INTEGRITY (LOBBYISTS) BILL 2011

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.10 pm]: As I was saying prior to the break, this is one of those bills that takes us further towards enhancing the democratic institutions of this place and of government in Western Australia in general. Government relations is a genuine activity of all corporations, be they in the business or the not-for-profit sector, and it is appropriate that we legislate to regulate that activity. But in some respects, this bill does not go far enough. We should go further than this and embrace the whole process of lobbying. I notice that the bill defines "lobbying" as "communicating with a government representative for the purpose of influencing state government decision making", yet it is not as simple as that. Lobbying is an ongoing dialogue. It may be around the issue of a specific decision, but it is a continuous process of communication with government. Therefore, from that perspective, it is appropriate that guidelines and regulations be put in place for lobbyists in the same way that guidelines and regulations have been put in place around the activity of the media who are assigned to Parliament House. The media undertake their activities in a particular manner. That activity is regulated by the Sergeant-at-Arms, I think, with the oversight of the Speaker and the President, and they in fact control the conduct of the media and the press gallery. The same situation should apply to lobbyists. That should include all lobbyists, not just consultant lobbyists, but also those who work within organisations or corporations and wish to interact within the precinct of Parliament with government decision making.

One of the things that I think has let us down in the period before this legislation, and, indeed, even before the guidelines that were released by the previous government, is the perverse situation whereby former members of Parliament can access all the facilities of Parliament House and can use that access to exercise their activities and interact with other members of Parliament. They are doing that not as a former member of Parliament—they are doing that in their professional capacity as a lobbyist—but they are exercising the privileges of a former member. I think that is entirely inappropriate and an abuse of their privileges as a former member of Parliament. It would be far better if all lobbyists were given access to Parliament House, because their activities could then be better regulated, and they could be excluded if their activities fell outside the expectations of their profession. That would also create a level playing field.

The other bugbear, of course, is that people undertake lobbying activities but do not call themselves lobbyists. They might call themselves an environmental consultant, or they might call themselves a lawyer or something of that nature.

Dr A.D. Buti: They wouldn't be so silly, would they!

Mr R.H. COOK: Yes—imagine calling yourself a lawyer!

They call themselves lawyers, and in doing so they seek to influence government decisions. They do not call themselves lobbyists, even though they are undertaking lobbying activities. It would be far better, I think, to acknowledge that government relations is a legitimate part of a public relations exercise by a company or organisation. Consultant government relations is also a legitimate part of government relations activity. Therefore, we would bring those activities inside the processes of Parliament and provide stringent regulations for those activities.

As I said before the break, I would have preferred to have had a greater level of self-regulation in the way in which people conduct themselves in relation to lobbying. Sadly, that did not take place, and, even more sadly, we now have to legislate to regulate these activities. It is, therefore, obviously appropriate that this legislation enjoys, certainly in principle, the support of both sides of Parliament.

This is important legislation because it acknowledges and reflects upon the fact that people wish to have strong dialogue with government. It acknowledges the fact that many companies undertake government relations as part of their core business and to achieve some competitive advantage. It acknowledges the fact that many companies cannot afford the privilege of having someone in-house to do this work, and they seek the services of a private consultant. If this legislation provides a better framework for the way in which these people should conduct themselves, that is to be commended. But I do not see why one group of people should be regulated in this manner, and a company that cannot afford to have someone do this work in-house is not subject to the same regulation. I believe they should all be subject to the same regulation. By providing better regulation through access to privileges, and, indeed, by explicit description of the way in which we expect these people to undertake their business, our democracy would be all the better.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr R.H. COOK: I now want to reflect on how this legislation differs from the previous regulations, and that is in respect to success fees. I think this is a very good part of the legislation. Success fees heavily distort the manner in which government relations practitioners go about their business, and, indeed, provide far too great an incentive for government relations practitioners to undertake their business in a risky manner. If businesses are serious about undertaking professional public relations, they should be prepared for that work to be conducted in a retainer or fee-for-service manner and not simply go out and seek lobbyists to undertake this work on a wing and a prayer. That is, therefore, an important part of this legislation.

Finally, I am pleased that this legislation will enjoy the support of both sides of this house. However, as I said earlier, although there is support in principle for the bill, there are a couple of amendments that we will be moving during consideration in detail. I look forward to further reflections on this bill and to see it put in place.

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Leader of the Opposition) [3.19 pm]: I note that I am the lead speaker for the opposition on the Integrity (Lobbyists) Bill 2012. The opposition is supportive of the bill and will be voting for it. We note that this was a commitment of the government early in its term and, broadly speaking, we think it will improve the situation that currently exists. But we also think that some amendments need to be made to this legislation to improve it, and those amendments have been sitting on the notice paper now for some months for the government to consider.

The history of lobbying goes back a very long time, and there are various descriptions of how the term "lobbying" came about. There are two historical examples of how the word "lobbying" might have come into existence. One refers to a United States President whose name now escapes me. His wife did not like him smoking inside the Willard Hotel, which is over the road from the White House, so he would go to the lobby of the hotel to smoke. When he was in the lobby, he was in a particularly receptive mood and was friendly towards people, so people would go to the lobby to seek his acceptance of their proposals of whatever nature they might have been. The term became "lobbying" because people would go to the lobby of the hotel to meet with the President of the United States to put their case about a certain issue. That has a certain charm to it, I suppose, as to how the phrase came about.

The other theory, which is more believable, involves the members of the House of Commons, who gather in the lobbies of the Commons—it is a commonly used term—prior to or perhaps even during divisions, given that there are so many members that they do not all fit in the house during a division. When members were in the lobbies of the House of Commons, people who had a case to present or a subject matter to discuss with a member of Parliament would go to the lobby to meet with that member of Parliament. Perhaps the term came about in that context. Of course, as members of Parliament people come to us all the time to present their case about an issue. Sometimes we are decision makers; sometimes we are not. Sometimes people hope that we can influence a decision maker; sometimes people just want to make sure that we are aware of their issue so that if, at some point in time, we are in a position of influence, we will have a degree of knowledge about the matter involved. Having been in government and in opposition, people seek us out regularly to raise their concerns and issues. Technically speaking, every time that happens they are lobbying us. In effect, people lobby members of Parliament every day about their concerns and issues. I attend a number of functions every day. People always talk to me about their issue. In fact, since becoming the Leader of the Opposition, I get lobbied virtually every time I walk down the street or exit my house. Sometimes I am lobbied about a specific issue; sometimes it is a broader issue, a policy issue or someone's views on a matter that might be current or historic. Lobbying is a constant subject that raises its head in political life. Of course, we cannot regulate lobbying in its entirety. We cannot regulate all incidents during which someone talks to a member of Parliament about an issue; it is an impossibility because it happens so regularly on a range of subject matters and is very pervasive. What we need to do is to be quite considered and specific in the areas that we try to regulate with legislation or government policy.

