

CITY OF PERTH BILL 2015

Second Reading

Resumed from 23 September.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [2.45 pm]: I am surprised that this bill was brought on after question time, but anyway. I was halfway through my speech on the City of Perth Bill, so I think I have got 12 minutes left. A lot has happened since I was last on my feet, but I will not reflect too much on what has happened in relation to this issue, apart from noting that a lot of people often confuse me with Lisa Scaffidi. Someone came up to my husband yesterday and asked, "How's your wife going?" He said, "Okay, but why?" The questioner referred to all the public pressure that is on his wife at the moment. That is the only comment I want to make about Lisa Scaffidi today.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members! That is enough!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: As I said, the only similarities are an Italian last name and a first name with four letters, but that is enough to confuse a lot of people. Honestly, the number of people who still call me Lisa is quite incredible.

Mr P.B. Watson: They call me Brad Pitt too!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I can see why, member for Albany—it is the resemblance!

I will get back to the City of Perth Bill. One of the key issues I want to talk about is the need for better coordination between the City of Perth and the state government, and this bill does not really address that. I refer to the new City of Perth Committee, with a number of key members, that is to be set up under clause 12. One of the problems that I have is that a lot of issues relating to state government policy and City of Perth policy have to do with transport and planning. Today, the Auditor General's report on cycling infrastructure noted some of the clear deficiencies in the cycling infrastructure around the central business district. The issue that has been put to me is that it is okay to have a committee, but what is the role of that committee, when we think about the significant public transport challenges we face today, and some of the conflicting messages we are getting from the state government and local government? Let us talk about the Metro Area Express light rail project again.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Fully funded, fully costed.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Fully funded, fully costed! The government is going to Canberra tomorrow to ask for money for it, but it does not know whether it will be on rail or on wheels. The government does not know where the project starts or finishes, or what route it will take, but I am sure the federal government will give the government a lot of money for that project. As I said, there was a complete disconnect between the state government and the Perth city council in the lead-up to the election. There are some general comments about the city liking light rail, but then it clicked with someone that sending light rail through the Hay Street Mall could be a potential planning issue, and a campaign was run by the City of Perth against the light rail project that it initially supported. We see continuing chaos in transport planning for the city. For example, what is the long-term solution now that Riverside Drive is closed? I get quite frustrated with the City Link project, in that people have spoken about taking the light rail through the city, but nothing seems to acknowledge the provision for future infrastructure. We have recently discussed the massive City Link project. I pass through that area quite a bit and I am aware of the missed opportunity. If we actually knew where the light rail project would go, we could have accommodated that project in the design the City Link project. This side of the house is very supportive of the prospect of light rail, but how do we get it into the city? We have just spent \$300 million or \$400 million on works in that area, but if we had a coordinated and integrated plan a few years ago, we could have accommodated provision for light rail in those works.

I will talk again about the sinking of the rail line and our need to expand our heavy rail system. The sinking of the rail line appears to have completely ignored the fact that we need to continue to grow our rail network. We go from ad hoc project to ad hoc project. Of course, the Perth Stadium station was developed in isolation of the network as a whole. Major questions continue to be asked about how we will get people to that stadium, particularly through public transport. We have had some opportunities and there is no doubt about money having been spent in the city. However, because the government does not have a transport plan for the future, it has not developed these projects with any acknowledgement or awareness of future growth or future projects. There is ad hoc project after ad hoc project. The problem with the light rail is where it will go to get people into the city centre. As I said, if the government developed the City Link project and was aware of that issue, it could have been accommodated. The City of Perth Bill 2015 does not address that issue. Again, it is an opportunity for better coordination. I do not want to politicise this, but after the city council elections, I might ask the City of Perth what its long-term transport plan is. What is its long-term plan for the cycle network? I am not sure

whether it has one, but it would be good to see whether it does because I can see only very mixed messages about what is happening to transport. With Elizabeth Quay causing congestion and traffic problems, it very much limits our capacity to grow the city into the future. In cycling, one of the key areas identified by the Auditor General today was the lack of infrastructure in the CBD and some of the impacts of the road projects there, particularly the lack of cycle paths throughout the City of Perth area. Whatever happens on 17 October, I will be keen to make sure that the City of Perth gets on board with cycling and does a bit more to connect the CBD to the suburbs with cycling infrastructure.

I will not provide too much more commentary on this bill because I know a lot of my colleagues want to stand up and talk. A lot of things have happened regarding the City of Perth over the past couple of weeks; as I said, other people will talk on that. We have significant problems with the power of the state government basically to annex other areas that neighbour proposed boundaries. We have concerns about other clauses, such as clause 20, and we will be going into consideration in detail to explore them later today, or maybe tomorrow.

