the time. The Hilton PCYC will have my enduring support because of what I know it does on the streets in the seat of Willagee.

I note that the shadow spokesperson for local government ended his speech with local government reform, and I would like to pick up from where he left off and talk about the area in which Willagee is located. It is unique in the sense that it sits on the border of three different local government authorities—Fremantle, Melville and Cockburn—so I get to see a wide variety of local governments and there is quite a diverse range of issues in the area. The City of Cockburn, basically, has been gutted. The democratic process that existed with the Dadour provisions has been circumvented, with a simple sleight of hand to carve up Cockburn. The minister does not need to refer any decision to change a boundary for any local government authority that is made by his own hand. That is exactly what the government has done with Cockburn. It has taken Cockburn and carved it up between Fremantle, Melville and Kwinana and completely circumvented years and years of work that the staff and elected members of that local government authority have undertaken to produce a tremendous community. Cockburn is a very good model for balancing service delivery and community development requirements for people in the seat of Willagee. I received 1 010 bits of correspondence—not form letters—to my office opposing what has been going on in Cockburn. I was at a community event on Sunday morning with Mayor Logan Howlett, the staff and a lot of concerned people in Cockburn. It was great to see several hundred people turn out, not only in support of that family event—there is no question that it was a beautiful Sunday morning—but also to oppose what is a forced amalgamation of local government.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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On the other hand, Fremantle stands to be something of a winner, picking up a bit of the Cockburn area. It is a problem for the community. Fremantle has a population of about 30 000 residents, but when I look at its budget of over \$100 million and I do a gross division by that 30 000—the council will say this itself—the council spends in the order of \$3 000 of its budget per resident. I am reliably informed that compared with other councils—I would welcome an interjection from anybody with local government experience—that the norm to deliver the services is somewhere between \$1 100 to \$1 500 per resident. Fremantle is unique. There is some concern though that the amalgamation may be loading it up with greenfield sites in development areas that the council is not necessarily geared to do and that will take it some time to develop. I am concerned that the development of the areas of land that it could use for infill may go a little slower as it tries to transition into what will be a different looking local government, so there are challenges there.

The City of Melville is a tremendous local government organisation. It is going full steam ahead. It is well supported by active local councillors and tremendous staff. Any time I have had to ring any of the directors at Melville city council, I always received a very good response. I have not always received the answer or outcome I wanted but they were certainly extremely responsive and worked very hard to help where they could, including getting new footpaths, intersection treatments and all sorts of things. For example, they put in a fantastic effort in the revitalisation and master planning for the suburb of Willagee, with new entrance statements and use of the old primary school land. I wish to put a personal shout out to Will Schaefer, who is leading the community engagement. He is a young officer at the Melville city council. He is fantastic. He never stopped trying to get the word out to get people together. He was sensitive to the needs of families and when people could not turn up. By my last count, just under half the entire suburb of Willagee made a contribution in some form or another through the community consultation process. Well done to them. Will would meet Indigenous people within the suburb in a range of different ways that were not necessarily mainstream to ensure that they were included and heard. We will see the benefit of all that hard work that Will Schaefer and his team and the community consultation group have done.

The forced amalgamations that this government wants are just an opportunity to make a decision for the sake of being seen to have made a decision. There is no business case whatsoever that states that the proposed boundaries in the minister's submission to the board will deliver any tangible benefit. It squibs around the idea of what real reform is; that is, what happens inside those local government authorities that would represent true reform? For example, in the area of planning, what is the standard requirement for moving a single residential lot building application through a local government authority and what is the penalty for not doing so? What is the incentive if it is done? There has been no discussion about reform and what happens inside these organisations. What is the minimum or maximum service delivery? Should the City of Fremantle be providing crisis care for victims of domestic violence? What local government organisation does that? I am not suggesting for one second that it is not a good thing; it is fantastic. Helen Cattalini does a fantastic job running crisis care accommodation for women and children—it is very rare to find such accommodation for children—who are victims of domestic violence. It costs a lot of money. Where is the line between state responsibility for delivery of services and the local government authority? It is a continual issue around cost shifting and so on.

I move to a really tricky area for the people of Willagee. Like most members in this house, maybe not those representing the western suburbs but certainly those representing the eastern suburbs and my area in the south, there are areas of public housing in my electorate. As a former shadow spokesman on public housing, I have a reasonable level of understanding of the issues around public housing. Regardless of whether we wear a completely compassionate hat, we cannot ignore the impact that antisocial behaviour has on a neighbourhood or the compounding or multiplier effect of one single tenancy that is at risk or in trouble.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Antisocial behaviour is something that we must tackle in a bipartisan way. It is very easy to take a bleeding-heart view and say that those tenancies should be maintained at all costs. I do not subscribe to the idea that somehow the rights of a perpetrator of antisocial behaviour in the neighbourhood who is destroying the quiet enjoyment of people living in as many as six or 10 houses around them should outweigh those of their neighbours or confer any victim status on themselves. They must take responsibility for their own actions. However, in the cases that I have dealt with that have gone on for years and years, there is borderline antisocial behaviour that turns into serious antisocial behaviour. A particular tenancy went on for most of the time I have been elected—nearly five years—in one street. A whole lot of people put in doubt their social values in the way they handled it. The local people in Hilton around this particular house worked hard for many years to tolerate and work with a quite dysfunctional Aboriginal family. They came together as a community to try to intervene and assist where possible, but it all came to naught. I feel particularly sorry for those people who tried very hard, with a very good strong social conscience, to work with that one particular family, only to have it thrown back in

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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their face. When they were trying as a community to wrap around this one particular family that was particularly challenged, they were given no support or recognition from the government agencies that have the professional expertise to deliver it. We have a group of activated people trying to assist an at-risk tenancy. There is no provision for the various government agencies, particularly around child protection areas, for them to operate with that active community group. It beggars belief.

