

MINISTERIAL OFFICES — STAFFING

Motion

Resumed from 18 August on the following motion moved by Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich —

That this house condemns the Premier and his ministers for breaking the Premier's promise on the staffing cap in ministerial offices, and calls on the Premier to explain how he can expect government agencies to cap their staff numbers whilst at the same time he condones the growth in staff numbers in ministerial offices, and calls on the Premier to —

- (a) reaffirm his commitment to the promise he made during the election campaign to cap the number of staff in ministerial offices at 150 full-time equivalent; and
- (b) explain why he is amongst the worst offenders, with his current staffing level of 17 employees and a driver, rather than the 8.8 FTEs that he is entitled to under his own election promise.

HON KEN TRAVERS (North Metropolitan) [2.05 pm]: I would like to speak to the motion moved by my colleague Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich. In regard to the questions of the promised cap, we know that the Premier, prior to the last election, promised that there would be a cap on the number of staff allocated to ministerial offices. As mentioned in the motion, the Premier indicated that there would be a cap on the number of staff in ministerial offices at 150 full-time equivalent. According to Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich's figures, that works out to 8.8 FTEs per ministerial office.

During the estimates hearings we were able to obtain numbers on exactly how many staff are in each of the various ministerial offices. The numbers make for interesting reading because many of them go above the cap that has been applied and there are only a few ministerial offices that actually remain under the cap. It is interesting to observe, when looking at the numbers, that lower house ministers have fewer staff than the ministers in the upper house. We know from the comments by Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich that staff numbers for the Premier's office are well and truly above the cap. According to the most recent figures that I have seen, he has in the order of 26 staff in his office. Some would argue, and I would be one of them, that the role of Premier is an important position in this state. It is appropriate for the Premier to have additional staff from a policy point of view and also from a logistical point of view, in order to deal with the volume of correspondence and requests for appointments, and to feed those to representing ministers.

The Deputy Premier has 12.7 FTE staff in his office. Again, as someone who has worked for a Deputy Premier, I understand that there are additional responsibilities that come with being the Deputy Premier that would justify additional staff being made available. I note that the Deputy Premier as Minister for Health and Minister for Indigenous Affairs holds very important portfolios, all of which are very time consuming. The health portfolio probably needs two media secretaries just to deal with the volume of correspondence. It may be that the Premier's original commitment was unrealistic because of the volume of work that goes on.

Which minister has the highest number of staff in his ministerial office? It is interesting that this government has staff made available to it by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, but also seconds additional staff from agencies to support it in its work. The Minister for Housing will often have a housing liaison officer because there are many inquiries and he often needs a departmental person to act as a housing liaison officer. Let us look at which minister has the most number of staff allocated to him by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, after the Premier and the Deputy Premier. It is none other than a minister in this place, the Minister for Transport; Disability Services. Hon Peter Collier can relax; it is not him! He is up there, but it is not him. It is his colleague who sits to his left—the Minister for Transport; Disability Services, who has an allocation of 11.1 staff, and the projected FTE for 2010–11 is 12. That is more than any other minister, other than the Premier and the Deputy Premier.

Hon Simon O'Brien: What is the source of the figures that you quoted?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: It is advice that was provided by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in answer to questions asked in the estimates process. We now know that the Minister for Transport; Disability Services has 12 staff. How many staff are seconded from departments to ministers' agencies? This is where it becomes a little interesting. The winner—the minister who has the highest number of seconded staff—is Minister Grylls with six. The Premier and Deputy Premier have no seconded staff. Minister Grylls has six staff and Ministers Constable and O'Brien have five staff seconded to their ministerial offices to assist them. That means that in 2009–10 the Minister for Transport; Disability Services had 11.1 staff plus five as of 24 June 2010 and the projected FTE will see that rising to 12 staff. I assume the five seconded staff will remain. That will give the Minister for Transport; Disability Services 17 staff. That is second only to the Premier in the number of staff in his ministerial office, and double what the Premier said the minister needed when the government got in.

Hon Nick Goiran: And?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: That is a good point. I just have to set the scene. I agree with the member. And what is happening with them? Where are they used? What are they doing? Let us look at their responsibilities. The Minister for Health; Indigenous Affairs gets by with 12.7 staff and he is also the Deputy Premier. The Minister for Education has 15 staff. The Minister for Regional Development has 16 staff and the Minister for Transport; Disability Services has 17 staff.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Why does he need so many?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Why does he need 17 staff? What are we seeing from the Minister for Transport?

Hon Nick Goiran interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon Simon O'Brien: All right, I won't deal with your queries so often.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Haven't you people read the standing orders? I suggest you do. One person speaks at a time.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Some of us are lucky enough to be reading the standing orders on a weekly basis as we review them. It is amazing how some of us can forget them occasionally, even though we spend lots of time poring over them.

The PRESIDENT: There is no excuse for any member.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: There is no excuse for any member. It is a case of buyer beware, know our standing orders.

The Minister for Transport; Disability Services has a record number of staff. As a Parliament are we seeing any outcomes from that? Are we seeing any increased productivity as a result of that? I imagine that the Minister for Child Protection; Community Services would have numerous issues to deal with in her office. She could probably do with 17 staff but she does not get 17 staff.

Hon Nick Goiran interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I could seek leave to continue my remarks at a later stage and let Hon Nick Goiran make a speech if he would like.

Hon Nick Goiran: To support the minister?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: If that is what he would like to do.

Hon Nick Goiran: You're the shadow.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Let us get some order, literally, into this debate. That means one person speaks at a time and in another 36 minutes and 10 seconds, somebody else can have a go.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Hopefully, I will be a little quicker than 36 minutes, but we never know if members insist on interjecting.

Hon Nick Goiran: Tell us the story about Hon George Cash like you've told us before.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Nick Goiran, I just pointed out that everybody gets a chance to make a contribution in this debate but you cannot do it from your seat.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: The reason I give that speech so often is that the lessons that are contained within it are not learnt by the members on the other side, which is why Hon George Cash used to give it to me so often. One of the things we learn about changing sides is that the role of a member of the government backbench is very different from the role of a member of the opposition. One day members on the other side may learn from those speeches.

Are we getting value for money from the Minister for Transport having the largest ministerial office, second only to the Premier in terms of staff? Are the important issues in the areas of transport and disability services that need to be dealt with across the state of Western Australia being dealt with by this minister?