Many of us have received a lot of feedback from people in the community who are concerned about many provisions of this bill. Let us acknowledge that. They are concerned about a number of issues, including the annexation powers.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: One question was put to me—I am not sure whether the member for Mandurah has outlined this—about the fact that clause 27 of the bill repeals the City of Perth Restructuring Act 1993, which established the towns of Vincent, Victoria Park and Cambridge. The question was put to me: does repealing this act now have an impact on the structure of those councils? I am not sure whether the minister received specific advice on that matter, but I ask the minister to address that in particular in his second reading response. There are other questions about the particular boundaries because some areas will now fall into the City of Perth and some will continue not to be in the City of Perth. As I said, I have always seen this bill as a bit player; it was sort of a tangent. It was never the main show. The government came in with a very ambitious and aggressive approach to local government reform. Like many areas in which this government has taken that approach—particularly the aggressive approach—it has failed, particularly in local government. There are a lot of areas, whether it be the cycling report released today, local government reform, road funding, public transport infrastructure or planning outcomes, in which there is no willingness to sit down with local government in any way. Of course, if the Western Australian Local Government Association was not dominated by people who are not keen to be critical of the government, there probably would have been a bigger campaign on some of these issues. If the Labor government had tried half the stuff that the Liberal Party has tried, we would have been torn to shreds. I see a government that has basically shown its unwillingness to work with the next tier down. As I have said in many instances, particularly when we are talking about the planning of transport infrastructure of the state, local governments are keen to deliver outcomes to their communities; there is no doubt about that. Many of them have very good ideas and very good plans. Frankly, many CEOs that I have met are very professional and they have good planning teams that have undertaken a lot of studies and do a lot of work. However, the state government has been unwilling to work with many of these councils. The state government's approach to local government reform was about reducing local governments for the sake of reducing them. To me, local government reform has never been about the number of councils. Real local government reform looks at where there is duplication or cost shifting between the two tiers and simplifies that to get better efficiencies; it makes sure that both arms of government are working together on issues. This was never set out as a main gain and now there is this idea that we have to have what I call a token on the mantelpiece to say, "We achieved something because we've got this bill." To me, the bill will really not do much. We need better outcomes for the city and the suburbs, but I do not think this bill will achieve them. As I said, we need better coordination in transport in particular—I think we have all experienced the city's roadworks—and we need governments to work with councils to deliver better outcomes, not fight with them every day of the week. Ultimately, it wastes time and wastes costs, and the government is not achieving what taxpayers have asked it to do.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [2.58 pm]: I am pleased to rise to speak to this bill —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): Members! The member for Gosnells has the floor.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: I am pleased to rise to speak to the City of Perth Bill 2015. I see it as an attempt by the Barnett Liberal–National government to try to salvage something out of the local government reform process that it embarked upon. I have grave concerns, though, about some of the elements of this particular bill that is before us. I am very thankful for the leadership of the Leader of the Opposition and our shadow Minister for Local Government in helping us navigate to find something for the benefit of Western Australians—for the people who are residents in this broad City of Perth and the geographical area known as the local government area of the City of Perth. I am confident that we will try to salvage something from what could be an absolute

disaster. The change in the boundaries being suggested here is particularly worrying to me. Many members may have overlooked this because, looking at the bill, there is a very poor reproduction of the boundaries of the proposed City of Perth. It looks like it was done on one of those old-fashioned Gestetner machines.

Turning to page 26 of the bill, there is a reproduction of the map, but it is almost impossible to read to determine what is going on. It is only because people in the community have contacted me that I have become aware of how serious this issue is, particularly for people who live in the City of Subiaco. Some 3 000 residents of the City of Subiaco south ward will suddenly find themselves in the City of Perth. These residents were alarmed about this long before the controversy of the last week or so—that is, the report from the Corruption and Crime Commission. These residents were concerned because they felt that the City of Perth’s endeavours to be a CBD-focused city with certain ambassadorial functions is very different from the focus of a residential local government authority such as the City of Subiaco. I think this idea is very well put in a letter I received from the Mayor of the City of Subiaco, Heather Henderson. She wrote to me on 7 October. She wrote to me with the benefit of seeing the report that the Corruption and Crime Commission put out. I think she puts that into a very sensible context as well. The letter reads —

As you will be aware from my previous correspondence, the City of Subiaco is very concerned about the ramifications for its South Ward residents if the City of Perth Act 2015 is enacted. The Act proposes that approximately 3000 residents are annexed out of the City of Subiaco and incorporated into the City of Perth.

The City of Perth has previously indicated it doesn’t want to be responsible for “normal residential precincts” and wants to concentrate on the core components of a world leading, modern capital city.

There might be some irony in those words. I will come back to that. The letter continues —

On the other side, the City of Subiaco wants to continue to provide the local government that is appropriate for this location, i.e. a Council focused on delivering good service and leadership appropriate to the location.

At the City of Subiaco Council meeting on 6 October, this issue was again discussed, particularly in reference to the Mayoral issues at the City of Perth and more particularly what might transpire after the Mayoral elections on 17 October. In *The West Australian* on 7 October, the Premier has also made it clear on the issue of the current Mayor at the City of Perth, and stated “she will need to have the confidence of the Council if she is re-elected ... if they don’t have confidence in her, then the Council will probably become dysfunctional”. The City of Subiaco shares these concerns and wants to see the status quo remain. Whichever way the City of Perth Mayoral election goes, the City is concerned that the strategic direction of the City of Perth isn’t a positive outcome for the South Ward residents.

Council is seeking your support in ensuring that this bill is not enacted and that the residents of the City’s South Ward continue to be a part of the City of Subiaco. It is commonsense that the status quo is maintained, I look forward to your support in the matter.