We have a very big stick with the three-strikes provision. We are increasingly seeing how it has been deployed. It has been deployed without compassion and without the resources that are required to deliver the best possible outcomes. If anybody thinks that the solution is just to terminate the tenancy and kick the individuals out—that is, if it ends there and they just disappear into the ether—they are completely dreaming and kidding themselves. They go off, families often split up, particularly the larger ones, and they end up in various other houses, overcrowding them and causing further dysfunction. The problem is just transferred. This government needs to take seriously the responsibilities of properly resourcing the carrot end of the carrot-and-stick argument of the three-strikes policy. The three-strikes policy is underfunded. The department is under-resourced. There is not a whole-of-government approach in a portfolio or case management—no through-the-door policy to assist at the first red flag, not the last, to try to turn the at-risk tenancy around.

These are the challenges that occur in the good ship Willagee that we are continually dealing with on a daily basis. I will continue to fight on the basis of an equitable outcome for everybody—the neighbourhood and these dysfunctional groups or tenancies—to ensure that we do not just transfer the problem further down the track and create a greater need and a greater draw on the assets of the state.

I would like to move to the concept of school reform, which is another good piece of camouflage in the first instance to cover what are ostensibly some pretty difficult cuts. Like many members here, I sit on boards of my local schools. I am completely exasperated at what has to happen inside these schools to ensure that they are properly resourced. Melville Senior High School, a fantastic high school under the principal, Phil White, has to compete in a very tough environment with private schools such as Santa Maria College, Christian Brothers' College in Fremantle and special select schools such as Applecross Senior High School and John Curtin College of the Arts to create an opportunity or a choice for the local changing demographic in the area. That school has just over 1 100 kids, so it is travelling well. It can offer two streams of Australian Tertiary Admission Rank academic study in every area. But it has just had \$458 000 cut from its budget, and it has been a helluva job and a helluva stress on the principal and his deputies to try to work out where, when and what will get cut. They looked hard at their specialist netball program, which provides a fantastic opportunity and pathway for the kids who come out of Willagee and have the aptitude and skills for that, and the aviation program that is run there. Despite what those programs deliver for the individuals who go into them and the amenity they offer for the community, they become luxuries. When we look at the core subjects that we are meant to be delivering in ATAR or academic study for our children and we start to see them as luxuries, we know we are not travelling on a good road.

The other school whose board I sit on is Hamilton Senior High School. It had \$244 000 cut. Included in that was a 30 per cent cut in its school support program resource allocation funding. That is the specialist funding that looks after truants, at-risk kids and turnaround strategies for dysfunctional kids in their school. It is a real problem and it is not going away, because 2014 is the bridge that these schools have to get across before they tool up for half-cohorts and, for some of them, a slight increase in the school population.

This issue is not confined to just high schools. East Hamilton Hill Primary School is another one that has had only a modest \$65 000 cut, but what did that translate into? East Hamilton Hill Primary School no longer has a music program, because it had to choose between delivering everything else or music, and it chose everything else. Music was the program that went. The music teacher was one of the best teachers I have seen in being able to get every child in that school—it is not a specialist program—exposed to and active with a musical instrument of some kind. It was a tremendous outcome from a tremendous teacher who is no longer at East Hamilton Hill Primary School. It is a shame, because over time we are just dumbing down and giving our kids fewer opportunities, not more.

We had the benefit of a visit by Mr Barnett, the Premier, and Minister Collier to the Fremantle district. I have to record here that nothing sent more rumours, more fear and more distractions to the parents of children in my electorate and in the member for Fremantle's electorate than that visit. Mr Barnett, a former education minister, and the current education minister were touring the schools. If they ever have to go into another high school again, I will be surprised. They kind of know what those high schools look like; they kind of know what is going on there. What would they need to go touring around and causing all the trouble? There have been rumours from one end of my patch to the other about what will go on down there. There has been no constructive consultation

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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about what the population wants there. There has been no consultation or any level of engagement with the local members. The member for Fremantle and I are not unaware of the issues in our areas. I would have thought that one of the best things the Premier and the minister could do would be to stop, have a chat and perhaps get some ideas about the education issues in the area from the local members. But, no, the Premier and the Minister for Education decided to go on some tour to see what they could see, and for no discernible benefit, because what have we got from it? We have no statement, no outcome from it and no discussion paper about the Fremantle education district. We have nothing.

The education issues in the inner suburban areas of this city are starkly different from those in the outer suburban areas. I understand that places such as Ellenbrook are bursting at the seams. It has a greater density of demountables than any other school in the metropolitan area. South Fremantle Senior High School has about 260 kids. In my patch, Hamilton Senior High School has about 460 kids. Any secondary education educator we talk to will say that if a school is going to offer the full suite of academic opportunities—in the ATAR subjects, that is—it will need about 1 100 kids to give it the scale to provide two streams in each of the academic subjects to ensure that it is capturing as many of those kids as possible. A school cannot do it with 640 kids. So what did they do? Innovation? They partnered with Melville, South Fremantle and Applecross, and those kids who have shown academic aptitude have to get on a bus during their school week to go to another school to pick up their subjects—I think it is Melville for chemistry and Applecross for physics. There are some other subjects, but I have forgotten the division of the subjects. That is how they have had to pool their resources in an area. It is just unacceptable.

Unfortunately, with Hamilton and South Fremantle, we have the situation in which the postcode for the area in which a person lives determines their opportunity or lack of it. In this case, it is a disadvantage to be born in the area with the postcode 6163 because it has substandard public education and a substandard government trying to provide solutions to fix the problem and to work out why Hamilton Senior High School has gone down to 460 kids. I can tell members that the principal, Donna McDonald; her deputy, Phil Casas; and all the staff are not the reason why the kids are leaving. The people at that school are fantastic people and fantastic innovators. They partner with all sorts of different businesses, particularly in the vocational education and training program, to ensure they are offering any number of pathways for their kids to find the passion that will drive their working lives. There is no shortage of passion or good leadership at that school. What is lacking is leadership from this government.