Hon Simon O'Brien: You tell me. I'm sure it will be unbiased.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I like to think so.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Your voice cracked when you said that.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I like to think that I give the minister constructive criticism all the time. He knows that I am more than happy to take up issues. Sometimes I am frustrated by the speed with which he responds. I take them up with the minister's office directly; I do not necessarily take them up in the media. I take up the issues that are brought to me as the shadow minister to the minister's office.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Do you get good service from my office? Do you get prompt service?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I get good service from the minister's staff. Sometimes their ability to get back to me with a decision from the minister seems to take longer than I would have hoped and the issues do not get addressed as quickly as I think they should.

Hon Simon O'Brien: My predecessor had an appalling record. Quite often basic inquiries made by me as the opposition spokesperson were left for six or seven months. You have never been treated with that discourtesy.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: There are some areas where it has been pretty close to that.

Hon Simon O'Brien: I don't believe that's true. I think that's a falsehood that you're putting up to the house.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: It is not. It depends on whether the minister is talking about the substance to the inquiry or whether I get a response. Sometimes I accept that I have gone to the minister and he said he will arrange for something to happen and it has not happened and I have had to chase up his office myself. At other times I have raised issues with his staff. Maybe the minister believes that the IM240 vehicle emissions testing was resolved in a reasonable time frame, but it took a considerable amount of time to get that issue resolved. I am still not even sure that it has been resolved. I have not been given an update on where it is up to. I have not heard back from the industry players, so I am assuming that it has been resolved.

Hon Michael Mischin: Maybe he needs more staff.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: He has the highest number of staff. If he had the highest number of staff, I would have thought he would have been able to give Rolls Royce service. The review of the Perth bicycle network has now been completed for some two years. Where is it? It is sitting on the minister's desk. Have the 34 recommendations of the Wilson Parking report that we talked about in the house yesterday been brought in? When the minister tabled the report in December 2008, he said it was going to be a priority. He was going to proclaim the legislation that had been languishing for less than six months as a matter of priority. Has that been done?

Hon Simon O'Brien: You're misleading the house, as you did last night in my absence.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I am not misleading the house.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Isn't it good that I get to stand and make a response?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The way it is going, it will take another two hours for this speech to finish. This is a fairly broad motion in a sense but we are talking about staffing in ministerial offices in relation to other staff cuts in the public sector. I remind members that that is the thrust of the motion.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Thank you, Mr President. That is what I think this debate should be about. The questions are: how many staff, and are the ministers using those staff productively? The Premier gave a commitment that the government would cap ministerial staff numbers. I would have thought that if he has allowed those numbers to grow we would see some good outcomes. We have asked about the Perth bicycle network review, which I understand has been completed for some considerable time and no-one has seen it. Despite all the extra staff in his office, he cannot produce anything.

We can talk about the 34 recommendations of the report on Wilson Parking that the minister said in December 2008 would be an absolute priority. The number one recommendation from that was that he would proclaim a bill that had been passed. Almost two years on, despite all the extra staff —

Hon Simon O'Brien: You know very well why it can't be proclaimed. If you don't know why, ask the person who usually sits next to you or the person sitting behind you; they can tell you. If you are too dopey to work it out for yourself —

Hon KEN TRAVERS: The minister can tell me very quickly by way of interjection.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Your dopey former Premier decided he would call an early election, thereby leaving these bills up in the air, rather than coming back and finishing them off—bills for which this house sat for an extra week to make sure were finished in August 2008. He could not wait for those bills to be finished. That is why the parcel of bills managed by Hon Adele Farina were unable to be proclaimed.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: That would explain why they were not able to be proclaimed maybe by December 2008. I rest my case. The minister has just admitted that the bill has been passed since August 2008. That does not preclude it from being proclaimed.

Hon Simon O'Brien: It is because two other bills disappeared into the ether with the early calling of an election.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Has the minister reintroduced them?

Hon Simon O'Brien: We will be reintroducing them once we have fixed them up.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I think this is straying a little from staffing matters, which is the central focus of this debate.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Thank you Mr President. The point I am making is that, after the Premier, the Minister for Transport has the most staff of any minister. The Minister for Transport; Disability Services has twice the number of staff that the Premier said prior to the last election would be the cap on ministerial staff. The point I am making to the house is that even though the Premier has broken that promise, we can expect it to result in a better outcome for the state of Western Australia. If the Premier has gone beyond the staffing cap set in those promises we can expect to see something produced by the offices of the ministers whose staff numbers are above the Premier's staffing cap, the subject of the motion Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich moved. However, two years later, as the minister has just admitted, he has not even introduced the bills into this house—bills he said at that time would be a priority.

There is a range of issues, and the Fremantle optimum ports task force is one of them. The community of Western Australia would not mind this minister breaching his staffing cap if it meant people were getting answers to their questions on the government's plans for Fremantle port. Even I would probably be prepared to accept the minister's breaching his election commitment if he needed these additional staff to produce something for the people of Western Australia. But we are not seeing it. That is why people are upset about this minister's record number of staff of any —

Hon Simon O'Brien: Who's upset about it?

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Everyone.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Nobody—you are.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I can assure the minister that all the government workers who are being offered low pay increases by his government whilst it is slamming them with increases in fees and charges are very upset that people like him pad out their ministerial offices with political appointees and do not produce anything from them. Government workers do not see any benefits; they see their pay going down in real terms and household fees and charges going up while the minister surrounds himself with an entourage of people in his ministerial office. They do not see any benefit in the work that should be coming out of his ministerial office.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: What do those people do?

Hon Simon O'Brien: I'll stand up and tell you in a minute.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: With all these additional ministerial staff we would have thought that the minister could resolve the problems he has with the Treasurer so he could table his statements of corporate intent for the port authorities of Western Australia.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Like my predecessor never did.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: The minister's predecessor got them in late, but she did get them in.

Hon Sue Ellery: At some point you will realise you are in government and have to do something.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Absolutely.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: The former minister and the government as a whole put in place mechanisms to make sure that the statements of corporate intent were tabled. Two years into this term of government, this minister has not tabled statements of corporate intent for a number of his port authorities.

Hon Simon O'Brien: You had to stop and correct yourself then, didn't you?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: He has tabled a couple. The tabling of the two statements of corporate intent last year might explain one of the extra staff over and above the cap.

Hon Simon O'Brien: You should understand that all the work associated with that is done at a departmental level. But then you haven't been a minister—you refused to be—so you wouldn't know.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: All the more reason to ask why the minister needs all these staff. Why is the minister unable to live within the staffing cap? If all the work on the statements of corporate intent is not done in his ministerial office but at the departmental level, why does he need all these staff?

