

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) RECURRENT 2013–14 BILL 2013

Third Reading

Resumed from 12 September.

MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham — Leader of the Opposition) [4.15 pm]: I rise to make a few remarks on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013–14 Bill 2013. The third reading is an opportunity to give an overview of the budget and see where it sits and how it has gone. Last year, in the middle of the budget process, the then Treasurer, Christian Porter, announced his intention to resign and leave the Parliament—and good luck to him. He has been elected as a member of the federal Parliament, and I am sure he will have a long and prosperous career over there; and I hope he enjoys Qantas food.

This year, the budget was handed down by the current Treasurer, Hon Troy Buswell. According to my calculations, the current Treasurer is the fourth person to hold that office in the term of the current government. Indeed, the Treasurer was one of his own predecessors as the fourth person to hold the office of Treasurer during the course of the current government.

It would be fair to say, I think, that this budget has not gone well for the government. In my 17 years in this place, I cannot recall one occasion on which a budget has been handed down when the then Leader of the Opposition was not critical of the budget of that government, to a degree. One of the functions of the opposition is to point out the deficiencies of the government. If we did not have an opposition that pointed out those deficiencies, we would have a one-party state. Therefore, although the criticism is often made that all oppositions do is oppose, it is a function of our democracy that the opposition and the opposition leader will express some criticism of the government. However, if an opposition leader is overly critical all the time, people label that person a whiner and a complainer; if an opposition leader is positive and tries to come up with solutions and does not criticise the government, people say that person does not have what it takes and is not prepared to get in there and fight for government. Therefore, naturally, an opposition leader has to find a balance between the two. There have been many opposition leaders in Western Australia's history and, indeed, in Australia's history across the states and the commonwealth, and I am sure every one of those opposition leaders has had to find that balance in one way or another.

However, I have to say that in my time in this place, I cannot recall a budget that has been worse received than this budget. I recall the first budget of the Gallop Labor government in 2001. There were some things in that first budget that caused some difficulties for that government. One example was the ill-conceived, as it turned out, premium property tax. That government also had to repair the five budget deficits of the former Liberal government. I was not a minister for the first four years of the Gallop government, but it learnt from that and it improved significantly over time. Also, the public gave that government some latitude because of the fact that it was the first budget of that new government.

However, this is not the first budget of a new government. This is the fifth budget of this government. It is fair to say that this budget contains a lot of broken promises and cuts, and a lot of increases in taxes and charges, that are hurting people. When a government brings down its fifth budget, the capacity of the public to show some understanding and latitude for that government is greatly diminished. To hark back to 2001 and the first budget of Geoff Gallop, that government inherited a set of books that showed five deficits over the previous eight years, and it had significant issues to resolve. That government made some mistakes, but I think people understood that. When it is the fifth budget of the same government, people are not as forgiving. I think the government will find that the public is not very forgiving of what has gone on in this budget. The cuts and the broken promises and the tax and charges increases have been really quite extraordinary. I think that the timing of this budget, very late in the year, has something to do with the cover of what we knew from early February—it is printed on my brain—namely, the rough timing of the federal election. The rough timing of the federal election meant that the government knew when it could bring the budget in and be, if you like, camouflaged to a degree by the ongoing focus on federal issues. That is what the government tried to do by timing the budget for very late in the year.

Even with the late timing of the budget, a range of issues were not properly considered. We heard the Premier say in question time today that contrary to what the budget said, there were 8 400 children of 457 visa holders who would pay the \$4 000 fee to go to school—it turned out there are 4 000 such children. Even though this budget comes five years into the government's term and the government had an additional four months or so to bring the budget together from when it ordinarily would be presented, these sorts of errors appeared in the budget. These sorts of simple, factual errors appeared in the budget documents that actually produce a budget black hole, in the common language. Then within a few days of the budget being handed down, there was quite an iniquitous decision to revoke contracts people entered into to provide power back to the grid via the solar rebate scheme. There were quite iniquitous provisions in the budget to revoke those contracts citizens of the state

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had entered into with the government. I do not think people in Western Australia are very forgiving of that. I have not heard of that before. I have not heard of a Treasurer, when asked, say that the government will rip up contracts with its citizens. Therefore, we had two issues—a factual issue with the number of 457 visa holders and the decision by the government, without proper advice, to undermine contracts entered into by the government with its citizens. Those two issues played out very badly for the government.