Some years ago—perhaps 2002 or 2003; I cannot remember—I went to the United States to lobby the United States government about undertaking ship repair work in Western Australia. I encouraged it to undertake further US naval visits to Western Australia for the obvious economic benefit that it would bring to the state. When I went to Washington, we met with the lobbyist who was going to take up Western Australia's case with some of the elected representatives in Washington. He was a former vice-admiral in the United States Navy. We sat with him for an hour or so and discussed Western Australia's case. He was familiar with WA. He was a gentleman in his 60s who had served in the navy for about 40 years. My recollection is that he told me that for every member of Congress—maybe 400 or 600 or so—there were 40 lobbyists in Washington. For every single politician there were 40 lobbyists! When that is multiplied out, which I have not done —

Ms M.M. Quirk: I heard there are 45.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Perhaps the number has increased since 2002. Such is the number of people lobbying elected members of the United States Congress on behalf of an interest that it is a massive industry—and that is

just in Washington. Members can imagine that lobbyists would be established in every one of the legislatures of the 50 state capitals of the United States. It is a massive industry. America's system of government seems to be much more prone to lobbying than does our system of government in Australia, certainly in my experience. The American system has various committees that operate inside Congress, which give individual members of Congress greater individual power than is the case in the Westminster system, in which most of the power—in fact, almost all the power—is concentrated in the executive. In this state we have 17 ministers; nationally, there are 30 or so, and that is where the power is concentrated. Alternatively, a United States congressman who sits on a congressional committee has power over the way money is spent. I heard a story the other day about how members of a certain committee had to decide whether a defence base in a particular state would be closed. They have a power of veto in those sorts of decisions. When that power is out there, obviously the lobbying of individual members of Congress who are not members of our version of the executive is incredibly important. Although they have a more diffused decision-making system than we do, that means that there is an expansion in the number of lobbyists and how they will operate in the United States, which means that there is far more of them. Indeed, the former vice-admiral in the United States Navy told me that most of his friends from the navy, who were senior military officers, all worked as lobbyists, because that is where they went after a service career. A great many former senior public servants and former elected members become engaged in this sort of business after they finish their term in government. It is a huge industry in the United States. I am advised that it is much more strictly regulated than the Australian system of lobbying.

From my reading of the history of lobbying in Australia, the regulation of lobbyists in Western Australia was advanced on other states. That commenced with the original passing of the Contact with Lobbyists Code in 2007, which was a government document that indicated that if anyone wanted to talk to a public servant—the onus was put on them—they had to be defined as a lobbyist and had to be on the lobbyist register. All lobbyists had to be on the register and they had a requirement to list their clients. Members can look on the Department of the Premier and Cabinet website to see the list of lobbyists that operate in Western Australia, many of which are national firms. The lobbyists provide a list of their individual clients as well. It is quite effective in some ways for working out who works for whom and who are the successful and the not-so-successful lobbyists. Businesses and non-profit associations need to use a lobbyist to get access to the Western Australian government.

I have periodically looked at the website and seen the client lists. Some lobbyists have upwards of 70 clients, which means that they must be very successful and make a large amount of money out of that business. They often charge large fees to their clients, so there is a very lucrative trade if someone is successful in the lobbying business. I suspect that a lot of people who think about engaging a lobbyist will go to that website to look at which lobbyists have more clients, and perhaps the fact that someone has a list of clients there is a way of actually getting more business. If someone is successful and they have large numbers of clients, they are more likely to attract more clients, because people assume that those lobbyists are more likely to achieve a positive outcome if they are engaged, as opposed to a registered lobbyist who does not have any clients or has very few clients. I suppose in some ways that an unintended consequence of a public register is to generate more business for the more successful lobbyists than for the less successful lobbyists, and concentrate lobbying activity in the hands of the few rather than the many. That would probably be the way that it would work.

This legislation formalises the code put in place back in 2007 by way of legislative instrument. That is a good thing; it gives it a little bit more authority and it adds a couple of extra rules to the way that it operates. One of the important ones is that it sets out a number of people who cannot be registered as lobbyists for 12 months after they cease a certain form of employment. Therefore, if someone is a member of the House of Representatives, a senator, a member of the Legislative Assembly or the Legislative Council, or a very senior public servant, there will now be a restriction of 12 months on that person working as a lobbyist after they cease to be employed in that manner. Anyone in this house who is retiring at the next election in March next year would be restricted from working as a lobbyist until March 2014. I suppose the motivation behind that is that any knowledge obtained by those people during their time in office would be sufficiently out of date a year after they had ceased their form of employment, so that any of that knowledge would unable to be of benefit and that person would not come into the role of lobbying with an unfair advantage for a least a year after they had ceased their former employment. I know that at the federal level in particular a lot of former members of Parliament have ended up as lobbyists in Canberra for various business and other organisations, and it has provided a source of work for some people. Indeed, one former federal MP once told me that after federal MPs cease being federal members of Parliament, a lot of them actually find it difficult to obtain employment, and lobbying is a way to use the skills they picked up as members of Parliament and gives them something productive and profitable to do and to make a living out of, rather than, as he put it, sitting at home watching television. That may well be the case with some members of Parliament. This will put a slight restriction on that—not a large restriction, but a slight restriction—of an additional 12 months in which they will not be able to work as lobbyists, in Western Australia at least, after ceasing their employment as elected officers or as senior public servants. On balance, the opposition is supportive of that. I personally do not think it makes a huge difference, to be honest. Members of the public do

not like to see someone leave this place and the next day be in business as a lobbyist. There is a broad view that it is somehow a bit shady if someone starts in employment immediately after they leave Parliament. I think that provision will resolve that public perception issue. Will it make a great difference that someone is not working as a lobbyist until a year after leaving this place? In reality, probably not a great deal.