Hon Simon O'Brien: It's not to do the statements of corporate intent, I can assure him.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I hope that when I sit down, he takes the call and explains to the house why it has taken two years to even introduce the legislation he says is necessary to proclaim the legislation that deals with the Wilson Parking issue. I hope he explains why some two years has passed and the Perth bicycle network review has not been tabled. I saw one of the most amazing press releases from a minister for a long time about farm vehicles and machinery transport reform saying, "I'm getting on to it." It did not say that he had concluded it or fixed it up; it said that he is getting on to it. With 17 staff he should have got onto it last week or the week before. He should have done it over the past two years. What have we seen come out of this minister's office in the past two years? There has been lots of talk, but very little is being delivered on the ground. He has opened a few projects around the state and taken an entourage of staff to the openings of those projects, most of which were commenced by the former Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. Where is the taxi reform that the minister promised and campaigned on long and hard before the last election? Have we seen that come out of this minister's office even though he has more staff than any other minister in the government—double the cap that the Premier promised each ministerial officer would have?

We got an interesting answer from the minister yesterday on the grain rail network when he finally admitted that the government is pursuing the Brookton strategy, despite having denied it for so long. Yesterday his answer confirmed what we all knew—that the government is progressing the Brookton strategy whereby grain will be carted by road, but he does not even have a plan in place to fix the roads before the grain goes onto them. Despite all his additional staff over and above the cap, he has failed to deliver for the people of Western Australia. This minister has two portfolios. I think every minister in this government has a number of portfolios. The Minister for Training and Workforce Development; Energy has two portfolios, the Minister for Child Protection has three or four portfolios.

I have touched upon some of the areas in which people are asking what is happening with this minister. I will point out to industry players when I see them from now on that this minister has the largest staff component of any ministerial officer, so we should be expecting Rolls Royce service from this minister. This minister should be able to produce over and above what any other minister in this government is producing. In fact, with 17 staff, this minister should be not far behind the Premier in production and output of issues within his portfolios, of which there are many.

I have been talking about the transport portfolio. I turn now to the disability services portfolio. I am a former shadow Minister for Disability Services. I hear things around the traps from time to time. I suspect—I do not know whether the current shadow minister would concur with this—that if I went up to some of the people in the disability services sector and asked them who the Minister for Disability Services is, they would struggle to tell me!

Hon Sue Ellery: They know. They just are not very happy about it.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Oh! So they know who they should be seeing. But would they be able to recognise him, I wonder?

Hon Sue Ellery: That is the issue. They do not see him.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: So they know who he is by name. But would they be able to recognise him?

Hon Simon O'Brien: You are on shaky ground with that one, Ken, I can tell you!

Several members interjected.

Hon Simon O'Brien: You are on very shaky ground, talking about disability services.

Hon Sue Ellery: Not at all!

Hon Simon O'Brien: You will see.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Feel free.

Maybe with all these extra staff, one of the things that the minister could have them do is coordinate his diary. I know the disability services area. There are a lot of key groups and peak bodies in the disability services area that would like to meet with the minister. That is time consuming. But it is an important part of being the Minister for Disability Services. So maybe one of the reasons that the Minister for Disability Services would break the cap that the Premier has put in place is so that he could employ additional staff to manage his diary so that he could meet with all of the different groups within this sector.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Get off the grass! Additional staff to manage a diary! Come off it!

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I do not know why the minister has got those staff. I am trying to help the minister. We know that it is not to help the minister to manage his diary. We know that is not the case, because the minister does not meet with the representatives from the disability services sector, does he? The minister does not have

regular meetings. Most of the ministers who have gone before this minister in the disability services sector have had those meetings. As a former shadow Minister for Disability Services, I know that the disability services sector used to meet regularly with Hon Paul Omodei when he was the Minister for Disability Services. Disability services has always been treated in a bipartisan way, and there have always been regular meetings between the minister and the different representatives of the sector to enable them to keep in touch. That could explain why the minister would have all these additional staff. But this minister is not doing that. In fact, it would be interesting to see how many staff Hon Paul Omodei had when he was the Minister for Disability Services, because he certainly used to meet regularly with the sector.

It is interesting to look at the number of staff across the portfolios of all the ministers in this house. I hope that during the course of this debate, all of the ministers in this house will get up and explain to us the situation with their staff. Hon Peter Collier has 13 staff. That is certainly above the cap of 8.8 staff. Maybe Hon Peter Collier can explain to us what he is doing with all the staff that he has in his office. The Leader of the House—a frugal man—gets by with 10 staff. That does not surprise me about Hon Norman Moore. He is the sort of bloke who will get on with it and get the job done. He will not surround himself with minions and entourages, but he will get on with it and do the job, even though he does not know what is contained in state agreement acts —

Hon Norman Moore: What? One clause of them!

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Yes, one clause. When we get to the Roy Hill legislation, we will be able to test whether the minister read that bill before it went through cabinet, because a similar clause is contained in that legislation.

I have to congratulate Hon Robyn McSweeney, because, according to these figures, she has one of the toughest jobs. She is getting issues raised with her regularly by the community, and she is getting by with eight staff.

Hon Linda Savage: That's because she is a woman!

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Very good comment!

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Why do I feel that I am not going to win on this side with that argument! I agree! Maybe if I were sitting on the other side at the moment I would have a bit of support, but I think the women's argument is winning on this side of the chamber very clearly at the moment. So Hon Robyn McSweeney deserves to be congratulated, because she is dealing with some tough portfolios, and with some tough issues. We might have our arguments about whether she is getting it right or wrong, and that is a fair debate to have. But she is doing it within the staffing limits. I am sure Hon Robyn McSweeney can justify each and every one of her staff and what they do. But I hope that the Minister for Transport; Disability Services will get up and explain why he has more than double the number of staff of Hon Robyn McSweeney yet is producing, I would argue, less than what Hon Robyn McSweeney is producing in her portfolio areas.

Hon Robyn McSweeney: The Minister for Disability Services is very productive!

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: But not at work; he may be somewhere else, but not at work!

Several members interjected.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Please, Mr President, call them to order!

The PRESIDENT: Order, members! It is not happy hour.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Hon Donna Faragher has 12 staff. That is not a bad effort. Again, I suspect that some of the stakeholders in the environment portfolio would appreciate it if the minister would make sure that they could make appointments to meet with her and discuss issues —

Hon Donna Faragher: What are you implying—that I do not meet with people? Is that what you are saying?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: That is the feedback that I get from the environment portfolio. They would like to have a little more access to the minister than they have had up until now.

Hon Donna Faragher: Well, the information that you are receiving is clearly wrong.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Let us have a debate with one person speaking at a time, and the opportunity for other members to respond at various points.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Hon Norman Moore is the Leader of the House. I do not know whether the staff who are used to help Hon Norman Moore in his role as Leader of the House are included in the 10 staff in his office.