Contained within the budget are all the other issues for which there were broken promises. I think that this government had a lot of leeway in its first term. It had a lot of leeway from the public for things it committed to that it did not do, such as the Ellenbrook railway and its failure to restore and rebuild Royal Perth Hospital. The government said it would do a range of things across the state before the election, and then it did not do them. I do not think that that leeway now exists. I do not think that forgiveness of the public now exists. When it was exposed that the government's bus rapid transit system to Ellenbrook does not exist anymore, even though it was an election promise, I think the leeway given by the people of Ellenbrook in the first term has now ceased. They have been promised a railway, a bus rapid transit system and a swimming pool—all from the government, all in writing—none of which has been delivered and none of which looks likely to be delivered.

Several members interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: There have been significant broken promises, and only six months ago, not only do I remember well —

Mr F.A. Alban interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): Member for Swan Hills, I call you for the second time. No interjecting, please, unless it is accepted by the speaker on their feet.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Not only do I and no doubt the people of Ellenbrook—one of the fastest growing urban areas in Australia—remember that well, but also the state's press was standing there when the decisions and announcements were made. Members of the press do not like being taken for fools; I can tell the house that they do not like it. They heard the Treasurer and the Premier say these things and they saw the written promises for the bus rapid transit system.

The closed-circuit television cameras for crime hotspots are not being funded. There is a \$15 million shortfall on what was promised to the tourism industry for marketing in Western Australia—\$24 million was promised and \$9 million was delivered. I would go so far as to say that members of the tourism industry—they are not known for their Labor sympathies, but I have a lot of time for them, and as Minister for Tourism I fought as hard as I could for them—are livid because of this broken promise. They had that promise spelled out to them three weeks before the election at a big gala performance by the then Minister for Tourism, and \$15 million of marketing, which means a lot to the tourism industry, has not been delivered.

I have referred to the solar feed-in tariff, so I turn to the school promises. Willetton Senior High School was promised \$95 million, and only half of that is in the budget and the forward estimates. Collie Senior High School had a \$6 million or \$7 million commitment, but there is nothing in the forward estimates. Mental health facilities in Karratha and Bunbury were promised for the 2013–14 financial year, neither of which appears anywhere. The grandparent carer scheme—of all the groups—was a \$5 million or \$6 million promise by the government and \$1.5 million or thereabouts has been delivered. The safety and security rebate for the elderly, which the former Minister for Police was very, very keen on and announced, as I recall, early last year, is significantly underfunded when compared with what was committed. There are various smaller promises around the place. In fact, the other day I went and stood at the clubrooms at Eaton oval, and a commitment by the government for clubrooms at Eaton oval was not delivered. Then there are some of the bigger promises such as the electricity price, which is a perennial issue of this government. In the debate with the Premier, I was standing a few feet away when he told the people of Western Australia that the rise would be at or about the rate of inflation. That is exactly what he said and that is not what has been delivered in the budget or in the forward estimates. The electricity price increase is nearly double the consumer price index and the seven per cent in the forward estimates in each and every year is nearly triple the consumer price index. The promises that no-one would lose their jobs and there would be no forced amalgamations were significant promises upon which people voted at the state election. The promise that there was —

Mr C.J. Barnett: When are you going to make an original speech instead of the boring stuff you repeat every week?

Mr M. McGOWAN: There we go, Madam Acting Speaker—he is back at it!

It has been a poorly received budget and one would have to be blind Freddy not to know that. One would have to be blind Freddy not to notice that it has been a poorly received budget. I cannot see it getting any better for the government. I might be wrong, but I cannot see it getting any better because the budget position that the

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government has created over its five years in office means that every year is going to be difficult. Every year, despite the Premier's unhappiness with it, we will come into this place and point out what was committed and what is delivered, because truth before an election matters. When a Premier betrays the trust of the people of this state, as this Premier has done in the lead-up to the election and in activities since, he is on the slippery slide. That is what has happened. It has been seen at the federal level, and it has been seen at state levels before. Eventually, people get sick of the government. It might have all the fundraising and all the resources in the world, but when people are sick of a government, it does not matter because the government will be done. This budget shows that the government has betrayed the trust of the people of Western Australia in so many areas—so many promises, so many cuts and so many tax and cost increases—and there are so many things it told people it would do that it has not done and is not going to do. That is where the Premier has failed and that is what people are seeing across this state.

Mr C.J. Barnett: That's why you got 29 per cent in your —

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I am sorry, Premier and member for Bassendean; this is not a yelling match. If you have an argument, take it outside.