Yours sincerely
HEATHER HENDERSON
MAYOR

The mayor raises some very valid points in that letter. Those 3 000 people in the south ward are constituents of the member for Nedlands, and I hope that he is doing his best to represent their interests and that he is fully engaged in this issue. Even prior to the CCC’s report, these people were concerned about this area’s amalgamation into the City of Perth and the change of local government that was being foisted upon them. Since the CCC’s revelations—I make no comment on the serious misconduct charges that have been put about relating to Mayor Scaffidi—it seems these people have an added significant reason to be concerned. In fact, the CCC report just highlights how incompatible the City of Perth is for the aspirations of the residents of the City of Subiaco. There is an inconsistency and an incompatibility between the two. It appears that the Lord Mayor has made some serious mistakes, but I am questioning the institution of the City of Perth. I think there are some serious problems with the institution, and that is why the residents of the south ward of the City of Subiaco are concerned. Regardless of the outcome of the mayoral election on 17 October, with the passage of this bill as it stands, those residents will be plonked into the City of Perth, and that raises all kinds of issues for them.

I have questioned the effectiveness of the City of Perth on numerous occasions. For example, the approval process for the Brookfield Place development was raised in the CCC report. This relates to the building that dominates our skyline looking across the river from South Perth; it is the silhouette of our city. Our city is dominated by a building that is far from world class. Perhaps it does function well inside. On the plaza level, it functions reasonably well as a modern plaza. It could be anywhere in the world; it is a modern restaurant, bar-

type plaza area that is reasonably functional. I gather that the building has high levels of energy efficiency internally. But when we look at the contribution made by the Brookfield Place development, as approved by the City of Perth, we see a building that really sells us short. Compared with the skylines and sorts of architecture in other comparable cities—cities that have had similar levels of wealth going through them, such as the skylines of Shanghai, Dubai and Madrid—they have stunning architecture with real features. What have we got? We have a building about which most people say, “What’s wrong with that building? Has it been finished yet? What is that scaffolding at the top?” This is a building that the City of Perth approved—and it has let us down. We should have a piece of architecture there that we can all be proud of.

That is just one example of the concerns I have about this institution, the City of Perth. It is an institution that people in a City of Subiaco ward will be obliged to compulsorily transfer to—and they are unhappy about that. Even looking at it in simple logistical terms, I understand that the City of Perth’s works depot is located in Osborne Park, which is a significant distance from those people in the Subiaco south ward. I cannot understand why some sort of arrangement could not have been made in which the people of the south ward could remain in the City of Subiaco. Perhaps we could have drawn the boundaries to include Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and the QEII Medical Centre. I gather that that is what it is all about, because the City of Perth put its hand up and said that it must have the QEII area. There is a very curious zigzag on the map that makes its way between the QEII Medical Centre area and the private Hollywood Hospital. Thanks to the minister’s office, I was able to get a much better quality map, rather than the thing reproduced in the back of the bill, and was able to have a close, zoomed-in look at the very curious way the boundary zigzags and cuts between the two hospitals. Surely we could have done something differently, and perhaps in the end we would have come to the conclusion that the south ward does not have to be —

Point of Order

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I draw Madam Acting Speaker’s attention to advertising material inside the house.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): Member, do you have newspaper?

Mr W.J. Johnston: No, it is on front of the laptop.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Just push the laptop lid down. Thank you.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! Members!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I am on my feet! Thank you very much. Calm down; the member for Gosnells has the call. The debate has happened; it is over.

Debate Resumed

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker. I imagined that it would be some sort of advertising relevant to this City of Perth Bill.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Put it down.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Instead, it is something to do with the TAB, which is not relevant to this legislation at all. The issue of local government boundaries having to be contiguous seems to have caused this problem. I am not sure where the idea of having to design a local government boundary that is contiguous comes from. I cannot see why the south ward of the City of Subiaco could not have stayed and perhaps have Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital in between the main area of Subiaco and the south ward area. Let the people stay where they have voted for. I gather all kinds of surveys have been done in that area and people have expressed their strong wish to stay within the City of Subiaco. I can understand that. The City of Subiaco is known to be a very well run local government authority, with a strong sense of identity that is responsive to its ratepayers. The people involved are fearful and very disappointed that it is a fait accompli that they will be thrust into the City of Perth. That is an issue we need to address.

Another issue I am very concerned about is the redrawing of the City of Perth boundaries. We will lose a principle that we had built up around the jurisdiction over the Swan River. There was the Swan River Trust and it was understood that the jurisdiction for the Swan River Trust went to the foreshore and, in many cases, beyond the foreshore. With the City of Perth Bill, that principle is being reversed. The City of Perth boundaries will go to the middle of the river, so that will give the City of Perth new jurisdiction over what happens on the river’s edge and, indeed, right up to the middle of the river.

Mr J.E. McGrath: It makes sense.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for South Perth!

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: I do not think that is a satisfactory outcome for us all. It is a backward step. I heard the member for South Perth say that it makes sense. The fact is a river system has to be managed as a river system. If umpteen local governments are chipping away and there are mixed boundaries, every time there is a problem people will ask: which local government does that fall into? It made sense to have the Swan River Trust, which had responsibility for the whole of the river and indeed the catchment. But of course, over the last two years, there has been an erosion of the idea of an effective catchment manager. It is not clear, member for South Perth, who will have responsibility for the river on the other side. He will need to speak to Mayor Sue Doherty about this to find out which authority will have responsibility for the river on the southern side. The City of Perth will certainly have responsibility right up to the middle of the river. There are some serious questions there.