What would make a bigger change is the prohibition on success fees, and I think that is a more significant factor in this legislation. Although encouraging success fees is, I suppose, a more pure form of free enterprise, I think lobbyists could be encouraged to act less ethically if a success fee was involved and the level of payment received differed according to whether or not an outcome was achieved. I suppose most Australians act ethically and do the right thing and most Australians would not be impacted; but if there were success fees, it could encourage lobbyists to cut corners and to do things that are unethical, inappropriate or, in some circumstances, improper. Therefore, a prohibition on success fees would be a wise thing to put in place, because it might discourage some of those activities. Whether that is particularly enforceable or whether there are ways around that through clever contractual arrangements remains to be seen, but I think sending a message to the lobbying industry that a success fee is not something we support is a good thing to do. Therefore, we support a prohibition on success fees and I think that it is a more important initiative than the ban on former MPs and public servants working as lobbyists for 12 months after they leave their original employment.

Coming to the weaknesses of the legislation, lobbyists will say they work as lobbyists and they will be captured by the legislation. Some people who work as lawyers basically lobby. Some people who work as corporate affairs employees of corporations lobby. Some people who undertake other forms of employment lobby in exactly the same way as professional lobbyists do. The argument goes: why are they not captured by this; why should they not be captured? Of course, that is a point, because there are people out there who do that. I meet corporate affairs people from major corporations regularly. I went to a dinner last night at which some of them were there. It is a very integral part of being in political life, particularly for a leader of a major party, a minister or a shadow minister, to be contacted by corporate affairs officers from major corporations who want to talk about the issues of that corporation or government policies or laws that might be coming along that might impact that corporation. As far as I am aware, they are not captured by this legislation, so their activities can go on without them being caught by the lobbyists legislation. I do not really see a way of addressing that issue. This legislation captures independent lobbyists—people who run businesses dedicated to that purpose. If we tried to construct legislation that caught every single corporate affairs officer or every single lawyer who engages in what is broadly known as lobbying, if we tried to construct legislation that caught other professionals, such as accountants, doctors, engineers and a range of other professions, it would be very difficult to do, and I think probably impossible, because all those people cannot be captured and made accountable in the way that stand-alone lobbying firms are.

If it becomes apparent at some point that there is inappropriate conduct on a widespread scale by people in those professions or occupations, perhaps that is something we would need to look at in the future. At this stage, I do not think it is possible to construct legislation that captures all those people, groups, organisations and professionals in a way that would make sense. I am sure the point will be made by other members who contribute to this debate that there is a range of people out there lobbying inside corporations, business associations, unions and non-profit associations who are lawyers, doctors and engineers and who should be caught in exactly the same way as lobbyists. However, I do not see how we can construct a piece of legislation that captures them without it being too broad and ineffectual and maybe even potentially criminalising activity that should not be criminal. I do not see how that can be done. Nevertheless, that argument will be raised and it is a conundrum because the people who are lobbyists and who will be captured by this legislation have a point when they raise those activities of corporate affairs people.

Mr W.R. Marmion: It's a tricky one, isn't it?

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is very tricky. I am contacted far more, multiple times more, by corporate affairs officers inside corporations than by lobbyists. In fact, I am rarely contacted by lobbyists. Although I am lobbied all the time by people, organisations, non-profit associations and people I meet walking through the shopping centre, I am rarely lobbied by lobbyists. Corporate affairs people who work inside companies, who make an appointment with their chief executive officer, who bring along quite a nice laminated pack of information and who talk about what the company does and what they would like to see happen in the future, are everywhere. Many of them are former political staffers actually—on all sides. Interestingly, when they finish being political staffers, they often become quite bipartisan when they get into these roles and they sort of get on —

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: That is right. They have to feed themselves and their families; I do not blame them. Political staffers on all sides take a risk when they go to work for ministers. The risk is that they —

Mr W.R. Marmion: Ask me! I lost my job.

Mr M. McGOWAN: That is right; they take a risk and they are often tarred with it. The fact that they were in that role might impact their future employment prospects. I have some admiration for political staffers on all sides because of the fact that they take a stand for something, take a side and do not just sit on the fence. They are a bit like people in this house; people in this house take a side and stand for something and do not just sit on the fence. Political staffers put themselves at some risk as a consequence of that because their future employment prospects might be limited because of that stand they took. Political staffers often end up as corporate affairs officers in companies and, as I said, often strike me as being quite non-political in that role because they know that at some point they will have to deal with people on all sides. As people increasingly realise as they get older, reason and reasonable people are not all restricted to one side of the house. In any event, it does not capture those people.

We have suggested some changes to this legislation. I want the government to take that seriously because I think these are the real failings in the legislation. The legislation formalises the rules that are already there, makes sure that former MPs cannot work as a lobbyist for 12 months after leaving Parliament, and bans success fees. That is the extent of the legislation. There are two failings, in my view, and one is smaller than the other. One failing in the legislation could very well be an anomaly. It states —

> … the register may record information relating to persons for whom registered advocates to government are undertaking, or have undertaken, lobbying.

That is, the public register on the website may have the names of corporations that engage lobbyists. That is currently the case; they are required to —

Mr W.R. Marmion: The ones that they work for.

Mr M. McGOWAN: That is right; if it is a major corporation, it is required to be on the register, as it currently stands. The legislation states "may"—that is; "the register may record information". In other words, there will be discretion about whether those corporations are listed. I have an amendment on the notice paper to delete "may" and insert "must". There would be a requirement for people who engage lobbyists to be registered; there would not be discretion. I do not know whether that is an anomaly. I suspect that the government will say that it was always the intention that the corporations will be listed. But this amendment will remove the out. Therefore, if a corporation, public authority, non-profit association or the like engages a lobbyist, this amendment will ensure that group is listed on the register. It removes the discretion, which I think is held by the Public Sector Commissioner or the head of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, about who goes on the register. I suggest to the government that this is an easy amendment to agree to because it basically means that all those corporations will be listed, as they currently are; it reinforces the current position. I do not think that would be too hard to agree with. If it is not agreed with, the suspicion would be that there is some reason it is not agreed with, such as there are some corporations or people who engage lobbyists that the government does not want listed. Therefore, to remove any doubt on that matter, it would be better that the discretion is removed. I urge the government to look closely at that amendment on page 17 of the notice paper. It is a very sensible amendment that I think removes any idea that there is something untoward going on. It is up to the government whether it wants to agree with that amendment, but I would think that it is reasonable.