Hon Norman Moore: There are actually nine staff.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: So the tenth staff member is probably the one who Hon Norman Moore gets to help him to manage the house.

Hon Norman Moore: That is the ninth staff member. The figures that you have got are out of date, by the way. They are.

Hon Simon O'Brien: He's just making it up, anyway! Don't worry about it!

Hon Norman Moore: The figures that you have got are out of date.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I am basing this on Department of the Premier and Cabinet figures.

Hon Norman Moore: Those figures were produced a long time ago.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: My figures are based on what it projected the Leader of the House would have this year, and on what he had last year; and, as I said earlier, on what he had as at 24 June 2010.

There may well have been changes. I am saying that Hon Norman Moore is doing well. He has 10 staff. His deputy leader has 17 staff. The Minister for Training and Workforce Development is up there with 13 staff. We then drop to eight staff for the Minister for Child Protection. Well done, Minister for Child Protection! That is a great effort! We then go back up to 12 for the Minister for Environment. Is the Minister for Transport; Disability Services producing twice the level of efficiency, twice the output or twice the responsiveness, compared with the other ministerial offices, or twice the intellectual capability to deal with the issues that he is facing, by having all those additional staff? No. In fact, *The West Australian* made its view very clear about how it rates the ministers opposite. Maybe the way in which the ministers opposite were rated by *The West Australian* is in inverse proportion to the number of staff that they have. Hon Robyn McSweeney was probably duded. She probably should have been rated higher than the Leader of the House. But maybe they factored in something for his extra responsibilities as Leader of the House.

Hon Norman Moore: I reckon it is rather amusing that you think that what Robert Taylor thinks about us is important! What I think is important is what your colleagues think about you!

Hon Sue Ellery: We hold him in very high regard!

Hon Norman Moore: I know, but never enough to be a minister!

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I never put my hand up for it, Hon Norman Moore.

Hon Norman Moore: Is that right? So they did actually recognise your talent, but you just did not make it available! You are the first person in history who did not want to be a minister!

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Let us get on with the debate, which is about ministerial office staffing.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I was trying to conclude by saying that members of this government went to the people at the last election promising they would put a cap on the number of ministerial staff. They broke that promise very quickly after coming into office. I congratulate Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich for drawing that to the attention of this house. They tried to score, like many of their election commitments. There are many areas in the portfolio of the Minister for Transport in which he has failed to honour the Liberal Party's election commitments. This is one area in which they broke an election commitment very quickly, and they exceeded the cap on ministerial staff. Sometimes upon getting into government there are reasons why what one had hoped to do is not always what one is able to do. But we would at least hope that when members opposite broke that cap, it would be for a good reason, and in the case of a ministerial office it was because a minister had so much work and was dealing with so many issues that he needed all those extra staff so he could produce better outcomes. There have been numerous broken promises, and I have only touched on a very small number of issues in the portfolio of the Minister for Transport and Minister for Disability Services.

We are now two years into the term of this government. We are up to the two-year anniversary of this government, and we are waiting to see where it is up to. I have used the most topical issue at the moment—the Wilson Parking dispute, which included 34 recommendations. The minister was going to deal with this as a priority. The minister was going to get on with it, but here we are, two years later, and the minister's excuse is that he needs to introduce legislation. This legislation was previously in the Parliament, but after two years the minister still has not introduced that legislation back into the Parliament. That was something that Hon Simon O'Brien considered a priority. With his 17 staff, the Minister for Transport could not deliver on that election promise. We have the Perth bicycle network, the Fremantle port optimum planning review, the statements of corporate intent from the port authorities, the lack of planning in road and rail infrastructure in Western Australia and we have a lack of any coordination about investment in port infrastructure across Western Australia. We have issues with the development commissions, such as the South West Development Commission, which recently called for the government to not just honour its \$25 million commitment to the Collie coalfields highway but to increase it to \$42 million. That is what that development commission said was needed. Did we see any action or reaction from this minister? Only when the minister is dragged kicking and screaming does he

put in \$14 million to get on and do at least a little bit on the Collie coalfields highway. And that was only because someone like the member for Collie is out there and knows how to campaign and to put pressure on a government. That is the only way in which things were being dealt with.

We have touched upon the minister's other portfolio of disability services. This government has broken its promise and needs to explain and justify why it broke its promise and what the people of Western Australia are getting as a result of this massive increase in staff, particularly in one minister's office. Because the other ministers have such a bad performer alongside them, they will probably get off the hook a bit. During this debate they will not be asked to explain quite to the same extent why they are above the cap, because in this house we have the minister who has the most number of staff after the Premier. The Minister for Transport has more staff than the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Health and Indigenous Affairs.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: You are kidding! More than education?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Yes, more staff than in education, more than in health and more than in Indigenous affairs. It might be acceptable if this was producing or delivering something for the people of Western Australia. However, these staff are obviously being used to put out press releases telling us that something might happen at some point in the future about farm vehicles and machinery transport reform. It is not that the minister has completed the final phase and we have the changes that need to be made; it is that they are working on it and they are going to get something done eventually. Maybe fewer of those press releases and more action might mean that the minister would not need as many staff. I do not know where these staff are being used. If they were being used to deliver something, I would be accepting of it, but they are not. The Minister for Transport, and this government in general, stand condemned for their lack of action and lack of commitment to their election promises, and then for expanding their ministerial offices and not producing anything as a result of that expansion.

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan — Minister for Transport) [2.44 pm]: Mr President, allow me, if I may, to make Hon Ken Travers' day by responding to his remarks. Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich has moved a motion that is typical of her and has so much in common with other motions that she has placed on the notice paper. The common aspects are, firstly, that notice was given on 18 March 2009. That shows that it is hardly a contemporaneous motion. It was just a case of putting something on the notice paper to have a bicker about in September 2010. Secondly, that the motion invites this house to condemn the Premier for various things. It is almost monotonous—indeed, there is a whingeing tone in the wording of this, which the honourable member, my good friend, needs to perhaps curtail because it sounds like the way she drones on and on forever in her irrelevance. However, not only the irrelevance is occasionally irksome; it is also the rampant hypocrisy of members opposite. Let me put into perspective, for the benefit of anyone who is interested, the comparisons between ministerial staffing levels of the Carpenter government as at 28 August 2008 and the Barnett government as at 24 June 2010. For example, I will outline the number of staff in my office that members opposite are very interested in. I am not sure why members opposite are saying that I have 17 staff, but I will tell them exactly what my staffing is. I will invite members opposite, if they wish, to tell me what I should not have.