In fairness, because I think there is a bipartisan solution here, when this government came to office we did not suddenly see the demise of Hamilton Senior High School. It has happened over successive governments because, in my estimation, some hard decisions were not made around the positioning strategy for delivering quality secondary education that fits the tertiary sector and delivers what we know we need to do to develop a skilled services sector and a knowledge economy that will take advantage of our region, the fact that we are also an Indian Ocean country and that we are in lockstep with the fastest-growing, most economically viable region to our north. If we do not get fit for purpose, we are dead.

**MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells)** [9.07 pm]: I rise to speak tonight on a subject that is very important to me and to all members—that is, how we manage to make environmental protection work with the advancement of the wellbeing of all Western Australians. Sometimes it is easy to say that there is a conflict there and to imagine that there is a difficulty in achieving those two outcomes. Often it is a challenge, and that is the exciting thing about my role as shadow Minister for Environment. I acknowledge that the Minister for Environment is in the chamber to hear my speech.

When Western Australians, especially those of us who live in the Perth metropolitan area, think of the environment, naturally we think of those things that are perhaps most visible to us. As we travel around the Perth metropolitan area, there can be nothing more evident than the Swan and Canning River systems. That area is one that I believe is still subject to a very grave threat. Ultimately, the gravity of that threat comes from problems of governance. That is what we are about in this place, making sure that governance arrangements are at their optimum to deliver the desired outcomes. I will come back to this issue of governance, but, firstly, I would like to look at some of the issues that we face in the Swan and Canning Rivers. This situation is not unique to the Swan and Canning Rivers. It is also faced in other rivers, and I will come to that point as well. Ultimately, one of the key things that we face is a lack of dissolved oxygen in the water column of the river. I am sure that the minister has been keeping an eye on the latest graphs from the monitoring points. I know he has tabled these graphs during ministerial statements or at question time. Perhaps this is a more appropriate time for us to be discovering those. I have been looking at the graphs lately and I am really concerned when I see the dissolved oxygen levels in the upper reaches of the Swan and Canning Rivers dropping. There are some neat spikes in the graphs where there are oxygenation machines. It is encouraging that there is some impact from those

**Extract from *Hansard***

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 18 February 2014]

p140f-192a

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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installations. But in parts of the river we are down to zero milligrams per litre of dissolved oxygen. That is admittedly at a depth of a metre or two metres below the surface for a zero level, but at the surface level in the upper reaches of the Canning in the metropolitan area, the river is well below four milligrams a litre, the point at which we describe the situation as being low in oxygen levels. There is cause for concern there. What is going on? What can we do to improve this situation? The minister has heard me say this before: one of the key things is to reduce the amount of nutrient going into the river that either consumes or decays, causing the reduction of dissolved oxygen levels. We need to solve that problem at its source. The difficulty here is that the government of the day could take some swift and dramatic action and implement things, such as Labor's phase-out of highly water-soluble fertilisers, but the benefits will not arrive for several years, perhaps even a decade or more. However, the benefits will be enduring. We need to take that step and make that move towards the phase-out of those highly water-soluble fertilisers. Otherwise, we will continue to face this dissolved oxygen level problem and more fish will die. I do not believe fish kills have happened yet in the Swan and Canning Rivers this year, but I fear it is simply a matter of time.

Sticking with the Swan and Canning Rivers, I commend WAtoday on its Save our Swan River campaign and the work it is doing. I think it is great for two reasons: firstly, we see how passionate Western Australians in the Perth area are about the river system and, secondly, it is a good way for people to describe some of their concerns and to express their views on how things can be improved.

We have also had issues with pollution going into the river. I note that my friend at the South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare, Julie Robert, the CEO, was recently in the local press discussing a discharge of foam into the Canning River and the detective work that is going on to track down the organisation that is culpable for that discharge. Clearly, these sorts of events are unacceptable. Similarly, waste materials have been discharged on road surfaces. There are always media stories on this topic, but then we are not sure what the follow-up is. There is a clear issue here with the level of transparency. I suppose from the minister's point of view it is easy to say, "Investigations are underway, so we do not want to jeopardise the outcomes of those investigations." However, the public needs to know what is going on so that we can have confidence that something is going on, because we do not seem to hear about the prosecutions of people who are culpable for different types of pollution.

I want to move on from the Swan–Canning Rivers to the Vasse–Wonnerup Estuary. I was down there with all my caucus colleagues just a matter of weeks ago for our caucus conference. Coincidentally, the week before the Minister for Water had been there. She had put out a media release and generated a media story on ABC about some oxygen monitoring equipment at the mouth of the Vasse River in the Vasse–Wonnerup wetlands area. She seemed to say that that would be a solution to problems in the area, particularly fish kills. Back in April 2013 about 10 000 fish had been killed, so she was down there to say, "The Department of Water will tackle this problem; we have the monitoring equipment in place so that we can allow seawater to come in and flush things out should there be a problem with the oxygen levels." Lo and behold, fish died a week later, the time I was down there for the WA Labor caucus conference. The minister unveils monitoring equipment on the Thursday or Friday of one week and then the Thursday of the next week 10 000 fish are dead.