The other amendment is more substantial and I think it is the most important part of making lobbyists accountable. This amendment inserts a new clause 16 in the bill. It is, as I understand it, what takes place in the United States to make lobbyists properly accountable. At the moment, we will have a register, a list of the lobbyists and a list of their clients, but what we do not have is disclosure of the lobbying activities. Therefore, we will not know when government has been lobbied by lobbyists. We will have the lobbyist list and their clients, but we will not know what lobbying has gone on. This new clause, which is quite a significant and substantial amendment, sets out a return that must be filled in every six months by registered lobbyists about what lobbying activity has gone on. If a lobbyist meets a minister or a public servant, they would have to set out in that return whom they met, whom they lobbied on behalf of, the name of the business they lobbied on behalf of, the subject matter of the lobbying and the date. It basically means that there would be full disclosure, not part disclosure, of what is going on. I think that this legislation would be far more significant and far more effective if the amendment were adopted. I encourage the government to consider the amendment very carefully, because at the moment the Register of Lobbyists, and this bill, which will reinforce the lobbyists register, do only half the job. We think we know the client and the lobbyist, but we do not know the lobbying that is going on. I do not want to know the internal details of every discussion held by a lobbyist and a government minister. I do not want a record of that, and I do not think the public needs a record of that. But the public needs to know what meetings and discussions are held. If decisions are made by the government consequent to that lobbying, that is a relevant consideration for the general public.

I will give one example. I asked a range of questions about the lobbying activities of some lobbyists in Western Australia. I discovered—I do not have the exact figures—that there were dozens of occasions on which there was contact between Serco Australia and ministers in Western Australia prior to the awarding of the contract for Fiona Stanley Hospital. I think that is a relevant fact, and people should know that. I found that out only because I regularly submitted quite comprehensive questions on notice. This amendment would mean that that sort of activity by members of Parliament to find out that information would not be necessary. This amendment would mean that every lobbyist would be required to submit on a six-monthly basis a form detailing the lobbying that had been undertaken. I do not think that is an over-the-top requirement on lobbyists; to be frank, that should be part and parcel of the business. I urge the government to consider the amendment carefully, because it would significantly toughen up this legislation and make it more effective.

I note that when the member for Churchlands introduced lobbyists legislation in 2005 and maybe in 2006 or 2007, it contained a similar provision. She made a speech to the house on each occasion and said that it was a good idea to ensure that that disclosure requirement was there. It is currently possible, technically, to find out the information if a member of Parliament has the wherewithal and the time and inclination to ask a question of every minister and if every minister decides to answer the question. But if that does not happen, that information will never be released. If the government wants to be serious about dealing with this issue, this amendment would mean that there would be proper, full and adequate disclosure of the lobbying activity by lobbyists of government. The opposition's amendment is on page 17 of the notice paper if the Premier wants to have a look at it. It is quite comprehensive. It would basically mean that the 60 or so lobbyists in Western Australia would be required to submit a form once every six months detailing their lobbying activities. I think that would be a good thing.

I suggest that we make those two changes to the legislation. If the government does not agree to them, we will not vote against the legislation, but they will form the basis of what we will do on this legislation if we are elected to government. We will make sure that all clients are registered and that all those lobbying activities are disclosed once every six months via that process that I suggested. It would be the toughest, most comprehensive and most transparent lobbyists legislation in Australia. But all it would do is catch up with the situation in the United States, because it has a long history of this. I suspect that the United States arrived at that outcome through some bad experiences. Those are the changes that we are suggesting to this legislation. We think it would make the legislation better and more comprehensive than it is currently.

We will now have a six or seven-week break from Parliament and that will give the government an opportunity to consider those amendments, because we are not going to go into consideration in detail today. I certainly encourage the government to have a good, hard, close look at what has been proposed to the bill.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [3.55 pm]: I rise to speak to and offer my support for the Integrity (Lobbyists) Bill 2011. But I think it is important to say that I believe this bill really attacks only a small aspect of the overall lobbying process in Western Australia. It strikes me that paid lobbyists—those people who bid for the time of not only opposition members, but also, more particularly, government members, who are in the lucky position of being in the government of the day and having the power to make important decisions—are just a small part of the overall influence on decision makers. That group of people in this very powerful position in our society—the power elite—represent for the most part pecuniary interests. They have their own financial interests at stake, and that is what motivates them. What worries me is that we do not see in this legislation, or beyond it, a real desire to balance things out so that we give not only access to the rich and powerful, but also a corresponding degree of access to those who are not incredibly wealthy and who do not represent a multibillion-dollar project. We do not have a formalised system that would balance things out. All we really have at the moment is a hope that the integrity of those who are in positions of power is such that they will do that balancing job themselves; in other words, if the Premier of the day hears from some organisation that has a multibillion-dollar project, he will also seek to spend a corresponding amount of time with those who might have an opposing view on the project. I do not see much evidence of that in the Barnett government today. I could use any number of examples, but I will use a fairly topical one. I imagine that the Premier frequently goes to functions at which he would see the CEO, directors and the chairman of Woodside. There would be an opportunity for those people to say to the Premier, "We're still moving ahead with James Price Point. Good on you, Premier, for what you're doing." But does the Premier ever really have the opportunity to spend a corresponding amount of time with those who might be opposed to the project? I think the answer is that, no, he does not. Unfortunately, under our system at the moment, the onus is on the Premier to work out how to balance that. How does he balance the amount of information he gets from people who are for a particular project and from those who are against it?

This issue of lobbyists is a very interesting one. I support this piece of legislation in that it will tighten things up for paid lobbyists who, as has been said by other speakers, tend to work for smaller firms and medium-sized businesses that cannot afford their own corporate affairs division, because those who are really powerful in

society have their own corporate affairs professionals. I suppose I could say that there is a degree of transparency there, because when we see the Premier or members of cabinet talking to someone from BHP Billiton Ltd, we know that. What we do not have, though, is a guarantee on equal levels of access.