I want to raise also the issue of Kings Park and the fact that the City of Perth will have control over the Kings Park area.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Not at all; you're totally wrong.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: I will quote from the Capital City Citizens' Committee. Ian Ker from the committee has studied this issue and says —

There is one aspect of the Bill that we believe is of special concern to all who care about Kings Park. That is the incorporation of Kings Park within the City of Perth boundaries ... and the special powers given to the Executive Director of Public Health ... No reason for either of these has been provided, either in the Bill or in the Explanatory Memorandum.

The Executive Director, Public Health, would be given "all the powers and authority of a local government", including the "power to make and enforce local laws under the Local Government Act, 1995". The definition of 'public health' in the Bill is so vague that it could be construed to cover provision for hospital and associated facilities and services, which, given the constrained sites on which the QEII Medical Centre and the new Children's Hospital are situated, could cover development of the western edge of Kings Park.

I sense Mr Ker's fear that eventually health facilities could encroach onto part of Kings Park.

Mr C.J. Barnett: He is absolutely wrong.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: The Premier says that, but Mr Ker raises a valid point. That could be the interpretation of the bill because the bill contains the idea that the Executive Director of Public Health has enormous powers. If he or she is seen to be making some sort of determination on public health, he or she would have some sort of overriding power. That is another legitimate concern.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Only Parliament can change the boundaries and use of Kings Park.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: As a Parliament we are now creating this City of Perth legislation, so it will have those powers.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, it won't.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: This bill contains boundaries that make the City of Perth responsible for Kings Park.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, it's not; it's specifically not.

The ACTING SPEAKER: There will be an opportunity for the Premier to make a response or for people other than the member for Gosnells to speak on this bill. Can we continue with the member for Gosnells? It is difficult for Hansard. Let us respect Hansard, if not the other persons across the chamber.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker.

During consideration in detail I will test the extent of the City of Perth's power over Kings Park. It is clear that we are giving increased powers to the Executive Director of Public Health. That is clearly in the bill. That raises concerns and it needs to be resolved.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: There are some other issues; one relates to the voting power of businesses. It is my understanding that if a person registers as a business in a local government area, they can then acquire a vote. The bill contains provisions that enable that voting power of a business to be enduring. The business might have long gone into receivership or been sold and moved on but it is anticipated that the voting right will continue. That sounds to me very much like a potential stacking or skewing of the new City of Perth's voter base, and I think that would be a most worrying development. We would like to think that voting in a local government authority is primarily about the voices of local residents—ratepayers—being heard. In this case, the bill provides for businesses, which, in many cases, may no longer exist—they may have gone out of business altogether—to still have some sort of voting right. That is a terrible skewing of the voter base towards some people who have

business interests. It will put those business interests ahead of ratepayers' interests and that would be a terrible development. I understand that is something that we will look at further in consideration in detail.

Obviously, given the findings of the Corruption and Crime Commission, we have to look at the issue of transparency to make sure that councillors are bound by transparency provisions similar to those that we are bound by. Where they are found wanting, they should be made more detailed so there is greater clarity and clear direction to councillors on what they need to declare and the frequency with which they make those declarations. I have concerns also around the potential powers of the City of Perth Committee. It seems to me there is the potential for all sorts of revisions to be made to the detail of this bill in all kinds of ways simply because the City of Perth Committee may recommend something. That is something we need to also have a close look at.

I note part 3, division 1, "Review of City of Subiaco ward boundaries and councillor numbers". I have touched on how the City of Subiaco's boundaries are being changed and that it will lose 3 000 ratepayers from the south ward. However, it seems also that there is a change afoot to the whole structure of the City of Subiaco. With the loss of those 3 000 ratepayers, we will find that the other wards will be impacted on. The knock-on effects are therefore considerable, and ones with which I can understand many people in the City of Subiaco will be very upset.

I note that the City of Perth wants this ambassadorial status. It wants the Mayor of the City of Perth to be someone who can travel and represent us at all kinds of international events, to be there with mayors such as the Mayor of New York, the Mayor of Paris and the Mayor of London, who are representing all those major, world-leading cities. However, I think we have to be realistic about it. Even with the passage of this bill, the voter base and the democratic mandate of the Mayor of the City of Perth, in the current structure of WA, will never be that of, say, someone who is elected by all the people of Greater London to be Mayor of London, nor will they have the same voter mandate of the Mayor of Paris or the Mayor of New York. I think it is a little delusional for people to want to fulfil this ambassadorial function as though they will be the equivalent of people who come from very different jurisdictions. With the exception of London, these cities are located in countries that are not Westminster-system nations. The role of local government in those countries is considerably different, and the power of a mayor in those countries is very different. I therefore think we must be realistic about how our Westminster system actually serves to bolster the powers of a state government and a federal government. It has a unique place for the head of a capital city, but it is not equivalent to the system in other jurisdictions such as the New York or Paris examples. When I read about this ambassadorial function and hear that it is an aspiration for those who want to see the City of Perth elevated in a way, I believe people have to be a little realistic about where that power and status will be used. We need to make some sort of relevant comparison with jurisdictions that are much more akin to what we have in our Westminster system.