MR P.B. WATSON (Albany) [4.30 pm]: I would like to talk on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013–14 Bill third reading debate. It is interesting the Premier is in the chamber. I keep hearing him talk about 29 per cent. I have been in this place for 13 years, and I have seen leaders come and I have seen leaders go. I saw Matt Birney. He was going to lead the world and he went down. I have seen the Treasurer come up and go down. If ever I have seen anyone heading for a fall, it is the Premier. I have seen it in sport. I have seen people come up —

Mr T.R. Buswell: You got only a glimpse of me.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Yes, but I kind of liked what I saw, because there was always plenty to talk about. The Treasurer must be laughing at the moment, because he can see what this Premier is doing. It is said that the Treasurer has the numbers, 34–7, and we all believe that. But what about Barnett's legacy? Let us look at the Premier. I remember sitting on the other side of the house, and the Premier used to sit at the back here, getting ready to retire. All he used to talk about was the standards of government and the standards of Parliament. He would say, "We must do this. We've got to have the standards of Parliament." Yet on a daily basis this Premier is misleading the house. He thinks, "Yes; that's okay, because I'm the Premier and I'm up here." But I say to the Premier that the higher he goes up, the bigger he will fall. I have seen it in sport. The Premier can talk about 29 per cent.

Point of Order

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I just seek some guidance from you, Madam Acting Speaker, on the long-held convention around third reading debates and how those debates should —

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: There is a long-held provision, firstly, that a member does not interject when someone else is raising a point of order, which is very off-putting; and, secondly, that a member reflects on matters that have been discussed in the bill.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): Thank you. Member for Albany, I remind you that you need to tie this to the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013–14 Bill and not go off topic in the third reading.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker, and I thank the Treasurer for his point of order.

Debate Resumed

Mr P.B. WATSON: The Treasurer said earlier today that the member for Alfred Cove was keeping a list of all the costings that members on this side of the house are making. I am not going to talk about costings; I am talking about the things that have been promised and have not been delivered. We had the gas pipeline. I remember that the Leader of the National Party and the Premier went to Albany in, I think, August–September and said that they had the gas pipeline sorted out. They had it costed and they had everything done. I have a press release, Premier. The Premier should not shake his head; he will mislead the house again. The press release said that they had everything locked in and that it would go ahead. Is that right, Premier? When the member for Cannington asked about this in the hearings of the estimate committees, we were told that there is nothing. The government does not have a plan and it does not have anybody. The gas-fired power station in Albany is not in it

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at the moment. That has just dropped away. That was going to be something big. This is a promise that was made. It was made at the previous election, Premier. I would like to lay on the table for the rest of the day this sheet of paper, which states —

Trevor Cosh and the Liberals will build the gas pipeline to Albany

LABOR WON'T!

This was a huge thing right at the top of the roundabout in town. People went around it every day. The Premier misled the people. Do members know whom I feel sorry for? I feel sorry for Trevor Cosh. I have spoken to Trevor Cosh since the election, and he is embarrassed now about what has happened. This is a businessman in town. He put his reputation on the line because the Premier rang him and said, “You can knock off Peter Watson; you’re the man.” The Premier did not deliver on that, and he is not delivering on this proposal. That goes back to Trevor Cosh. It is all right for the Premier. At the next election, he will be sitting on his farm, drinking his chardonnay. These are the people whose reputations are damaged forever because the Premier does not deliver on what he says.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You’ll be the last person to be updated on the pipeline because you knock it every time.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Well, Premier —

Tabling of Paper

The ACTING SPEAKER: Excuse me, member. You said a paper is to be tabled.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Before the member for Albany tables that, my understanding is that if a person other than a minister wants to do something, they need to seek leave of the house to lay that document on the table for the remainder of the day’s sitting. I understand that is the process, so I understand the member for Albany has to seek leave to do that.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I think the minister is correct.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I seek leave to lay this on the table for the rest of the day’s sitting.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Is leave granted?

Mr J.M. Francis: No.

Debate Resumed

Mr J.R. Quigley: They don’t want it out there because they don’t want the Premier’s lies on the table.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am not one to be sensitive about what is said in this chamber, but the member opposite just talked about the Premier’s lies, and I would ask him to withdraw.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): Sorry; let us just work back. If that is the case —

Mr P.B. Watson: I can’t remember saying it.

Mr J.R. Quigley: I said what’s on the paper was a lie.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, you did not.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Madam Acting Speaker —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, I am sorry; I did not hear anyone called a liar, but if there was any of that language, it is not appropriate in relation to a member of this house. Let us go back to the minister’s point of order, which is about a paper —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! We have a point of order about a paper being tabled. It is my decision that the paper may be tabled. It is within the purview of the Acting Speaker to make that decision. It can lie on the table for the duration of the day.