It needs to be pointed out that it is all very well for ministers to go and make big announcements, but it is a case of the proof being in the pudding; in this case, the problem has clearly not been fixed. The member for Collie–Preston and I spoke to the employees from the City of Busselton who were involved in cleaning up all these dead fish and pulling them out of the river. These people were working for the shire and said that they had seen it before. Many of them are recreational fishers and are passionate about their part of the world, the Busselton area. They commented that the government's arrangements are fragmented. The Department of Water is involved, ultimately, though there are issues with the amount of nutrient getting into the system. The Department of Agriculture and Food is involved. Obviously, the Department of Environment Regulation is involved. The Department of Parks and Wildlife is also involved. Multiple agencies are involved, but no one body really takes charge of the governance arrangements for the Vasse–Wonnerup system. To those people with whom the member for Collie–Preston and I spoke, the obvious point was that we need a single body to take charge. They said it is just like how Perth has the Swan River Trust. They did not say it in the past tense. I had to tell them the government has decided to get rid of the Swan River Trust; that governance model that seems so sensible is now being dismantled and lost. But I was able to tell these people that they were dead right; clearly, we need a single body to take charge of these things. By the way, minister, the City of Busselton was particularly angry that it had to bear the cost of the clean-up. I dare say this is something to pass on to the Minister for Water. I neglected to state that the Water Corporation is also involved in that situation. The involvement of multiple agencies means it is very fragmented. It does not make sense. Clearly, we need to solve that governance arrangement. The Water

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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Corporation or the Department of Water can expect to receive some sort of bill from the City of Busselton for the labour involved in that clean-up.

There was some interesting conjecture about the nature of the algal bloom that was obvious in the estuary. I am not sure which species of algae it was. There was some suggestion that it was not necessarily a matter of reduced oxygen levels in the water and that it was a toxic algae. That is another matter. Then we have to ask whether the monitoring equipment that was recently announced was capable of detecting that situation. Perhaps the monitoring equipment is not designed in a way to trigger action for flushing when a particular algae is of a toxic nature rather than an oxygen depleting sort. I commend to the minister a report that the South West Catchments Council passed on to me. It is from January 2014, so we could say that it is hot off the press. The council has produced a preliminary document titled, "Independent Review of the Current and Future Management of the Water Assets in the Geographe Catchment, WA: Discussion Document". One of the outcomes that this review is expected to provide is —

- An evaluation of the current roles and responsibilities of key organisations involved in managing the above assets, which identifies the positive and negative aspects of the current governance frameworks,

So we come back to this point. Governance arrangements need to be right in order to achieve the specific monitorable and scientific outcomes that we need for a healthy river system, in this case, the Vasse–Wonnerup. Healthy waterways are critical to the enjoyment of the environment that Western Australians expect to receive.

Many organisations are working in this area. When I say that, I am not looking only at the Minister for Environment. I hope that he will pass on word to the Minister for Agriculture in the other place, because they share responsibility for natural resource management. There are now seven natural resource management groups in Western Australia: the Rangelands NRM; the wheatbelt NRM; the northern agricultural NRM; the south west catchment council, which I met with recently; the south coast NRM; the Perth NRM; and now, as a result of the federal election, the Peel–Harvey catchment council, which has been elevated to the status of a regional NRM group.

In the 2011–12 state budget, there was \$30 million of state funding for these NRM groups, which now has to be divided by seven. This \$30 million will dwindle to zero come 2015. That is of great concern, because these groups are working on things like very important wetland restoration projects that can help to halt or slow the flow of nutrients into the river and estuarine systems. That is very important. The minister likes to talk about the Swan River and how he is encouraging people to develop wetland systems. He is very supportive of that. But that is only part of the story. We need to not only reduce the flow of nutrients but also stop the spread of nutrients in the catchments. That is where we come to things like WA Labor's proposal to phase out the use of highly water-soluble fertilisers.

I move now to an asphalt plant that is proposed for the Boral Orange Grove quarry. That is an important issue for you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr N.W. Morton), and several of us in this chamber, including the Minister for Planning, because I believe this is in his electorate. I have been receiving correspondence from people who are concerned about this proposal. They have been told that the asphalt plant will be just a temporary measure to provide for the development of the Eastern Gateway project. That is possible. However, they are concerned that it might turn out to be a permanent arrangement. They are concerned about the volatile organic compounds and fumes that we would expect to be emitted from an asphalt plant.

These people quite rightly used their entitlement to refer this proposal to the Environmental Protection Authority under section 38 of the Environmental Protection Act. It is clear from the act that a person may refer a significant proposal to the authority. I want the minister to take this up with the Environmental Protection Authority, and it is certainly his right to do that. I say that because the secretary of the Gosnells District Progress and Ratepayers Association received a letter from the Environmental Protection Authority stating —

While I appreciate your concerns, the EPA is not required to accept a referral of a proposal which is not significant and will not be giving further consideration to your referral.

A judgement has been made here by a person, based on limited information, that the proposal is not significant. However, that is only part of the problem. Section 39 of the act states that the authority shall, subject to this section, keep a public record of each proposal referred to it under section 38. That is regardless of what the initial judgement might be about the significance of the proposal.

[Member's time extended.]



Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** There is also an option for the authority to say whether a proposal will be assessed under this part; and, if the proposal is to be assessed, what the level of assessment will be. However, there is not an option for the EPA to just ignore a proposal, which is effectively what this letter from the EPA states it is seeking to do. Therefore, the minister needs to clarify with the EPA that even though it may consider some referrals to be irritating and may believe they are insignificant, it is within the scope of the act for people to make a referral.

I note that a community meeting will be held tomorrow night about this proposal. From the emails that I have received, some 40 or 50 people are involved. So just on that community interest test alone, there is a real community concern about this project. It would have been reasonable for the EPA to at least set a level of assessment for this proposal. The EPA might well have determined that the proposal was not to be assessed. However, there would then have been the opportunity for the residents to appeal and have their appeal dealt with. That would have been a reasonable use of the process, because it would have enabled the residents to tease out some of their concerns. However, that is something that this short-cutting approach by the EPA has not allowed.