I want to say a little about the role of peak bodies, especially those peak bodies that have a pecuniary interest. It is very interesting to note the rise of bodies such as the Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia, the Housing Industry Association, the Urban Development Institute of Australia and the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association. The access of those peak bodies to decision making has grown a lot in recent years and they wield incredible influence. It is very interesting to consider how they are positioned on certain issues. Companies might play a softly, softly approach when talking to decision makers, but when there is a certain hardline position to be taken, such as a position that is a little edgy or risky, then they hand it over to their peak body. There is a really good example of that in an issue in which the Premier has a great deal of interest; that is, carbon pricing. I do not really hear much from BHP Billiton or Rio Tinto on carbon pricing, but I do hear a lot from the Minerals Council of Australia. Handballing, therefore, does go on. The attitude is if it is a hot-potato issue, hand it over to one of the peak bodies and get it to deal with it; get Mitch Hooke from the Minerals Council of Australia to speak out and attack; then the company in question can stay in the background and not risk damaging its corporate reputation with the broader community.

We see this handballing happening in other sectors as well. I note that the Australian Food and Grocery Council was a fairly effective body at representing the views of some of its members. At one stage it took a very hardline position on carbon pricing, although I gather it has completely revised its predictions as its analysis has changed quite dramatically in recent months. At one stage, however, the Australian Food and Grocery Council, in representing its different members, used its power as a peak body to enter the political debate on a topical issue—carbon pricing—and acted as a lobbyist and put a particular view. We have seen the rise of these peak bodies which, in some way, we could say have been doing the dirty work. This legislation will not go anywhere near that issue. That is why I come back to my point that, unfortunately, this bill deals with a small segment of the overall issue on how to add greater transparency to the lobbying process in general and also how to balance things out. The real concern I have is that this legislation will not increase the amount of balance that is needed in the process of providing information to decision makers.

Having worked as a form of lobbyist for a non-government organisation, I am certainly pleased to see the provisions in clause 9 of the bill. The provisions make it clear that someone working for a non-profit organisation is not required to register as a lobbyist. That is very good to see. I think, though, we need to clarify through this debate that a non-profit organisation is an organisation that has society's overall interests at heart. I am talking about organisations that are not the sorts of peak bodies I mentioned earlier. However, in further reading clause 9 I can see that exceptions are made for groups such as the Minerals Council of Australia, the Housing Industry Association and the National Farmers' Federation. It seems from the way clause 9 of this legislation is structured that they would be exempt from the requirement to register their staff as lobbyists. We need to be clear that some people act as lobbyists, not because they have a pecuniary interest but because they have a desire to make better our society. They do not lobby for their own personal enrichment and in fact in many cases lobbying costs them a fortune. However, I am not sure that those people get anywhere near the level of access that business peak bodies get. There are many ways of quantifying that access. The simplest way would be to look at the amount of time people spend with decision makers.

To come back to my James Price Point example, it would be very interesting to see the number of hours that government decision makers and politicians have spent with representatives of Woodside and APPEA. It would also be interesting to know the number of hours that the Departments of Mines and Petroleum, Environment and Conservation, and State Development have spent with the proponent and those people representing that multibillion-dollar proposal for James Price Point; whereas those people who have an opposing view—I am not expressing a view either way on this right now—would have spent very little time with decision makers. There is that inequity in our society. Tackling this issue of making sure that lobbyists are registered will not really go to the heart of tackling that problem. All we have is the hope that the integrity of people who are decision makers will force them to make that call about balancing up the time they spend with people who have different views. We are therefore reliant on the integrity of people in this place to make those calls. It is difficult, though, when I consider the sorts of cocktail parties and different functions that we are invited to continually, because invariably we end up meeting people in that "power elite" category who have big resources and pecuniary interests to promote. It is much rarer for government members, and especially ministers, to spend time with people who do not have those pecuniary interests. That is a real concern of mine. I think this bill will be useful for tackling a small segment of the problem but we must not kid ourselves that it will go to the much broader problem, which is the access that some very powerful people have.

I am also interested in the definition of "non-profit organisation" mentioned in clause 9 of the bill. I note that there could be all sorts of ways of manipulating that definition. Organisations such as these "think tanks" could say they are not seeking to make a profit, nevertheless the staff of the organisation are exceptionally well paid. I would be interested to hear from the member for Riverton on this, given his background with the Institute of Public Affairs Australia. Recognising that some of these organisations are not-for-profit organisations in the main, it would be interesting to know where the money comes from for their funding arrangements. Some have much greater financial backing than others because they manage to position themselves as the mouthpiece for industry groups. Of course those groups that are a mouthpiece for a well-heeled sector—say, the oil and gas sector or business in general—will get the backing to present their views; whereas those with a different view and that do not have a pecuniary interest in that view will not get the same level of backing.

So there is the problem: we have an imbalance. This legislation goes some way to tackling it. I applaud the amendment on the notice paper that seeks to have detailed just how much lobbying effort individual lobbyists spend. That would get to the detail as well and would provide us with the sort of information that would be much more valuable than simply knowing the identity of the lobbyists. It is more important to know how much time and effort they spend lobbying on different contracts and how much time they spend with individual ministers. That will be important for us to know when judging the influence that is being wielded in our community. I support the legislation but say again that I think it goes only some way to correcting the imbalances we have when it comes to the influence of very powerful people in our society.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [4.09 pm]: I also want to make some remarks about the Integrity (Lobbyists) Bill 2011. In 2002 I was very fortunate to go with the state department to the United States for the mid-term elections. I visited Florida as part of that program and was introduced to something called the sunshine law. If you google "sunshine law", you will find out a lot of information about it. What it refers to is that government is to be done in the sunshine. It was quite fascinating, because the law tries to have as many as possible of the activities of government done in public. It combines all types of integrity issues like freedom of information and lobbying into one area. I do not remember the exact details, but every item and every document that is created using the resources of the State of Florida must be made publicly available. There is a very small number of exceptions. It is not that one needs an FOI application to seek something or other; it is that the government must make information available. I do think we need more reform in this area of open government. I think the sunshine law is a really exciting way of approaching it, so that rather than just having the Westminster tradition of government being done in secret unless the government wants to tell us about something, it is a system where government is done in public and decisions are made in public. Again, when I was on that trip, in Minnesota we met with the county commissioners for the area of Minneapolis–St Paul. In America there is a separate level of government between state government and local government called counties. County commissioners are permitted to meet only in properly convened meetings of the county commissioners or a subcommittee, and all of those meetings are broadcast on cable TV.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am sure everybody sits there and watches! The whole point is that whilst not everybody is going to watch, everybody can watch. I am just making the point that the more that government is done in the public eye, the better it is. There is the old saying about making laws and sausages. I cannot remember the proper quote; I am sure the member for Girrawheen will interject and tell me what it is. It is something like you do not watch laws or sausages being made. In reality, I think the more open governments are, the better they are.