I have heard a lot said about the culture of entitlement that seems to exist at the City of Perth, which is a real concern as well. It seems that too many councillors have been able to receive all sorts of gratuities and trips and what have you, and not declare them in a properly transparent way. I have had a close look through the Corruption and Crime Commission report, and there is a concern about what has gone on with Mayor Scaffidi. It seems that perhaps other people at the City of Perth have fallen foul in a similar way. That only serves to undermine the confidence that the community has in local government officials. It casts a pall over all local government officials when this kind of abuse of office takes place. I can fully understand why people who live in the City of Subiaco would say to themselves, "Well, no, we want to stay where we are, thank you very much. We don't want to find ourselves in with a City of Perth that has found itself so wanting on this issue of declaration of various gifts and bits of travel." That is really something. I do worry that it is not just about the individuals involved; it is actually about the institution—that institution of the City of Perth and that culture of entitlement that seems to have grown there. That is something that has to be changed.

I look forward to going into consideration in detail on this bill. A series of amendments are proposed by the opposition, and we will certainly be looking to the government's response to those amendments to determine our support and to, hopefully, salvage something of benefit to the people of Western Australia. We are not an opposition that opposes for opposition's sake. We are an opposition that is keen to progress things along and look for incremental improvements. If there is any way in which we can improve things, I am sure we will take that opportunity. However, I see many problems with this legislation as it is currently presented to us. I think that there will be some seriously upset people if it does turn out that the City of Subiaco south ward residents are transferred into the City of Perth. The points raised by the mayor are ones that we should all listen to. I hope that there is a way in which the City of Perth can have its goal of taking in the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre, but at the same time leave those people from the south ward of Subiaco with the City of Subiaco. I think that would be a fair and reasonable thing for us to do. It might be said that some of those people are longstanding Liberal voters, but I think it is also true to say that they are sorely disappointed with the level of representation they have received from the member for Nedlands as their local member.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Can I just say that the boundaries were set by the state government, not by the City of Perth at all. The state government determined the boundaries for the new City of Perth.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: That makes the matter even worse, though, Premier.

Mr C.J. Barnett: That is the reality.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: It means that the member for Nedlands has sat silent around the table and not been in touch with the wishes of his electors, his voters, his constituents.

Mr C.J. Barnett: He doorknocked the area.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: What was the outcome? I have seen a survey that says that the overwhelming percentage of those 3 000 people want to stay in the City of Subiaco. I do not know what percentages the Premier has seen.

Mr A.J. Simpson: Maybe they should vote in the local government elections.

Mr C.J. Barnett: They are not interested.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: It is not about local government elections; it is about —

Mr A.J. Simpson: Standing up for the community.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: The Premier has just said it. It is the state government that has made this decision. The Premier has just told me that it was the state government that made this decision.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It's a university precinct; that's what it is.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): Okay; all right, one at a time! Think of Hansard! If nothing else, think of Hansard! The member for Gosnells has the floor.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: The Premier has just told me that it is the state government, not the City of Perth, that has drawn these boundaries.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Yes, for good reason.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: That means that the member for Nedlands has failed to represent the wishes and interests of those 3 000 people who live in the south ward. I do not think the people of Gosnells would let me get away with that level of poor representation.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Maybe you don't have any vision!

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: In this case, the City of Subiaco residents, those people in —

Mr C.J. Barnett: It's a student precinct—rented accommodation; they are students.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Gosnells—Premier!

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Premier, when I am on my feet, please do not speak. I do not want to call you, but the member for Gosnells has the floor.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: If the Premier thinks that these people are mostly students, as he puts it —

Mr C.J. Barnett: A lot are.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: — he should have a drive around that south ward and he will see some very nice established homes belonging to longstanding supporters of the Liberal Party—previously, I would say in many cases—but good people who have been badly let down.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, they have not.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Yes, there are a few student properties further down adjoining Stirling Highway. Unfortunately, again because of the poor quality mapping, I cannot recall all the names, but not many students live along Monash Avenue or Kanimbla Road and the like. In fact they would be very wealthy students if they could afford to live in some of those streets. They are very nice homes in a very residential area. The people who live there want to stay in the City of Subiaco because they know that it is the local government that best represents their aspirations.

MR R.F. JOHNSON (Hillarys) [3.29 pm]: Let me make it quite clear—I have said it publicly and I have informed my party—that I do not support the City of Perth Bill 2015, and I want to give the reasons why I do not support it. The main reason is that I have a strong feeling about honesty and integrity in government. I do not

believe that promises should be made during an election that people have no intention of keeping, and I find that that is what happened at the last election. The promise was made that there would be no forced amalgamations, and what are we seeing with this bill? We are seeing a forced amalgamation. What was said in the weasel words “We are just adjusting the boundaries”, is not the case. Of course the boundaries are being readjusted. That has to be done when two parts of a being or thing are amalgamated. What is happening here is that a part of Subiaco and Nedlands will be amalgamated with the City of Perth. The government can say that it is redrawing the boundaries of the City of Perth, but it is amalgamating those two parts with the City of Perth, and it is doing that against the wishes of the people. I have had numerous meetings with people from Nedlands and Subiaco and they are absolute aghast. The promise that was made during the election campaign is what I call a Julia Gillard promise. She promised not to bring in a carbon tax and the moment she got elected, she did the opposite. That is exactly what is happening here. I do not believe in that, I have never stood for that and I will not stand for it now, and that is why I cannot support this bill.

At the end of the day, whether councils are amalgamated does not affect me individually. But if the government is going to do it, it should be honest and up-front and say during the election campaign exactly what it is going to do. Then, if it gets elected, it has every right to carry out its mandate, but it should not make false promises. This bill is basically predicated on an untruth.