I should say as an aside that local residents had put up signs up on their properties about this proposal and about the forthcoming community meeting, and they received a letter from the City of Gosnells saying that they must remove that signage within two days. We have had debates in this place about signage that members, including me, have placed on people's properties at election time. We are allowed to put our political advertising on domestic properties. Yet somebody—the speculation is that it is Boral, the proponent—has requested that the signs be taken down. That undermines community confidence in due process and in the right of people to express their concerns on an issue, versus our right as members of Parliament to present ourselves as candidates at an election. There is a double standard there that I find repulsive.

I turn now to another issue that is not far from my electorate of Gosnells and is in the electorate of the Minister for Local Government. This is an issue that I have already made the subject of a grievance to the minister. It is about the Bio-Organics Pty Ltd plant at Oakford. I commend the work of John Flint as an investigative journalist at *The Sunday Times*, and also of the community action group and the Serpentine Jarrahdale Residents and Ratepayers Association and Mr Alan Clarkson. Their good work has exposed what is taking place at this property, about which I am very concerned. I do not think the story has been completely told. I note that very recently, on 8 February, the licence issued by the Department of Environment Regulation that was covering the operations of Bio-Organics was withdrawn. That is good news. However, the company has 21 days within which to respond in writing as to why its licence should not be suspended, and it also has to address certain issues. I am concerned to hear that the company is considering moving its operations to Gingin. In many ways, what this company is doing may be a viable means of getting rid of the waste material that our restaurant industry and others generate. All of us eat out and generate this kind of waste. Obviously we need some means of getting rid of grease from the fats and oils used—all that material that was to a large extent arriving at this Oakford property owned by Bio-Organics. It was being taken there in incredible volumes—30 trucks a day—and the minimum size of the trucks going in was about 10 tonnes. There were huge quantities of this liquid. The liquid was being mixed in with the composting process. I understand that successful composting requires a lot of water or a lot of liquid, but I do not think it is acceptable that there was so much liquid going in that it discharged onto adjacent properties. It was reported in the press a couple of weekends ago that the property of a neighbour, Mr Mal Dempsey, was described as a contaminated site because of the discharge coming off the Bio-Organics property onto his. He is considering his options. I think this is a really nasty situation. I really do believe it could have been done properly. Waste products could have been successfully used on paddocks to enrich the growth of pasture for grazing cattle. There could have been a way to do this. What is going on is not being done to a standard. That is why it is pretty clear that the current licence has been suspended. That is one issue that the Minister for Environment must deal with. I note that the minister has been reluctant to respond to questions. I think that is a poor show as well. Clearly, he has to respond to questions about an issue such as this, otherwise community confidence is lost and people feel that they are being neglected. They do not know what is going on. I fear that the situation at Oakford is something that is happening in other places and I fear could be replicated if the company was moved to a Gingin property. That is something that has to be looked at as well.

Another issue, which I will not dwell on, is: what has the minister been advocating around the cabinet table when it comes to the policy on sharks? I draw his attention to his responsibilities under the Wildlife Conservation Act. He would be well aware that great white sharks are clearly listed as a vulnerable species under schedule 1 of the Wildlife Conservation Act. The minister actually presented this in the regulations back in September. I have been checking the *Government Gazette*. To my knowledge, the Minister for Environment has not sought any exemption for great white sharks from the current listing arrangement. I believe he is probably trying to suggest

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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that should the government ever capture a great white shark, the provisions of section 17 of the Wildlife Conservation Act may apply. The minister may have some power under that section to allow a licence to be issued by the Minister for Fisheries to enable the catching of a great white shark. Clearly, there is a need for the minister to be the advocate for the environment, for vulnerable species, and to act for them rather than falling into this ridiculous situation of knee-jerk reactions and silly policies that I think are driven from people outside this place. It is clearly not a sensible policy. We have debated that already today. We have pointed out the silliness of having meat curtains and things like that to attract sharks rather than act as any means of reducing the risk that somebody may face. There is also the complete distortion of the level of risk. I understand that my recreational cycling has a risk factor as well. Every one of us probably engages in something that is dear to us, an activity that we enjoy, but of course there will be a risk factor. It is not right if members of this place, such as the Premier, distort the extent of that risk. That is completely wrong. It is misleading the public. It is fuelling the fear that people can so easily fall into. Using populist lines that engender great fear is completely wrong.

I want to quickly touch on the release of the forest management plan in the lead-up to Christmas and the disappointment that those of us who have been following forest management in Western Australia feel about this document and the fact that the Minister for Environment so readily signed off on it. I do not believe it takes adequate account of the decline in regeneration of forests due to declining rainfall. It has not heeded the word of scientists who have studied the ecological response of forests to declining rainfall. It has not taken account of the real needs of the industry to be put onto a sustainable footing. We should be doing everything to help support a move towards a plantation industry. That is clearly where we need to head. I know in some quarters—not in all, but in some—the plantation industry has had its problems. That needs to be sorted out. I acknowledge that we need a significant amount of wood and paper material in this state, but we need to be self-sufficient. We can be self-sufficient; it should be via a vibrant plantation sector.

The government's endeavours in the environmental portfolio are those of a government caught more in the eyes of those who are about reducing environmental regulation. To meet that challenge that I mentioned before of making sure we improve the lot of humans while protecting the environment, we need good quality environmental regulation. Whether it is the Swan River, the shark situation or the disposal of waste at industrial plants, we need good quality environmental regulation. There are too many examples in Western Australia today of environmental regulation not being taken seriously. That is a grave disappointment to all of us. It is a disappointment to Western Australians who expect their environment to be protected.

**MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington)** [9:37 pm]: I rise to make some remarks in this debate on the Premier's Statement. It is one of the few debates in which a member can talk about issues directly related to their electorate. That is what I intend to do. I start by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet. I commented last year after the Governor's Reply that I think it is important to acknowledge the traditional custodians. I note that we still do not do that at the start of Parliament, which I think is a defect.