As the Leader of the Opposition explained, the lobbyists bill is going to bring into law the lobbyists register that was implemented by the former Labor government. That is a good thing. There is nothing wrong with that. I want to just briefly reflect on the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition to insert "Part 3—Disclosure of Lobbying" and clause 16 "Lodgement of returns". I make the point that that is a very important part of opening up what government does by placing an obligation on the registered lobbyists and also the minister to tell people what is happening. I particularly draw the attention of members to two articles Joe Poprzeczny, who writes for the *WA Business News,* wrote on 7 and 14 December 2011 regarding the lobbyists bill. I know everybody wants to do something else right now so I will not go through all of this, but I urge members to read Joe Poprzeczny's comments because they are worthwhile. I do not necessarily agree with every word Joe Poprzeczny writes, but the point he is making in those articles about the limits of this bill are probably quite valid. It is probably a good idea to bring more people into the net for lobbying regulations.

I want to make a couple of comments. I assume we will have to go into consideration in detail when we reconvene after the winter recess. If the Premier wants to comment on these issues later, I am happy for him to do that, or if he wants to take note of them and talk about them in his reply, I do not mind. I refer to clause 4(3), which states —

The following are not lobbying —

…

(g) providing information in response to a request from a government representative;

I do not know why that is given an exemption. I do not understand why that is necessary. Perhaps there is a particular reason that the government wants to exempt that arrangement, but I do not think it should be exempted from the definition of "lobbying". Clause 10(4)(a) states that the register is to be "in any form the Commissioner considers appropriate". I do not know whether that is the best way. Again, it would be great to know either today or when we get to the consideration in detail stage whether there is a particular reason for that form of words or whether we should say something like "be kept in a form prescribed by regulation" so that it is not just left to the discretion of the commissioner on how the information is recorded. Clause 11, "Publication of information on register", states —

(1) The Commissioner must make the information on the register publicly available free of charge.

(2) The Commissioner may comply with subsection (1) in any way the Commissioner considers appropriate.

I make the point that clause 18, "Publication of code of conduct", states —

The Commissioner must —

(a) publish a code of conduct in the *Gazette*; and

(b) make a code of conduct publicly available free of charge on a website.

I do not understand why, if the code of conduct is to be made available on a website, we would not have the information on the register available on a website. It may well be that the commissioner chooses to do that. This is one of the issues Joe Poprzeczny raised in one of his articles. It just seems sensible to have it available on a website in any case. I go also to clause 14, "Certain persons disqualified from registration or listing". Subclause (1) defines the people, which the Leader of the Opposition read out. Everybody in this chamber is included. Subclause (2) states —

A person cannot be registered under this Act or listed as a registered advocate to government if —

And it goes through all the things that cannot happen. It then says at subclause (3) —

However, even though subsection (2)(b) applies to a person, the Commissioner can decide to register the person or, as the case requires, list the person as a registered advocate to government.

There is the exclusion that someone cannot be a member of Parliament, retire for less than 12 months and then register, but, even though that is the law, there is then a provision that allows the commissioner to nevertheless register somebody under certain circumstances decided by the commissioner. I do not understand why that would be the case. Maybe there is a good reason. I do not understand what that good reason might be, but on the surface it does not seem sensible. If we could get that clarified at some time, it would be worthwhile. In doing so, I make the comment that we know that the people who will not be part of this process will be lawyers, advocates for industry associations and directly employed corporate affairs officers. I am not suggesting that they should be registered. The Leader of the Opposition outlined the fact that the reason the former government did not register lawyers was that it is very hard to define all these occupations. The other reason is that many of these occupations already operate under their own internal codes of conduct. Lawyers have to be part of their various professional associations and comply with the codes of conduct and rules that relate to their professions. We know which organisations corporate lobbyists—company corporate affairs officers—represent when they turn up. If they work for XYZ Pty Ltd, they are clearly there on behalf of XYZ Pty Ltd, so we do not have the problem of not knowing whose interest those lobbyists are representing.

Perhaps we should also think about including in the obligation to disclose the actual activities people are involved with. There could be a very similar provision to the Leader of the Opposition's amendment that requires ministers, for example, to set out who they have met. I go back to my original comments that the more government is done in public, the better it is for the entire community. I think that would be a good provision. It would also pick up the various organisations such as the 500 Club, the Labor business round table or the Liberal Party leaders' forum. People in the community would then see when people were getting access through those types of forums. I imagine the sorts of criticisms that occur in the media, as occurred recently about the Liberal Party forum and have occurred about other organisations in the past, would be reduced because people would know what was happening and they could make a judgement for themselves about government decisions.

As I say, I think that doing things in the sunlight is the best approach. I make the point that the commentary around the world on the question of open government says that if the argument is made for a narrow political

interest, it never works; it always comes back to bite people. Great speeches can be made about these things from both sides of the chamber, but that is not what I am trying to do. I am trying to say that the more open government is, the more it is in the interests of all Western Australians no matter who is in government. Sometimes when in government members think, "I've got the advantage because I've got the information; I've got the resources; I've got all these things and the opposition doesn't, and if I disclose, I am reduced because they're increased." I am not arguing in that way. I am saying that it is to the benefit of society if we know decisions are made for proper reasons through a proper process. These are all suggestions that I think are worthwhile. I do not know what the Premier will choose to do with them. He can comment on each of the issues I have raised regarding the specific clauses or he can do that at another time; it does not worry me, but I think it is probably worthwhile getting some explanation for the issues I have raised.