I was in government when the City of Perth was split up and there were very good reasons for it to be split up. It was seen as being too big and cumbersome. I was also here when the City of Wanneroo was split into two. It was also seen as being too big and cumbersome and not representative. I must have been at lunch the day that a thousand people came to Parliament House to demand that this amalgamation take place, because I did not know that happened. However, I was on the steps of Parliament House when a thousand people turned up at twilight to demand that this not happen because they were so opposed to forced amalgamations in their local authorities. Fair enough, all those forced amalgamations did not take place for one reason or another. So what are we left with? We are left with a bill that will allow somebody to come out of this with something. At the end of the day, to me this bill is smothered in ego and arrogance. I do not blame the minister for this.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Member for Hillarys, you’ll remember we went to the election on these boundaries, basically.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: No, we did not. The Premier said that there would be no forced amalgamations. That is what he said. He said lots of other things that have been proven not to be true, and I do not stand for that. He may, but I do not. I like to think that I have integrity. I used to think that the Premier had integrity. That has long diminished. Yes, I suggest that he leave the chamber, because I am not going to say anything nice about him.

We have been told that more parts must be added to the city.

[Quorum formed.]

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I am a bit disappointed that the member for Girrawheen called a quorum, because I was more than happy talking to the people in the chamber. I say quality rather than quantity, and there is some good quality in the chamber at the moment. I accept that.

We keep being told that the University of Western Australia, the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre and Kings Park need to be added to the City of Perth. Why? The City of Perth has a bigger population and is larger in size than the City of London. My colleague the member for Gosnells spoke about the City of London, but he was basically talking about London as a metropolitan area. The City of London is one square mile. The City of London does not even contain the Parliament of England or Buckingham Palace. It is the CBD area. When I agreed to split the City of Perth, I was told that the City of Perth would be the central business district. That was where all the financial dealings were going to take place and where all the big businesses would be housed, and that made sense. Why would we have City Beach and other areas in the City of Perth? We would not. But this is one person’s legislation, and it is not the minister’s. I do not blame him. He has been given a sandwich with a very unpleasant filling. I do not envy that for one minute, but that is what the minister has been given. I have a lot of time for the minister and he knows that.

A member interjected.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I almost just did.

Roughly a thousand people marched on Parliament House, and they were totally opposed to this. We are not the masters of the people; we are the servants of the people. We should be listening to what they say. We should be acting on behalf of them, not on behalf of one person whose pure arrogance is seeing this bill go through this house. That is why I oppose the bill. It is not because I am opposed to forced amalgamations; I just believe in truth, honesty and integrity, and we are not seeing that, unfortunately, at this moment. Do the residents of Subiaco or Nedlands really want to be amalgamated with the City of Perth?

Ms M.M. Quirk: They don’t care about the residents.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The City of Perth does not, no. I am told that the Lord Mayor does not. Why on earth would a resident of Subiaco or Nedlands want to be part of the City of Perth? They would not. They would be far better off where they are. I have been approached by many of them because they see me as someone who stands up for the truth and will not just go along with what the Liberal Party says. I am using my right to make my own decisions and cross the floor, as long as I have informed the party room, and I have done that.

As I say, we are not here to dictate to the people; we are here to listen to them and do what they want. The shadow minister said in his speech that he did not think that those people who will be transferred will be particularly disadvantaged. I disagree. I think they will be enormously disadvantaged. What about the people who will not be transferred? Three thousand people from Subiaco and Nedlands will be transferred to Perth if this bill goes through. That is what will happen. I think they will be disadvantaged. The rate base of 2 300 people in Subiaco is an enormous amount of rate income to lose. I have been contacted by the mayor, the CEO and other people and they know the problems they will have.

We keep being told that we have to have the medical centre, UWA and Kings Park in the City of Perth. I repeat: why do we have to have those in the City of Perth? We do not. Most people would not have a clue where the boundaries of the City of Perth are. Unless they live in the adjoining towns or cities, they would not have a clue. People who land at Perth Airport think they are in Perth the minute they land. When people stay with me in my home, they think they are in Perth. They may be in the suburb of Hillarys, but they think they are in Perth. I do not dissuade them of that because to them this is Perth. We are not in Monkey Mia, Broome or Margaret River. We are in the metropolitan area, so people think that they are in Perth. They would not have a clue. They enjoy all the tourist attractions we have to offer. I think Perth is one of the most beautiful cities in the world, but I think it is being ruined to some extent because of the congestion that is being forced upon us. I have never been in favour of Elizabeth Quay as it is proposed. I think that at the end of the day it will be a bit of a disaster. Perhaps it will be a lot better 20 years down the track when we have a decent transport system, but at the moment it has caused congestion and I do not think the expenditure we have put in is worth it. Why are we doing this? We have the biggest debt ever in Western Australian history. I repeat: we have the biggest budget deficit ever in Western Australian history. I reckon that by the next election the debt will go up to \$35 billion. I will stand corrected if I do not get that right, but I reckon it will definitely be \$35 billion. The budget deficit is projected to be \$2.7 billion, which will obviously amass by the time we get to May. I reckon it will be nearer \$4 billion. If it gets to \$4 billion, or even \$2.7 billion, expenditure will need to be made up, and the government will have to borrow another \$2.7 billion to \$4 billion to make it up. Debt will go up and up, yet we are wasting time in Parliament and we are wasting public funds by doing something that is the pure vanity of one person, and it is not the minister. Crime is spiralling out of control and people are dying on our roads at an unacceptable rate. There are all sorts of things happening that really need the urgent attention of this government and this Parliament but they certainly are not getting it. We are debating a graffiti bill and there are massive penalties for scribbling on somebody's wall yet if someone breaks into my house, all they will get is a four-month good behaviour bond and will be told, "Be a good boy or girl and we will not even charge you." What sort of priorities do we have? I know what the people in my electorate want; they want tough law and order stuff. They do not want the sort of rubbish we are talking about today. Why is this bill so urgent? I know why. It is because the person who really has control of this bill wants to have some sort of win out of it.