It is now—I think it is actually today—25 years since I moved to Western Australia and 25 years since I met my wife. I met her on the day that I arrived in Perth. Of course, at that time I did not know she would become my wife. Kate Doust was an official with the shop assistants' union, which I had come over to work for. She and the assistant secretary came to collect me at the airport. She was, quite literally, the first person I met in Western Australia! Now, 25 years later, we are married with three kids; our oldest girl is just about to get married.

Anyway, I want to get on to my electorate. I will start by talking about schools in the Cannington electorate. I will use a particular school, Beckenham Primary School, an independent public school, as an example of the problems that this government is generating for schools in my electorate. As it happens, I am on the board of Beckenham Primary School. This afternoon I attended a meeting of the school board to discuss the issues that arise in running that independent public school. I would like to read, for the benefit of Hansard, a letter signed by the chair of the board.

It is headed "School Board: Beckenham Primary School: *An Independent Public School*". It is addressed to Hon Peter Collier and reads —

Dear Mr Collier

We are writing to you to express both our disappointment and concern with regard to recent State Government budgetary decisions which will impact upon the delivery of educational programs throughout the State.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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While noting that the impending changes to individual school funding are managed by the Department of Education, the reduction of resources to schools is due to the Government not adequately funding public education which is one of its fundamental and core responsibilities.

Below we highlight to you the particular impact the planned reduction in funding will have on Beckenham Primary School.

There is then a table that reads —

<b>Element</b>	<b>Financial Cost to the School</b>
Reduction of the school's base FTE formula by 0.2FTE	\$22 220
Loss of 0.1FTE for Level 3 Classroom teachers (4 teachers x0.1) = 0.4FTE	\$44 440
Reduction in School Support Program Resource Allocation (SSPRA) by 30%	\$30 000
Long Service Leave Liability (Levy)	\$25 000 (approx.)
Procurement Savings of 1.5%	\$3300
Loss of funding to assist with Performance Management	\$5000
<b>Total Cost to the school (to maintain existing programs.)</b>	<b>\$129 960</b>

We urge you to encourage the Treasurer and Premier to make the funding of public education a priority. Budgetary growth must be linked to population growth in order that schools are able to maintain and improve a diverse range of educative programs.

At 101 years of age, our school is one proud of its heritage and tradition. It is also a school which needs its funding levels maintained.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely

Vicki Hartmann  
Board Chair  
18/02/2014

That is, therefore, a \$129 960 cut from this school. I want to highlight the actual impact on this school of that enormous cut. I will start by also pointing out that because last year Beckenham independent school ran over budget, the first thing that happened this year was that the department asked for a cheque for \$26 950 from the school to be returned to the Department of Education. The next thing that happened is that because there has been no rollover of the accounts for the school for the end of the calendar year, which is the financial year for the IPS, the school cannot write any cheques. The school, therefore, cannot pay its suppliers at the minute because the Department of Education administrative procedures are so weak that it cannot close the books for the calendar year 2013. So, here the school is in the middle of February 2014 and it cannot write any cheques for the suppliers that are providing services and goods to the school.

I have been informed that there are only four people in the Department of Education who are helping independent public schools with their accounts. The issue is that if the school rings the Department of Education to get assistance with its accounts, the call is booked and at a later time one of those four people rings the school back. The government is so proud of its IPS project, yet it is not resourcing the department adequately to ensure that these basic administrative functions can be carried out by the schools. As far as the school is concerned, its books are up to date. They are complete from the end of the financial year but they need the sign-off for the rollover from the central office in the Department of Education and it is not happening.

Education assistants and teachers are now buying items for use in classrooms with money from their own pockets. There are even discussions about including classroom items on the book list so that parents will be required to pay through the book list process for the cutbacks that have been imposed by the state government. That is effectively a tax increase on users of public education. It is an unfair, flat tax on the users of public education.

The school support program resource allocation funding cut means that the school, which is obviously in an area of need, will cut back the counselling services provided by Parkerville Children and Youth Care Inc to just one

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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day a week. The inevitable result of that is that more kids who have difficulties in learning will be delayed and will not be assisted with that type of counselling. That will inevitably lead to more problems for those kids and therefore more problems in the classroom, and less time available for teachers of all students, since they will concentrate on the few that have problems. This is a bad decision.

The school prides itself on its work in the area of science but to make up this \$129 000 cut, the resources available to the science teachers have been cut by 50 per cent. Another thing you might be interested in, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr N.W. Morton), is that the school found a way to save \$10 000 on its electricity bill by swapping from Synergy to Alinta. That \$10 000 should be available to the school as an IPS for improved services in the school. But that saving that this school has created out of innovative management—the sort of thing the government says that IPS is all about—is instead being harvested by the government and the Premier for the benefit of their budget bottom line and is not available to the school to improve the quality of education in this independent public school. Further, the budget for cleaning arrangements in the school has been cut, because that is one easy way to save some money; yet of course it means that the standards in the school may well slip.

More dramatic is the cut from \$20 000 to \$13 000 available to teachers to buy resources for their classrooms. That will directly impact on the quality of education at Beckenham Primary School. It is completely contrary to the rhetoric the government has been using, even as late as now, about the purpose of independent public schools. It is a direct attack on quality public education. Art consumables are being cut from \$8 500 to \$5 000. As I said, science consumables are being cut from over \$3 000 to \$1 300. Physical education resources are being cut from \$3 800 to just \$2 500. The kitchen garden resources are being cut from \$11 465 to \$4 500, and excursions and incursions from \$12 937 to just \$10 000. This is what is happening in this school, just as an example of schools across the state. When the government says it is increasing funding, it is not increasing funding for Beckenham Primary School; it is cutting funding. It is cutting funding for Cannington Community College. It is cutting funding for Gibbs Street Primary School. It is cutting funding at Queens Park Primary School. It is cutting funding at Brookman Primary School, at Wilson Primary School, at Bannister Creek Primary School, at Sevenoaks Senior College and at Lynwood Senior High School. This is what the government is doing and this is the effect it is having. I am just using Beckenham Primary School as an example because I have these documents in front of me today that were given to me as a member of the school board. This is what is actually happening in schools across the state. It is just not right for the government to come into this place or to go to the media and claim that school funding is being increased. It is not. Funding for individual schools is being cut.