The number of staff advisers I have is roughly commensurate with my areas of key agency responsibility. I have some major agencies in my portfolio, which I am sure members opposite would recognise. I have a chief of staff. Is there a suggestion that a minister should not have a chief of staff? Presumably not. I have four policy advisers. Again, given the areas of policy that I have responsibility for and the complexity and the scale of some of the agencies that I am required to take ministerial responsibility for, that is not excessive. I have an adviser for Main Roads. Should a Minister for Transport have an adviser for Main Roads? Of course, he should. Should a Minister for Transport have an adviser with responsibility for public transport and for railways? Yes, and I do. Should a Minister for Transport have an adviser with responsibility for ports, coastal infrastructure and boating, and a range of other departmental matters? Of course, he should. Should the Minister for Transport have an adviser for licensing and passenger business services? Of course, he should; and I have one, just as Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich would have had when she was responsible for that area as at 28 August 2008. I have those four policy advisers, who are all term-of-government appointees. I have an acting level 3 appointments officer. Again, that is quite reasonable, and I think all members opposite would accept it. I do not hear any views to the contrary. I have a person doing the job of executive officer and liaison officer. That person is juggling the two jobs together at the moment. Again, these are standard positions; an executive officer and a liaison officer. One person is doing both jobs at the moment. I have one media adviser; he is a very good media adviser. I also have two staff at level 2 for reception and general administration purposes. That is the eight TOGs and the two permanent departmental juniors in my office. I also have several placements in my office. In each case, agencies in my portfolio have seen fit to have an officer of theirs located in my office to assist in the interface between me and the activities of my agencies. Given the number of queries and that these are the sorts of agencies that generate high levels of inquiry and

correspondence, it is convenient for those agencies to physically have people located in my office. Those are the other five. That adds up to 15 people; so, yes, it is fair-sized office but it is not extraordinary.

Hon Ken Travers: What agencies have liaison officers with you?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: The placement staff from the Disability Services Commission, which is not unreasonable; one from Main Roads; two who collectively represent the Department of Transport and its various functions; and one from the Public Transport Authority. That is the extent. There are not 17 staff, as the honourable member would have us believe, unless we start to include people who are away on long-term maternity leave or whatever. If we contrast this with the Carpenter government ministerial office establishments as at 28 August 2008, it is a very different picture altogether. Hon Alannah MacTiernan had a staff of 21 —

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Come to order when whoever is in the chair calls order. That is the sign that everybody sits and takes stock.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: The central point, and this is what the motion is all about, is that my immediate predecessor had 21 staff in the same office that I now occupy. Her responsibilities, though, were slightly different from mine in a couple of ways. There were some responsibilities that she had that I do not have. Admittedly, there was the mega-department called planning and infrastructure, which was something of a failure and we have now done away with. Nonetheless, there were some functions that have been hived off that were hers. Similarly, there was a massive amount of work that was not hers in that portfolio because she had a Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. Who was that? It was fabulous, the unbelievable, the fantastic Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich! Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich had at that time in her ministerial office, doing a bit of a job that I now do and a few other odds and sods—goodness me—16 staff. This does not seem right. Let me get this right. Hon Alannah MacTiernan had 21 staff and our colleague Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich had 16 staff—that is, 37 staff—and I have 15, including a third of those that are departmental placements, not because we have gone out and said that we would break a cap and get some extra staff in. They are people there at the convenience of the heads of my agencies. Is that not interesting?

Hon Ken Travers: Did they ask to put them in your office?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Absolutely; they offered. I thought it was a good idea. There is however one very important agency that, incredibly, Hon Alannah MacTiernan and Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich did not have control of but which I do have control of. I say “incredibly” because just about everybody else in the Labor Party has been Minister for Disability Services at some stage. We had better mention that.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: You have to do something as it.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: The member has never been Minister for Disability Services. I must mention the Disability Services Commission. I am very proud of what we have achieved and are achieving in disabilities. I know that the President does not want me to stray off the subject matter, so I will only do it a little bit today. As we approach the second anniversary of this government, which is occurring earlier than we might have expected it to, I would advise the honourable member and his colleague Hon Adele Farina, who is following this debate closely, that we had better do a bit of a stocktake of what we have achieved, just so that we do not have this silly, childish, stupid exchange by way of interjection saying that we have done this or have not done that and, yes, we have and, no, we have not. I think we need to get together, for the benefit of Hon Ken Travers and Hon Adele Farina and others, a list of what actually has been done in these various portfolio areas.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Do not take advantage of the fact that I was momentarily distracted.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Some unruly interjections are obviously hard to ignore.

The Disability Services Commission is a very well functioning agency. I have a very good relationship with not only that agency but also the wider disability sector. It is one that I am very proud to have. One of the regrets one has being a minister is that one has different constraints on one's time than one might have had as an opposition spokesperson. I spent a very great deal of time over a number of years with the disability sector when I was in opposition. One soon finds out in a ministerial role that one does not have all the time that one was once able to invest in opposition activities. Nonetheless, there are definitely ways in which one can participate in a far more meaningful way by actually delivering the outcomes that are required. I do brief the sector on a regular basis; indeed, I have been making arrangements in recent months to meet with certain peak organisations more frequently than I have been able to in the first rushed year or two of government activity. Nonetheless, I absolutely reject any notion, which the honourable member is trying to suggest, that I do not have a close and productive relationship with the disability sector. The record of what we have achieved in government already is

there to be seen and cannot be denied. It is plainly silly for the honourable member to assert anything to the contrary.

Hon Ken Travers: Tell us what those things are. You have got 30 minutes.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Members opposite will have a couple of opportunities.

Hon Ken Travers: You cannot remember them.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: You cannot even name one.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Hang on! Members opposite are sometimes like a mob of schoolkids. I was going to say that members are free to come along, as I understand it, this Friday morning, as they are all so interested, to the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations where I will be present with the Disability Services Commission to be examined. We will see how many members are interested enough to turn up. If they want by way of example the sort of thing that I am very proud of, it is a concept that I think has made a significant identifiable difference to the quality of people's lives, and that is our program for alternatives to employment. It was brought on stream in 2009 and again in 2010. Every child with significant disability support needs who has left school and is unable to pursue an employment option has had a massively increased allocation of post-school option funding made available forever as a matter of course.