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

The ACTING SPEAKER: Did the Treasurer have a point of order?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I distinctly heard the member for Mindarie use the words “Premier” and “lies” immediately adjacent. My understanding is that that —

Ms M.M. Quirk: You’re just repeating it to make sure everyone heard it.

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Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am repeating it so that he withdraws it in the normal protocol of this place.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Treasurer. Member, if there was that, would you please withdraw it?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I withdraw.

Debate Resumed

Mr P.B. WATSON: I think we have woken the Premier up, if nothing else. Something came up the other day about VenuesWest charging people who go to school sporting events for parking. VenuesWest covers places such as the basketball stadium. Now, if people want to go to watch their kids play basketball, they will have to pay a fee for parking. I know it is only a suggestion, but, Premier, or Treasurer, I am just saying: do not do this. One of my main concerns is that these days we do not get parents going to sporting events. I have coached kids in Albany for years, and the hardest part is to get parents to participate and to come along. It is bad enough that parents have to pay to go into the venue to watch their kids play sport, but if we charge people parking fees, I think it will stop more people going along.

I refer to the Katanning inquiry. I was hoping that money would be in this budget for the Katanning hostel victims. These people asked the Premier for a meeting, with the Attorney General present.

Mr T.R. Buswell: If I can just clarify, my understanding is that there is money in the budget.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I am talking about that money. I am talking about the money in the budget, but there should be money for compensation for these people over and above what is in the budget.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Is that over and above the million dollars?

Mr P.B. WATSON: Yes. I know two guys who had a day off work. They were told that the Premier would be there at the meeting with the Attorney General.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, they weren't.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Yes, they were. I have the details of that. They rang the Premier's office and were told that the Premier would be there. Then, on the morning of the meeting, the Premier said that he would not be there. After everything that these guys have been through —

Mr C.J. Barnett: I don't deal through you.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I do not care what you do. You do not tell me what to do about my constituents!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Albany!

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

Mr P.B. WATSON: You are nothing! You are weak!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! Member, that is inappropriate language. The member should address his comments through the Chair unless he wants the Premier's interjections.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I do not want the Premier's interjections. I think he is the weakest person I have ever met in my life. I have met some weak people—do not worry—but you are the weakest. These people gave up their day's work. They have been through all those issues. You did not have the ticker to show up. You are weak. You are gutless!

Mr C.J. Barnett: The meeting was arranged through the Attorney General, and you know it.

Mr P.B. WATSON: You know better than that. They came up to Perth. I sat with them on the plane and they said, "The Premier is going to be there." Then the Premier is reported in the local paper as saying, "No-one ever asked me." That is rubbish! You have got no ticker. You will not face up to your responsibilities. You are gutless!

Point of Order

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I apologise for interrupting the house on a point of order. I am simply asking, not so much for this debate, but there will be a longer one tonight —

Mr P.B. Watson: This is about Katanning.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I know that. I am asking the Acting Speaker to provide advice to the house about the content of third reading debates and the relationship to the principal bill.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I remind members to make sure that their contribution to the third reading is relevant to the bill being discussed. Member for Albany, please direct your comments to the bill.

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Debate Resumed

Mr P.B. WATSON: I will talk about cuts to staffing in members' offices. Does the Treasurer accept that those cuts have to come through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet? I would like to tell the Premier and the Treasurer about some incidents that have occurred in my office. If I cannot have two people in my office at all times, I will close my office. Some of the new members might go into the party room and say it is okay if we cannot replace a staff member, but I have had six policemen in my office who have had to taser someone and take him away. Someone else smashed up my office at lunchtime when there was only one staff member there. The staff member had to go down the backstairs and out into the street. The number of staff will be cut and we will not be able to replace them with someone else. It may not sound like much to members opposite at the moment, but I will have to close the office when there is only one person in my office, due to the safety of my staff. That will result in not providing the service that we should provide as local members. When I am in my office during the week, I probably see seven or eight people a day; that is 40 to 50 people a week who come into my office about issues. I have a couple of upper house members in my electorate but no-one goes to see them; they go to the local Legislative Assembly member because they do not know who the other members are. All members of this house have to look at this. If we do not look after our staff and we put them in danger—what did the Treasurer say?

Mr T.R. Buswell: I was just explaining to other members the density of members of Parliament in that corner of the state in Albany.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Funnily enough, the National Party is going to Bunbury. Obviously that showed in their polling in the federal election. I cannot raise that because it is not a budget item.