I imagine, Mr Acting Speaker, that when you go to schools in your electorate, you see exactly the same thing. We all know that the funding for individual schools is being reduced. Sure, there are more schools. More schools mean that perhaps there is some small increase in the total expenditure, but the money being spent on schools in my community for the benefit of those kids is being cut. I am demonstrating how that is having a direct impact in classrooms. The decision of this government has had a dramatic impact on those schools.

I want to quickly talk about another issue that is unrelated to schools but directly related to my electorate; that is, the decision by the Minister for Corrective Services to allow a prisoner to walk a puppy in my electorate.

**Mr J.M. Francis:** I mean, I personally made that decision—come on!

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** As I understand the Westminster system, the minister is responsible for the behaviour of his department. I understand that the minister actually invented the program that led to the prisoner having a puppy.

**Mr J.M. Francis:** That's not true. Who told you that?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** The minister was part of the program and he supported the program of putting dogs into that prison.

**Mr J.M. Francis:** I never started the program at all! Who told you that?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** Then who did, minister?

**Mr J.M. Francis:** It was there before. It has been there for years.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** So the minister does not support the program. The fact is that 22 prisoners were brought to a suburban oval that is located near pensioners, two schools—a private school and a government school—and one of them, who had been sentenced to 15 years in prison and was three years into his sentence, was allowed to walk a puppy around an oval in the suburb of Wilson. If the minister thinks that Wilson residents think that is a good idea, he is wrong. That was a bad decision by the minister and his government.

**Mr J.M. Francis:** It was not a decision made by me. It is a decision made by the department.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** It is a decision made on the minister's behalf by his bureaucracy in accordance with the policies that the minister has not changed in the 12 months he has been minister. After five and a half years in government, the minister still does not get it! The minister is in charge; he is the one who gets paid the big money.

**Mr J.M. Francis:** We are changing it!

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** Is the minister saying that he is now changing it?

**Mr J.M. Francis:** We are changing the entire department.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** The minister is saying that after 12 months, after a prisoner walks away with a puppy in a suburban area like Wilson, that now he will do something about it. What a ridiculous position. What weak and mealy-mouthed behaviour from an incompetent minister who should resign. That is the fact and everybody knows it.

Several government members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Cannington, I ask you to direct your comments through the Chair. You have been engaging with the minister, expecting him to respond, so you can direct your comments to me.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** Absolutely. As you know, Mr Acting Speaker, this is a weak and pathetic minister who should resign. It is time, as you say, Mr Acting Speaker, that this weak and pathetic minister should resign.

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr N.W. Morton):** I ask you to withdraw the comments with respect to the minister.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** I am happy to withdraw if I am directed to do so.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I query whether that is —

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I have made a ruling, thank you, member.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** I think that this minister is not up to the job and everybody in Western Australia agrees with me, except the minister. It is an embarrassment —

**Dr K.D. Hames:** Which minister?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** I am talking about the Minister for Corrective Services.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Direct your comments to me, member.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** I am; I have not looked at anybody else, Mr Acting Speaker.

This is a weak and pathetic minister who is not doing his job.

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr N.W. Morton):** Member, I have asked you to withdraw those comments with regard to the minister's character.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** I withdraw.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** This is a minister who is not up to his job. He is getting paid too much for the work that he does, because he does not do it well.

I will move on to the issue of aircraft noise in the electorate that I represent. Over 3 000 people in my electorate have talked to me about aircraft noise problems. We all have roughly 18 000 houses in our electorates, so people from about one in six houses have contacted me to talk about aircraft noise. There is no issue for the people of Cannington that is more concerning than aircraft noise. This year Perth Airport will prepare its master plan. I made a submission to the master plan five years ago and I will make another submission this year, and I will encourage all the residents in the area to make submissions as well. We have to make sure that the airport accepts its responsibility to the local community. It is just not good enough for the airport to say that its responsibility ends at the boundary fence of the airport, which is exactly what it currently says. It is time that the airport was a good neighbour to the residents of the electorate of Cannington. It is time that it took responsibility for the noise load that is being put on those local constituents.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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[Member's time extended.]

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** The airport will also need to put a proposal into its master plan about building the second runway. That second runway is pointed straight at the suburb of Beckenham. It will massively increase the noise load for the residents of Beckenham, and that is unfair. It is also interesting that the planning guidelines published by the Department of Planning for areas under the flight path discourage multi-unit development under the flight path, but then there is an exemption that states “unless it is necessary for another purpose”. What has happened is that 97 units are being built at the northern end of Queens Park, which is the spot closest to the airport runway, and all those units will be adversely affected by aircraft noise. There is a range of developments in the suburb of Beckenham. Currently, the residents of Beckenham have a large noise load, because planes fly past Beckenham to get to the runway, and that will massively increase if a second runway is built. A second runway will increase the cost of flying into Perth. People do not realise that the capital cost of construction and the operational costs of the airport are paid by the airport charging the airlines to use the airport. There is a need for a second runway for only three hours in the morning, between five and eight on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday; so, for those nine hours a week, the airport will need to spend \$600 million or \$650 million to build a second runway that will be pointed at the people in Beckenham. That cost will have to be recovered from aircraft operators and airline users at the airport. That is the only source of income for that private organisation. It is not as though it can get money from somewhere else. That will lead to higher prices to fly in and out of Perth Airport. Members should realise that the reason the airport is jammed for those nine hours on those three days is because of fly in, fly out operations. It is not because of large planes bringing tourists and businesspeople to the state, but rather the fly in, fly out operations.