Prior to this government coming in, clients of the Disability Services Commission with very high care needs, and in many cases many complex levels of multiple disability, all finished school whether it was in the compulsory school years regime. Once the child had finished school, many families suddenly found they had an 18-year-old adult to provide full-time care at home for because that child or young adult did not have the ability to access an employment option. The availability of respite, which is sometimes known as post-school options or alternatives to employment, might amount to a couple of hours a week of respite activities, or activities that in turn provided respite for parents and family members. Our program has delivered a package for each of those school leavers that provides respite, in round terms—it can vary a little from case to case—instead of a couple of hours a week, four days a week. That makes a very big difference to a family that might otherwise slip into a situation of requiring urgent and critical need, as Hon Ken Travers understands well. In turn, not only is that family's quality of life enhanced but also they do not move into a crisis situation and therefore avoid some of the consequences of that such as divorce and worse. Plus, if families in those situations are no longer entering a situation of urgent and critical need, as others have in the past, we can then use the massively increased dollars this government has made available to start tackling the backload of urgent and critical need cases. That is how a very positive, a very definite and a very measurable improvement is made, and value added to the quality of life of people who otherwise are very vulnerable through being afflicted with disability. I refer to not only individuals with disabilities but also their families and their extended circle. That is one example that Hon Ken Travers demanded of how we have done something good.

Hon Ken Travers: I think Hon Nick Goiran wanted three; three on this, three on transport, three on —

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: We can do that. But I will do better than that—we will give members opposite a summary. It is relevant for members to review these things.

Hon Ken Travers: Tell us now!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Hang on; I will provide some more information. I know the President perceives I am trying to bring my remarks to a close fairly soon, but members opposite are demanding that I keep going.

Hon Ken Travers: Three things the minister has done for the PTA, three for transport, three for Main Roads and three for disability services.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I will provide more examples if Hon Ken Travers wishes.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Let's get on with it.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Before I do that, there will be a lot more than three examples. Members opposite will have the opportunity, even today, to look at some things about taxis under a later item on the agenda paper. I will give members a list of things we have done there.

Hon Ken Travers: Tell us now!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Let us return to the matters raised by members opposite. We have seen what a furphy it is to say that the numbers in, say, my ministerial office are greatly inflated beyond what is reasonable or required. It compares dramatically with other members who had 21 and 16 staff members, the vast majority of whom of course were term-of-government or political appointments. That is without going to the area of

disability staff because neither of those two former Labor ministers that I was referring to had responsibility for that portfolio. That is not to say that a hell of a lot —

Hon Ken Travers: How many of the minister's eight staff through the department—not the liaison officers—are term of government?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I believe it would be six or seven.

Hon Ken Travers: How many are members of your political party?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Why? Was it compulsory to be a member of the Labor Party to get a guernsey?

Hon Ken Travers: You made the allegation; now defend yourself!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Mr Deputy President, I am trying to deal with the motion before the Chair.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm): Nothing much has changed since I took over, by the way, minister. Rest assured you have my complete and undivided attention.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: We are trying to get down to this question of Labor disability ministers. It is true that Hon Ken Travers, and I think by interjection Hon Sue Ellery, noted that generally there has been a bipartisan spirit of approach to disability issues. There has certainly been a responsible level of monitoring of issues by respective oppositions over the years, but generally a bipartisan approach to initiatives has been taken. I was a little disappointed by the tone of some of the comments that came through. I cannot imagine there is anybody in the sector, or in this place, who seriously thinks that I do not have a high level of commitment and a growing track record in that portfolio.

To return to the motion, if we contrast that with how many staff the Carpenter government had in the disability minister's office, I do not know where to start! There was something of a record number of disability ministers during the Carpenter government. I think it was about six or seven by turn; some of them had a few goes. I remember Mark McGowan did it for about a month. John D'Orazio was meant to be doing it. There was an incident whereby former Minister D'Orazio found himself the centre of a public storm. He had to be publicly demoted by Premier Carpenter. He was going to be punished and demoted by being put in charge of disability services! Hon Ken Travers might have tried to block that from his memory, but if there was one insult, one item of neglect, one item of contempt that was ever delivered by a government to the disability sector in this state, it was that. It still rankles with the whole sector to this day. It is made more offensive by the fact that in his time Hon Alan Carpenter had been an opposition spokesperson for disability services. He should have had a little more sensitivity than that. We had this ridiculous situation in which we had a turnaround of disability ministers. They must have almost had a turnstile at Government House because they were changing every month or so! In contrast, we have delivered stability, achievement and progress, historically and currently, in that sector. It is something that members opposite cannot ignore, even though they may prefer to do otherwise.

I do not want to be too unkind but the honourable member appears to think that if a minister has certain staff numbers, then that should equal a particular type of output and that I would be able to have more meetings. I have plenty of meetings, both in and out of my office, but the honourable member says that I would be able to have more meetings if I had more staff. I do not know how that is meant to work because there is only one of me. My diary is very well managed by my chief executive officer and my appointments officer, and we juggle a very significant workload. I do not have the number of staff that Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich had when she was a minister. I certainly do not have the number of staff that Hon Alannah MacTiernan had.

Hon Adele Farina interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Despite the protestations to the contrary, we have been able to generate any number of productive outcomes in government, which I think reflect very well on this government, particularly as we are juggling the economic situation that we inherited which has caused us to trim the total government cloth according to the means that are available. That is just something that confronts governments during times of economic and revenue contraction. If members opposite want to put responsibility on me for the deferral of a project because of Treasury requirements, it just shows that they have no understanding at all of what ministerial responsibility carries with it.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich ought to know, but perhaps she did not learn anything during her time as a minister. She had a few different portfolios, although she never quite got the disability services portfolio, I am glad to say. Perhaps the lack of experience of Hon Ken Travers in that area is betrayed by his lack of understanding of what actually does go on in a ministerial office from day to day.

However, members opposite want to know what is happening in the Public Transport Authority and want me to mention three things that we have done. We are getting on with a proper railway extension to Butler.

Hon Ken Travers: You've deferred it by three years.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Hang on! That is the sort of thing oppositions say. Hon Ken Travers's government delayed a railway to Mandurah by three years.

Hon Ken Travers: We built the railway to Mandurah. You never built it and you were going to do the Kenwick deviation that's now completely discredited.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: It is not completely discredited but that is a debate —

Hon Ken Travers: What; you still think it should go through Kenwick to come to Perth?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: That is a debate that has been had and was decided years ago. Hon Ken Travers fails to recognise that the southern rail project actually started as a means of servicing residents in the south-east metropolitan districts of Gosnells and Canning, until another government came and decided to change the route, which it was entitled to do. It is important that the member does not confuse apples with oranges.

The fact of the matter is that just in June we put through our enabling bill to build the railway to Butler, which is funded to the tune of \$240 million. That was not the case when we came to government. Shortly I look forward to announcing progress and to the awarding of bus contracts to secure the future for bus procurement in Western Australia after my predecessor in the former Court government, Hon Murray Criddle, laid the path for a local bus manufacturing industry which will provide all the buses used by the PTA in Perth.