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton) [4.23 pm]: I wish to comment in support of the Integrity (Lobbyists) Bill. It is not a huge change from what we have had in the past. The intention of the bill, as I understand it, is to essentially codify a register that the previous government established. It has a long history. Most states have followed up with similar codes. Of course, the Liberal–National government's commitment to this bill was during the last election. At that time, motivation was the aftermath of the rise of Brian Burke mark II. It led to refreshing people's memories of the power of an influential lobbyist, a former Premier, and his assistant and their influence over and contacts with not only the highest echelons of government but also the bureaucracy and how they utilised them for their own commercial gain. The feeling was that that simply was not a transparent relationship, and that was obviously the case.

As I said, this bill will, essentially, codify a register that the previous government, the Carpenter government, established in 2007. It will not cure all the problems the member for Gosnells identified; it is not meant to. It basically focuses on people and firms that act as third party lobbyists on a commercial basis for others. It does not include non-profit groups. I will come back to the influence of non-profits in a minute. It does not include corporate affairs, for good reason. We know who the corporate affairs people are; they tell us the firm they work for. They are employed by that firm. If they do not register and lobby for the interests of their paymasters, they do not work for them for very long. With regard to professions, lawyers will lobby for firm X and the next day lobby for firm Y. They are a bit flexible. They also have codes of conduct, so they are covered quite well. Interest groups are, I guess, non-profit.

The member for Gosnells said that there is a huge imbalance in access to the decision-making process and, particularly, that money talks. One of the biggest changes we have seen in recent history in the change in ownership of land has been the decision by the commonwealth government to identify marine parks. There has been a huge change. I do not know how many hectares it represents, but it is millions of hectares. To my knowledge, not too many commercial interests have been lobbying for that. It will affect people's interests in the future because it will limit fishing and access to oil and gas, I suppose. We all know that it was lobbied for mainly by individuals and various organisations such as the member for Gosnells' former organisation, and many others. Of course, behind much of it was a group called the Pew Research Centre, a large United States foundation established 100-plus years ago by a very wealthy family who earned their money in oil and gas and banking. The last time I saw, it had an asset base that if we wrapped up all the lobbyists, non-profit organisations and think tanks, and subtracted their asset base from Pew's asset base, Pew would still be worth a few billion dollars. It is extremely large. It split itself into groups. For some reason it came to Australia and decided—I do not know why—to lobby worldwide for an increase in marine reserves. I think marine reserves in certain countries are an excellent idea, particularly in South East Asia. Logically, I do not think they are needed in Australia because we have a pretty good system for priority areas. I would think they should concentrate on doing that in some areas in North America. Nonetheless, I am not arguing about —

Mr W.J. Johnston: Do you want to know why Pew has done that?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I am interested, but a little later.

Pew invested very heavily and lobbied both parties, I imagine. It lobbied the Liberal Party and funded a range of organisations and a chair at the University of Western Australia. It has been very successful in getting a large transfer of the ownership of land away from commercial activity to the public sector. My point is that we have a very robust lobbying group out there. Some of the people with the non-commercial focus are very wealthy indeed. In fact, some of the lobbyists against James Price Point have big pockets. I am not saying that they are motivated to acquire money up there, but they are very wealthy individuals in support of those against the James Price Point development.

Mr C.J. Tallentire: They are not as wealthy as Woodside, member.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: No. I am not saying that, but they have fewer regulations and less transparency around their motivation and operations.

Mr C.J. Tallentire: They will not get the same benefit as Woodside; the pecuniary interest is not there.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Most of them lobby for what is called "option value". They want to lock away the land to have the option in the future of going up there with their super yachts and other activities.

Mr C.J. Tallentire interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: My point is that in Australia, we have a very wide, open access to lobbying the political and decision-making process. This bill is really focusing on those people who act in a commercial interest for a third party, not for non-profits. I honestly think that in terms of access to resources and other things, we adequately cater for the non-commercial interests in the lobbying process. The member for Gosnells' former organisation does not have that many members, and it does not have a huge income

Mr C.J. Tallentire: It has about 20 000 members.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes, but it does not have a huge income. It is very critical of both sides of government when it operates, and it is mainly funded by government now.

Mr C.J. Tallentire: But it does not have the same level of access as those industry groups would have.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I do not know about that!

Mr C.J. Tallentire: Just check the time spent by ministers with some of those business organisations.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I do not know about that. Many of those business organisations actually give money to organisations, such as the member for Gosnells' old one.

Mr C.J. Tallentire: I do not remember that.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: They do, to lobby their perspective, and there are numerous reasons for that.

Of course on the other side, on the workers' side, the unions have huge influence.

Mr P. Abetz: And access.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes, and access—direct access.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Including direct influence over preselection.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes, preselection, and what people say in Parliament. My point here is that we have a very robust system. In terms of the commercial and other interests in the decision-making process, we have a large number of people in this house whose main function is to listen to their local constituents, hear what they say and come into this place and go to the executive and lobby on their behalf. That is what we do on a daily basis. We all do it. We go out into the community—our electorates—and we sit in our electorate office and meet people, and people come and ask for things, such as increasing the size of the school, building a road in an area, or putting a roundabout in an area. That is what we do. Sometimes people get a commercial interest out of that, and fair enough. But that is not necessarily their sole motivation. Most of it is about improving their community, gaining access to their family and whatnot. That is what we do, and we do it, I think, in this state and this country very effectively. That is why we are here. We are the largest, let us say, counterweights to the commercial interests that might otherwise sway the executive. If members are really worried about the lack of balance in the system, they should work harder.

There are a couple of issues that I would like to raise on this bill. The member for Gosnells raised my old firm, the Institute of Public Affairs. We did not lobby governments very much. We seldom walked the floors of Parliament anywhere.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You just attacked them!