The other problem with that is that now Newman, Karratha and Port Hedland airports all have capacity constraints, because after the planes take off from Perth Airport they have to land somewhere. The locations of Newman, Karratha and Port Hedland have multiple users all competing for the same landing slots, so we now have capacity constraints at all three of those airports. Now the fly in, fly out operators are asking those airports to expand their capacity. For example, Newman is being asked to expand its terminal capacity, again, for nine hours a week; it is being asked to spend money on those projects. There is a clear problem with the way airspace is being managed in this state and there needs to be an improvement. Eventually, a second runway will be needed at Perth Airport, and when residents have talked to me about that I have always said that is the case. Given that Brisbane Airport has 40 to 50 per cent more passenger movements than Perth Airport, which is a significantly higher number of passenger movements, with the same configuration of runways, members can clearly see that there should not be a need to build a second runway now. When I say now, it will probably be complete in about four years' time because it will have to go through its master plan process and the environmental process, and then it will have to construct the runway, so it will be four years or so before it is built.

Clearly, that date could be delayed if management decisions about the operation of the airport were made. That would be good for Beckenham residents because it would delay the massive increase in aircraft noise. We are actually talking about the fourth runway because there is an unused runway pointing at Maylands that the airport voluntarily stopped using about 15 years ago. It is interesting that the airport was prepared to stop using the cross-runway that used to inflict noise on Maylands, but it is now saying that it has these problems and it wants to build this extra runway to point at Beckenham. There are technical alternatives to the way the runway is managed and other options.

It is also important to remember that this fourth runway will not be used for fly in, fly out aircraft; it will be used for normal passenger aircraft. The reason is that the fly in, fly out operators conduct their operations at the northern extreme of the airport. My daughter was a fly in, fly out worker at a goldmine a couple of years ago. We used to drop her off and collect her from Skippers at the northern end of the airport. If people think that this runway is for the fly in, fly out planes, they are wrong because the planes would have to cross two other runways and go past the apron to the international airport to get to the end of the runway. They will not do that. That would use too much fuel and delay operations on the other runways. The extra runway will have to be built to take full size 777s and A330s—international planes. They are the planes that will operate. In the future Virgin Australia Airlines will be co-located at the international terminal. Its planes will go around the side of the terminal and fly off on the new runway—not the little planes that are run by Cobham and Skippers and these other companies that have their operations at the northern end of the runway.

It is true that the planes operating out of Terminal WA may operate off the new runway but they are large planes. Some of them are full sized 737s. They are big jet planes that make just as much noise as regular public transport planes. This is not the best solution for the residents in my electorate. I hope that we have a more sensible outcome. I will be doing what I can through the master plan process to look at that.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 18 February 2014]

p140f-192a

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Roger Cook; Acting Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr David Templeman; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr John Day

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I also want to quickly touch on the City of Canning. As you know, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr N.W. Morton), the City of Canning is to be abolished under the government's ridiculous changes to local government, which it keeps calling reform, yet there is no change to the operations of local government; it is just changing the boundaries. It is interesting that the City of Canning has \$47 million in the bank and a brand-new recreation centre in Cannington close to Queens Park. It is up to date with its asset investment program and with its road building program. It has the lowest rates of any council in the metropolitan area, and that is what is being abolished. The City of Melville, which lost money on the subprime loans arrangement during the global financial crisis in the United States, is not being abolished; in fact, it is being expanded. But a council like the City of Canning, which has \$47 million in the bank, never lost any money on the GFC and is up to date with its asset investment program, is being abolished. It is not what the local residents in my electorate want. Petitions have been presented in this place, signed by more than 1 500 people, indicating that they want to keep the City of Canning together. We know that that will not happen because the government has its mind set already. It is not about a process; it is about an outcome. It is not about a benefit to the community; it is about hero worshipping of the Premier. That is not what the community wants.

I also want to emphasise that whatever outcome we get from this process, it is important that the Cannington city centre remains the top activity for the amalgamated council. I have said before that when people look back in 30 years on the changes to the metropolitan area, the developments around the Cannington train station will be seen as an important part of the metropolitan area's development. Whilst the development of Maddington and the township of Gosnells are important in the metropolitan area, the development around the Cannington railway station and the Cannington CBD will have the most impact on the way the metropolitan city develops. In "Directions 2031: Draft Spatial Framework for Perth and Peel", the City of Cannington CBD is listed as one of the principal activity centres in the metropolitan area. It is not just me saying that; that is the plan for the metropolitan city. Whatever comes out of local government changes, it is important that that focus be kept on that area.

An important management decision needs to be thought about here. Without elected councillors, it is quite difficult. I am talking about the interface between the important CBD developments and surrounding near suburbs. I do not know that the government's current processes on that interface work well. Seven storeys in the CBD behind the old Myer warehouse is not a problem. Nine storeys is not a problem. Five to seven storeys near the train station is absolutely fantastic. It would be a great idea. Mixed-use development on the Department of Housing block between Sevenoaks Senior College and the railway station is a fabulous idea; I agree to it—there is no problem from this local member—but I do have a problem with the boundaries of the CBD zone and residences. The other day I was approached by a person who found out about a four-storey approval across the road from his house when the sign went up advertising the apartments. He was not told about the development during the planning process; he found out about it only at the end. That is a problem that I think highlights a need to better deal with the interface between areas that will just be ordinary single-dwelling blocks, low rise and the CBD. That is not properly done at the moment. These are important issues for the community of Cannington. It will be interesting to see how the government responds.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr J.H.D. Day (Leader of the House)**.

*House adjourned at 10.08 pm*

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