I disagree with the opposition. The opposition can do what it likes and I will do what I like. The opposition will move lots of amendments and although I do not know whether or not they will be accepted, I suspect they will be, because somebody wants to have a win here somewhere, but I ask opposition members to really consider in their consciences whether they are doing the right thing. At the end of the day they will disadvantage 3 000 people who will be shifted across who do not want to go there. They are Western Australians, my friends, and if the opposition is looking for their vote at the next election, it might not get it.

As I say, there are some very serious issues; there really are. I am not totally opposed to amalgamations, even forced amalgamations, but the government has to be honest and say things up-front. Be honest with the people. If the government did that, I would not be speaking in this debate; I would support it.

A member interjected.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Sorry, I thought that was an interjection.

I have got the details. The population of the City of Perth—the City of Perth, okay?—in June 2012 was 19 000-odd people. I would suggest that that has gone up by at least 1 000 or more since then. The minister is nodding his head; he would appear to agree. The area of that council is 8.1 square kilometres. The area of the City of London is one square mile, and do members know what the population of the City of London is? What do members think it is?

Several members interjected.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Members would be surprised to know that it is 7 000 people; it is less than half of the population of the City of Perth. That is the City of London, and that is where the business is done. I bet members did not even know that the House of Commons is not in the City of London.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Members knew, okay. Obviously now we are carrying out a quiz!

Mr C.J. Tallentire: How many people does Boris Johnson represent?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Many—quite a lot. We are not talking about the City of London, though; we are talking about the Greater London Council of which he is the mayor, and he has done a good job. We could have that here if we want, but we are talking about the capital city—the central business district. We are talking about London. Greater London had a population at one time of about as many people as the population of Australia. It was 16 million at one time. When I was living there, there were 16 million to 18 million people living in London. I think we are up to about 22 million people in the whole of Australia, and in Perth, of course, we are miles away from that number, so why are we making such a fuss? We are a very, very small speck on the map of Australia, and particularly on the map of the world, and there are so many more important things to consider. We should be spending time in this Parliament trying to bring in laws that protect the vulnerable in our society—the children, the aged, the disabled and the sick. That is what we should be doing. But what are we doing? We are feeding somebody’s vanity by dealing with a bill about which I know this minister will not say anything because he is a decent person. He has been given this dreadful sandwich to deal with, and the person who is really responsible has left the chamber because he does not like hearing me talk. That is fine, because he cannot handle the truth—that is his problem—but that is what he is going to have to live with.

I will not take up much more time, but I say to members opposite—I am not going to convince or try to persuade them to vote any way at all; it is entirely up to them—that they need to consider what their role is. Do they represent not just the people in their electorates, but all the people? When we are sworn in and take our oath of office, we swear to represent the people of Western Australia, not just the people in Hillarys, not just the people in Cockburn and not just the people in whatever electorate members may be in, but all the people of Western Australia. Members have to do that because we are the Parliament. We are not some little provincial thing like a local authority area; we are a sovereign Parliament and we have an obligation to everybody in WA to do the right thing. The National Party will not support this bill and I do not blame it, because if this bill goes through, it is just the first step. The National Party knows that, which is why it will not support this bill. It knows what is on the agenda—of course it does—and I do not blame it, because it does not want amalgamations forced on the people in its electorates. Everybody knows that if the National Party does not support this bill, if the Labor Party does not support it and if one or two members of the Liberal Party do not support it—I know there are people other than me who do not support it—it will not go through. I would say thank God for that, because then we can get onto something that is more serious and more relevant to look after the people of WA—everybody in WA. Some people who live in the western suburbs think they are a law unto themselves; they really do.

Mr A.J. Simpson interjected.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I know the member for Cockburn does as well, but he keeps chickens; he used to bring me eggs at one time. He is a decent bloke. But this is the trouble: there are some people who think they are born to rule. Madam Acting Speaker, I seek an extension, but I do not think I will be using it all; I am almost certain I will sit down before the 10-minute sign comes up.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I just wanted to explain to people why I cannot support this bill: for honesty and integrity, for openness and accountability—something that we are desperately lacking now. I would like to just get this bit in, Madam Acting Speaker. I was looking up the City of London on Google and on its coat of arms is a wonderful motto that states: “Domine, Dirige Nos”. Translated, that means: “O Lord, direct us”, or, in other words, “O Lord, guide us.” I would suggest that would be a great motto for not only the City of Perth, but also this government.

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [3.49 pm]: There is a mass exodus! At this point in the day, after listening to my colleague the member for Hillarys on the other side of the house, I tend to agree with most of the sentiments he has put forward about the need, or lack thereof, for this City of Perth Bill 2015. I think it is pretty clear to everybody that what we have here is a last-ditch attempt to pull together some semblance of an outcome for a Premier who started off some years ago running hell for leather, pushing the Minister for Local Government into a rabbit hole from which I am very glad he managed to emerge. There was a time when I did not think we were going to see the minister again; I thought he was going to vanish forever down that rabbit hole.