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes, I attacked them! My major goal was getting governments to stop doing things—not to do things. That was my objective. We did not argue for regulations; we argued for the elimination of them. We did not argue for taxes; we wanted to get rid of them. So we were not the friends of governments on either side. Richard Court was a friend of mine but he was not friendly with me when he was Premier, I can guarantee members that. What we need in this system is a proliferation of these types of organisations. How are they funded? They are funded in many ways. Sometimes they are funded by businesses. Most of the IPA's funding came from the individuals. Sometimes they were wealthy, and sometimes they were modest. The environment industry now is largely, apart from government funding, funded by wealthy individuals, who for a variety of reasons give money for specific causes or general operations. That is how it works, and that is good. As we grow in affluence, the environment is a very high priority good, and people who have made it, help. Some people who helped my old organisation wanted the free enterprise system to flourish because that is what made us wealthy, and they wanted to see the continuation of that. Some people funded environmental groups. In fact, three of the founders of the IPA also founded the Australian Conservation Foundation. They were true conservatives and

conservationists at the same time. So we have a very robust system. What we need is a proliferation of those types of organisations.

What this bill really is meant to do, in a narrow way, is deal with problems that have been identified in the past when certain people acting as third parties got too much power, and it was not transparent. Will this bill transform this? No. The problem in the past, in the Burke era mark II, was that a set of individuals had too much influence. It was not so much the lack of transparency. Brian Burke talked about all his clients all the time, and sometimes they came up in the media. But he had too much leverage over too many people. That was the problem. Will this bill affect that? In some way it will. It will disclose them, at least. It will say, "Here is the relationship, and here is the nature of that relationship", hopefully.

Mr C.J. Barnett: But you cannot guarantee that it will stop dishonest and unscrupulous behaviour.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: No, not at all. The member for Gosnells is right. The best way to do that is to disclose a deal, and have compromise; and, I might add have a free press—an aggressive, independent press. I think in the 1980s when we got into trouble with WA Inc, one of the problems was that the media in Western Australia was not independent enough of government. The people at the time who were in the press learnt the lesson and became more independent as time went by.

This bill will prohibit politicians and public servants—senior public servants, I suppose—of going immediately into lobbying when they leave politics or the public service. This came up a number of years ago. We see it in Canberra, and we see it in the United States, as the Leader of the Opposition said, where a lot of retired senior public servants and military officers and others have become lobbyists. Those people do have influence. I add that my observation is that ex-politicians make the worst lobbyists. The Leader of the Opposition made the comment that most politicians struggle to get work after they leave the hallowed halls of Parliament. That is true. Look around and see how many ex-politicians have gone into successful careers after politics. Some of them do not need to do that, because the superannuation for politicians in the past led them into a life of luxury. But that is not the case now. I came into the house too late for that to worry me.

Mr W.R. Marmion: Thanks for raising that, member!

Dr M.D. NAHAN: But it is the young ones we had better worry about! There he is! The member for Ocean Reef will be here so long he will be cashed up!

The real issue is the senior public servants, because, let us face it, most ministers have large portfolios and are distracted in here and other places, and it is often the public servants whom they rely on for advice and who have a great deal of influence. As they say, politicians come and go; the public servants stay and stay. The senior public servants are the ones who have been the most effective lobbyists. In the United States, they have put on the greatest restrictions. Twelve months is a very short period of time. In some places, they are restricted for a very long time indeed. How we effect that I do not know. I think our public service has changed so dramatically that we no longer have career public servants. People are now on contracts; they come and go, and there is much more fluidity. So I do not think that is as much of a problem as it used to be. My view is that a 12-month cooling-off period is not a huge problem. People are not going to lose their contact base or their rolodex, and they can take a break and go to France for a while and come back. A cooling-off period is a useful thing to have.

Another issue is success fees. That also came up, I believe, because of Brian Burke mark II. There was a big success fee somewhere along the line, and that upset people, because that encourages lobbyists to take a lot of risks and go all out, particularly if the success fee is too large. A success fee means that they will get either a lot, or nothing, so they will put a lot of effort into it, and if people are a bit dodgy by nature, they might go too far.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It would encourage bribes, too.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes. This bill will do away with success fees, and I think that is a good idea. Many lobbyists will not operate on success fees. Many lobbyists are out there simply to gather information, put a point, develop a relationship and provide a conduit rather than an outcome. Therefore, success fees would be anathema to them, although, as I understand it—I have never been a paid lobbyist—they get payment in a couple of ways.

Could we expand this legislation? I think we have to be very careful about expanding this to include non-profit organisations. As said before, we know who corporate affairs people are and if we regulate things too tightly, we will get non-profits becoming de facto or actual intermediaries. I have seen non-profits taking kickbacks for promoting, for instance, solar cells—that is, non-profits that go out and advocate —

Mr W.J. Johnston: Which non-profit did that?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I will not mention names. It is not anyone —

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: No; I can prove it, but I am not going to.

Non-profits go out and take kickbacks by lobbying certain activity; that will happen. The tighter we regulate certain things, the more devious people will use various forms to achieve their aims; that is a reality. We are really here to reasonably ask: where has the problem been before? It has not been with the non-profits, it has not been with the interest groups, it has not been with the think tanks, it has not been with the corporate affairs people, but it has been with the intermediaries—we know who they are; it has been with that group. If we push things too tightly, we will get the intermediary people seeking money to act as third party lobbyists going through different vehicles. If we go around, we can see it happening. They often pursue multiple objectives—they pursue their general interests, but they also pursue narrower interests—so we have to be careful what we ask for and push. In general, this bill is a progression addressing a specific issue and a need. Much of what it entails already exists. All the other states essentially do this. This legislation codifies it and it also gives the Public Sector Commissioner, set up by the Liberal–National government, the power to set up a code of conduct and oversee the disclosure of the register. That is a very sensible process indeed and I support it.

The Leader of the Opposition raised a couple of points and one is the disclosure of the relationship—that is, of the employer or of the contractor. The bill uses the word "may" rather than "must". My guess is that is there to give the discretion of reasonableness to the commissioner to decide the way he or she wants to do things, because in some way this bill is based on giving the commissioner of an independent body the power to oversee this register, which is an excellent idea. As for disclosing every interaction or transaction of third-party lobbyists, one of the reasons we might not want to do that, besides the fact that it is a lot of information, is that if we do that for lobbyists, we might indeed want to do it for corporate affairs people. We know who they are lobbying for, but we do not know what they are saying and what their interactions are, therefore we might get into a large data minefield. In general, I think this is a really good bill. It took us a while, but we are there. It particularly relies on the Public Sector Commissioner to take carriage of it, so I stand in support of the bill.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr C.J. Barnett (Premier)**.