Hon Ken Travers: How many additional buses over and above the replacements are you going to buy?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Hon Ken Travers will find that there are plenty of buses.

Hon Ken Travers: Not one! You are continuing a bus contract.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: It is not continuing; it is starting a whole new one. We will not restrict the availability of buses by some artificial means of trying to cost save like my predecessor did by relying entirely on one fuel source. We will employ new technologies. We will give Perth a public transport network plan, which we never had under the previous government, which just spent money according to what —

Hon Adele Farina: When?

Hon Ken Travers: When?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I am not going to give members opposite a date right now.

Hon Ken Travers: Ha, ha! A couple of weeks ago you said it would be in three weeks. Now you can't tell us.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: No. It is the priority of government to produce that—something members opposite never ever produced.

Someone the other day came along to the committee of which Hon Ken Travers is a member and tried to talk about consultations for bus services in Ellenbrook going back to 2006. That is when there were consultations carried out by a Labor government. Guess what? It then never delivered. Now we are delivering those services that are needed from next month.

Hon Ken Travers: We were going to build them a railway line.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Perhaps a future Labor government —

Hon Ken Travers: Something you promised and then broke.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: No, we have not broken any promises.

Hon Ken Travers: Yes, you have.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: We have not broken any promises.

Hon Ken Travers: You said you would start construction in this term of government and you're not going to do it.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: You broke your promise.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Dear, oh dear! They do get upset, do they not?

Hon Ken Travers: Are you saying you didn't promise to start construction in this term of office?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Mr Deputy President —

Hon Ken Travers: Go on, mislead the house. Did you promise you would start construction in this term of office?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm): Order!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I have made many statements to the house, as has the Premier about the progress we are making.

Hon Ken Travers: Are you going to start construction in this term of office?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: There is money in the budget and the forward estimates, as the member knows —

Hon Ken Travers: To start construction?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: What does the member mean by “start construction”?

Hon Ken Travers: The minister should get the silver shovel out and turn the first sod. Just do that for us at least.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Quite clearly there will be no silver shovels out. This comment is from the former government that relied on putting up signs, banging in star pickets and saying, “We are delivering projects.”

Hon Ken Travers: Will you spend \$73 million on the Ellenbrook railway during this term of government?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: We do not have \$73 million allocated.

Hon Ken Travers: That's what you promised you'd do.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: What was it?

Hon Ken Travers: Look at your election costings—\$73 million.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Was it \$73 million? I think Hon Ken Travers is wrong, but no doubt he can check and he can apologise when he satisfies himself that he got it wrong.

Not much of substance was advanced by the mover of the motion or the subsequent speaker on the question of staff numbers in ministerial offices. It has already been recorded that the Carpenter government as at 28 August 2008 had about 192 full-time equivalent staff members who were political appointments; whereas we have 157 staff members, not including —

Hon Ken Travers: Minister, will you allow me to apologise?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: No, I do not require that. Hon Ken Travers can make a statement during the adjournment debate or something. I do not want his apologies.

Hon Ken Travers: No. Minister, will you spend \$53 million on the Ellenbrook railway? I apologise; it was only \$53 million. Will you spend \$53 million on the Ellenbrook railway?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: So, Hon Ken Travers is only \$20 million out!

Hon Ken Travers: Will you spend \$53 million?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Mr Deputy President, I know that you do not want me to encourage unruly interjection by responding to it, but I do accept Hon Ken Travers' apology for getting that figure wrong by \$20 million, which he so very glibly made, and for his unwillingness to acknowledge how up-front the Premier was in noting that a portion of funding for those works had been pushed out in the forward estimates. That is something that members opposite attacked us for during a previous budget debate, but it is recognition of the reality.

However, we have established the hypocrisy and the basic error—whether it be a \$20 million error or some other type of error—in the premise of this motion, which states that if I have 15 staff, including five who are just there as placements and two who are juniors from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, then I have somehow got a surfeit of what is required to do my job. I have demonstrated what the requirement is. When we contrast it with the 21 staff that Alannah MacTiernan had and the 16 staff for her minister assisting—that is, a total of 37—and the sundry staff that must have been in the disability minister's office in the previous government, because it sure as heck went through them all, we can see what a silly motion this is. However, I will give a clear undertaking that my staff and I will continue to work hard, as will all my ministerial colleagues, to deliver the quality outcomes that we are delivering, because the staff that I have in my office are very good indeed and I want to place that on the record. I think their work is appreciated by the industry and the agency people they interact with. They are very good staff and I value the contribution that each and every one of them makes. They are regular people. They have a range of qualifications. They are all well motivated. They also come cheaper than some of the types that the Labor Party takes on. The last time Sharryn Jackson was booted out of Hasluck, she was given a job paying \$200 000 a year.

Hon Ken Travers: It wasn't that much, minister.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: How much was it?

Hon Ken Travers: You'll need to come back and apologise to the house. When you're at it, can you tell us what Brian Pontifex and the other bloke in the Premier's office are getting paid?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: That is probably a good point to finish on. I have just pulled a round figure out of the air. If Hon Ken Travers can come back into the house —

Hon Ken Travers: I came back and apologised. You can do the same.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Hon Ken Travers said he thought I was wrong in saying that it was costing \$200 000 to employ Sharryn Jackson between stints as member for Hasluck when the former Carpenter government created a job to keep her going. If I have that figure wrong and it was some other amount, I ask Hon Ken Travers to please come into the house and tell us how much she was paid. Actually, I think she was state president of the ALP. How much did the Labor Party pay its state president? We certainly have not done that. I do not have Barry Court on my staff. Does the Leader of the House have Barry Court on his staff? Maybe there are still some bitter voices in the Labor Party. Maybe there are some other failed state presidents who are a bit jealous that they never got a decent job. Clearly, the foundations of this motion are very weak and it does not deserve the support of the house.

HON LJILJANNA RAVLICH (East Metropolitan) [3.22 pm] — in reply: The Minister for Transport may well think that breaking election promises and having a motion before this place to discuss the breaking of election promises is silly and that I am a very silly member who has presented a silly motion to this place. This is a motion of substance. It has been well crafted, based on fact, given great consideration and at the time clearly showed foresight. I am just amazed at what we heard from the minister. How can he justify having the greatest number of ministerial staff, which is way over the cap limit promised by the Premier during the election campaign? The Minister for Transport was asked by Hon Ken Travers what he has achieved as a result of having considerably more staff than any other minister. He was asked to list three things that he has achieved in his two portfolio areas but he could name only one thing. That just goes to show that this minister is certainly not across his brief. He is out of touch with community expectation and what the community expects to get for the expenditure of public moneys.