This bill is a poor and thinly disguised effort to get some kind of win out of this disastrous journey. I think that this house should look very poorly at this attempt to give the Premier something to write home about for his failed amalgamation process. I will go into some of the details that I picked up that I want some advice on during consideration in detail. Labor has had to try to find a way of making some amendments to this cobbled-together bill that will at least bring some sanity to what is being asked. Personally, I think they are probably not enough to fix what is wrong with this bill. Nevertheless, I will continue with my contribution to this afternoon's debate.

We have heard from many of my colleagues that we were all recently sent letters from residents of the City of Subiaco, Hollywood and Crawley. We have been lobbied by people who have been involved all along, I suspect from the beginning of this process, and who have attempted to get some sanity into the debate. I know how this feels because there are people on the border of my electorate who were completely left out of planning when the Trojan Horse—or possibly more like Godzilla—of amalgamation hit the shores. A group of residents in my electorate fortunately ducked and were missed out but they then ended up in nowhere land because they were not included on any of the maps. That is a point of history now because, as we all know, the City of Bayswater and the City of Stirling, the two local government authorities that preside over the majority of my electorate, have committed millions of dollars between them to try to pull off what was going to be a disaster from day one for various reasons. I remember going to the very first community gathering that the City of Stirling organised. It asked the Speaker to come. From memory, the member for Mirrabooka was there. A number of us were there. I got a brief speaking gig on that occasion, from memory. I expressed my deep concern about forced amalgamations and the impact on ratepayers. At that meeting, funnily enough, the Speaker stood up and expressed his rejection of the notion of amalgamations as well. It was slightly amazing when a bit further down the road, he turned completely around and supported amalgamations. One never knows how fast this bidding wheel has been spinning and who has got on and off at different times. I personally have always been stringently against the notion of forced amalgamations.

I will talk in a bit of detail about some of the ways that I think this bill continues to ignore the views of the community and put further pressure on the community to take action against the state government. The residents of Hollywood and Crawley have spoken very clearly about this issue and the proposal to move 2 350 people and around 1 000 rate-paying properties at an annual loss to the Subiaco rate bucket of \$2 760 000 each year if this bill goes ahead. That is their estimate. They go on in some detail to talk about the problems residents of Hollywood and Crawley will face if this bill is passed. One of the most difficult aspects for the community to understand in this forced process is what was originally proposed and has now been shelved; that is, in the forced amalgamations, there was an option of not having ward councillors. I think that is a very grim situation. A number of people who wrote to me expressed great concern that the City of Perth does not have ward councillors per se; it has a number of councillors who represent the whole city. Certainly the point has been made that that is a real loss. Who will represent them? Who will hold up their interests? Who will look after the residents of Hollywood and Crawley because they will not be given a direct representative in this new City of Perth?

I will read part of an email from Tony and Beverley Noakes. It states —

We were dismayed to read in last Friday's POST that ...

The City of Perth Bill is coming on —

This would move part of Subiaco's South Ward into the City of Perth, and would effectively disenfranchise 3,000 people. Here in Subiaco's South Ward we are well served by our Ward Councillors. The City of Perth has no Ward Councillors, and it is hard to imagine that a small suburban enclave like ours, far from the CBD, will be of much concern to the City of Perth, whose main functions are to service government, commerce, hotels, apartments and public buildings.

I think that point was raised very well by Tony and Beverley Noakes, and also by Pamela Meehan from Shenton Park, who raised a similar concern. She states —

The City of Perth has no Ward Councillors, thus there is no requirement for the City of Perth Councillors to take into account the desires and wishes of this suburban enclave.

It is hard to see that a City of Perth that is expanded to include these 3 000 people would have their best interests at heart when we look at what the proposed objects of the new City of Perth cover because it seems that they are well outside of being supportive of the needs of small areas such as Hollywood or Crawley.

I will go on and talk in a bit more detail about some of the other comments that have been raised by people concerned about what this bill will do. Seventeen per cent of Subiaco's investment wealth has been contributed by Hollywood and Crawley residents. That is what the estimates I have in front of me show. That 17 per cent amounts to a \$40 million endowment fund. I have not checked these figures so I cannot say that they are

accurate; they are from a resident of this area. I suspect that it is worth putting them on the public record. Lynley Hewett states —

It is not for the non- rate-paying properties of QE11 or UWA or it University Colleges.

They have paid nothing in Rates ever.

If we are going to see Hollywood and Crawley moved out of Subiaco into the City of Perth, Lynley Hewett is asking whether that \$40 million share of the endowment fund that Subiaco holds will be moved into the City of Perth, and will it look after the interests of Hollywood and Crawley residents. I think it is a justifiable question. I thank her very much for raising it.

I received another comment from Rob Thomas. I will read a paragraph because I think it is very pertinent. It states —

The general consensus amongst the people that I talk to (the silent majority) is they are sick and tired of having their State Government foist changes upon them without an adequate and plausible explanation of why the changes are needed and without clear and open consultation with the people affected by these changes.

I want to go to the bill to talk about that point. There is at times comment that the community should be consulted. I refer to the objects of the bill, in clause 4.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.