I have only a limited amount of time to wrap up. This motion was placed on the notice paper on 18 March 2009 as a result of an election commitment. The Premier made it quite clear in correspondence to ministers that the staffing cap across all ministerial portfolios would be set at 150. Quite frankly, I do not care whether each ministerial office has 8.8 staff. Members opposite are trying to be cute. The Premier promised a total of 150 staff across all ministerial offices. How they are spread is a matter for the Premier and the ministers. It has been clearly demonstrated that the projected FTE for 2010–11 is 172.2. On top of that, 43.6 FTEs have been seconded from respective departments. These are people taken out of the departments away from their usual work and put into ministers' offices to undertake the work of political parties. This is a representation of resources being taken out of front-line servicing, where they are needed most, and put into ministers' offices. By any measure, 215 FTEs in ministers' offices is a long way from the staffing cap imposed by the Premier. Why would the Premier go to the people of this state and differentiate himself from previous Premiers, make a song and dance about it, give them a commitment that this was a demonstration of him being more careful with taxpayers' dollars and put on the public record that as a demonstration of the extent to which he will be more careful with taxpayers' dollars he will have a total of only 150 ministerial staff? We are 65 over that number.

Hon Norman Moore: Which figures are you quoting from?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I am quoting from figures that were provided to the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations on Friday, 16 July 2010. I can seek leave to have this document tabled and incorporated into *Hansard*. It clearly demonstrates the budget FTE for 2009–10, the average FTE for 2009–10 and the projected FTE for 2010–11 for each ministerial office. This government plays funny games with figures. If the Leader of the House is telling me that these figures are rubbery and the information provided to the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, of which both Hon Ken Travers and I are members, is rubbery, he has some explaining to do. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet may want to clarify these figures. I seek leave to table this document and have it incorporated into *Hansard* for the public record.

Hon Norman Moore: You cannot incorporate it into *Hansard*. You can table it.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm): Is the member seeking leave to table the document?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Yes, I seek leave to table the document.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Is leave granted?

Hon Norman Moore: Yes.

Hon Liz Behjat: No.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: There was a dissenting voice.

[Leave denied.]

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: The information is publicly available in the records of the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations' ongoing estimates hearings. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet hearings were held on Friday, 16 July 2010. What really sums up the attitude of this government is in *Hansard* of 18 August when Hon Norman Moore made the following comments —

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich made the point that somehow or other breaking the promise of capping staff at 150 FTEs in ministerial offices is a very significant broken promise and a matter that would resound among the community. I suspect if we did a survey of the community and asked how many people had actually heard of this so-called election commitment, we would not get more than one per cent.

What the Leader of the House is really saying here is that it is okay to break a promise because it is not a significant promise.

Hon Norman Moore: I didn't say that at all; I said it was not a significant issue in the community.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: This is what he said. He said it was not a significant promise and, furthermore, that the community would not understand it; therefore, he can get away with it. That is exactly what he said and it is exactly what sums up the attitude of this government, so the Leader of the House should be ashamed of himself. He should be leading by example, not putting this sort of thing on the public record, because it does not reflect well on him. It does not reflect well on his party and it does not reflect well on the Premier.

Hon Norman Moore: You tried to make out it was the end of world war III and I explained it was not actually world war III at all.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: As far as I am concerned it is a broken promise. He broke it, it is his shame, and he tried to minimise the impact of that.

I put out a statement on 7 February 2009 because at that time it was becoming very apparent that the staffing cap was never going to be achieved and, clearly, there was no commitment to its achievement.

Hon Norman Moore: The actual savings were achieved, as I explained, which is what it was all about.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Let us get this clarified. The commitment was not about the savings; the commitment was about a cap of 150 staff in ministerial offices.

Hon Norman Moore: The reason for the commitment was to save money. We saved the money we said we would save.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I do not care what it was. If the Premier wanted to make a commitment to save money, he should have worded it in that way. In his correspondence to all his ministers, including the Leader of the House, that has been recorded in *Hansard*. The Premier should have said that it is the government's target to achieve X amount of savings as a result of cuts to ministerial offices, or something along those lines. Instead, he said that the government made a commitment during the election campaign to cap the number of staff in ministerial officers at 150 full-time equivalents.

Those were exactly his words. The Leader of the House can go on as much as he likes; he is way off the mark and he knows it. In making submissions on the appointment of staff in his ministerial office I ask that he be mindful of the commitment made by Premier Colin Barnett on 30 September 2008. It is not rocket science. There is no reference to any amount of money that needed to be saved and, interestingly enough, on 7 February 2009 there was a total of 195 FTEs. According to the projected FTE for 2010–11 there is a total of 250 FTE, made up of staff in ministerial offices and FTE who have been placed into ministers' offices from government agencies as at 24 June 2010.

I will conclude my remarks. I think we have yet another example of an arrogant government, another example of a broken promise and another example of this government and this Premier thumbing their noses at the Western Australian taxpayers and not giving any due consideration to its reflection on this government's integrity and to the use of taxpayers' dollars. As with previous issues I have brought to this house and these motions I put on the notice paper on 18 March 2009, I think the government and the Premier should be condemned for breaking this promise as they have broken other promises. If they want to make a promise, they should commit to delivering on that promise. To say that people do not understand and do not care and, in the scheme of things, it is not important, begs the question: if they do not think it is important why did they think it was important prior to the

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Hon Ken Travers; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich; Deputy President

election? Prior to the election it seemed to be very important and all of a sudden it carries no importance or significance at all. To me that spells hypocritical actions by a hypocritical government.

Question put and a division taken with the following result —

Ayes (11)

Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm
Hon Helen Bullock
Hon Robin Chapple

Hon Kate Doust
Hon Sue Ellery
Hon Adele Farina

Hon Lynn MacLaren
Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich
Hon Ken Travers

Hon Alison Xamon
Hon Ed Dermer (*Teller*)

Noes (17)

Hon Liz Behjat
Hon Jim Chown
Hon Peter Collier
Hon Mia Davies
Hon Brian Ellis

Hon Donna Faragher
Hon Philip Gardiner
Hon Nick Goiran
Hon Nigel Hallett
Hon Alyssa Hayden

Hon Col Holt
Hon Robyn McSweeney
Hon Michael Mischin
Hon Norman Moore
Hon Simon O'Brien

Hon Max Trenorden
Hon Ken Baston (*Teller*)

Pairs

Hon Linda Savage
Hon Jon Ford
Hon Sally Talbot

Hon Helen Morton
Hon Wendy Duncan
Hon Phil Edman

Question thus negatived.