I was bitterly disappointed with the grandcarers support scheme. A lot of grandparents in my electorate, especially in the Indigenous community, look after their whole family.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Another broken promise, member.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Yes, it is a broken promise. The scheme has been cut from \$5.3 million to \$1.7 million. I do not know what it is like in the city, but in regional areas grandparents look after young people all the time. In this budget we talk about debt and cost. Hon Peter Collier has presided over the waste of millions and millions of dollars of taxpayers' funds. The Premier says that the government has to get money so it will take it off schoolkids. I do not understand. If we on this side of the house had a minister like Hon Peter Collier who had failed in two different ministries and was still a minister, I know what the Premier would say. He would say, "Oh, that is the Labor factions and unions doing that." What is happening on the other side? Hon Peter Collier has the numbers, so he just pulls the Premier's strings. I think it is 34–7, going on the latest figures this morning—the good oil says it is 34–7. I would like to hear from some of the members who were there today.

I turn now to the Black Cat Creek fire. The people of Albany and I are absolutely disgusted that the report into that fire was released on the Friday before the federal election. The Minister for Emergency Services can sit there and say that he does not know anything about it. I have spoken to other ministers in similar positions to the Minister for Emergency Services who have said they would not release that type of report without it being run past the minister. It was released on the day before the federal election and Ms Bearfoot's husband was not told about it. He told me that when he saw his wife in hospital, all he could kiss was her eyebrow because there was nothing else left. He could not recognise her. The treatment he got from this cold and heartless government, which released the report just when there was a federal election —

Ms M.M. Quirk: Member, can I interject?

Mr P.B. WATSON: Yes.

Ms M.M. Quirk: The minister answered a question on notice and said he was advised of that report on 28 August 2013.

Mr J.M. Francis: That is not what I said.

Ms M.M. Quirk: What did you say, minister?

Mr J.M. Francis: I was told by the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner earlier in the week that it was coming up towards the end of the week; I had absolutely no input into it whatsoever. It would be very wrong of me to direct Wayne Gregson, the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner, as to when and when not to release that report.

Mr P.B. WATSON: The report was finished and handed in on 24 December 2012—that date is in the report. All of a sudden—bang!—it was released a day before the federal election. Hello! Call me gullible.

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Mr J.M. Francis: You are.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Thank you.

Mr C.J. Barnett: And nasty.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Thank you. If the minister thinks it is funny that this man was not told about the report into his wife, I have to question the minister's judgment. Members on the other side of the house are supposed to have very high standards, but they all think that is very funny.

Treasurer, I would like to know what is happening with the Albany ring road. There is \$300 000 in the budget for planning but I would like to know what happened to the \$1 million that the then federal transport minister, Anthony Albanese, gave the state government for that project 12 to 18 months ago. Has that disappeared into the ether?

Mr T.R. Buswell: I don't think so.

Mr P.B. WATSON: The Treasurer does not think so.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I'll have a look.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I wonder, because the Albany ring road is very important. An accident is waiting to happen at the roundabout in Albany where the trucks come through. When I go through there at about 3.20 pm to catch the late afternoon flight to Perth, everyone else is going through there, including school buses and trucks, and something has to be done. I know there is only a certain amount of money to go around but I think that is a very important project that we should be funding. I would like to know where that \$1 million went.

It is very disappointing that we cannot get tourism right in Albany, and I know that the City of Albany is partly to blame for this. The only way we will get more tourism is to deregulate the airline services. I know there is one point of view that says one airline will drop out or another will drop in, but we have to try something because at the moment it is not working.

Mr T.R. Buswell: That review is now underway and I am trying to get it done as quickly as I can. There is a five-year contract and my base for the review is to deregulate. The issue with Albany is that if we deregulate, we may end up with no airline.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I do not think we will finish up with no airline. At the moment, nothing is happening, so we have to try something. Be bold. Try something to get people down there. At least get the 100-seater planes down there so that we can put 20 extra seats on those planes —

Mr T.R. Buswell: There is \$1 million for the Albany ring road in the budget papers. It is estimated that \$700 000 was spent last year and \$300 000 will be spent this year.

Mr P.B. WATSON: The state government has not put any money in. That is all federal money.

Mr T.R. Buswell: No, I think there is a mixture there.

Mr P.B. WATSON: There is \$1 million there—\$700 000 and \$300 000. The state government has not put any funding into the ring road. That is money from the federal government.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I'll continue my search.

Mr P.B. WATSON: As I said, this is the worst budget in my 13 years in Parliament. The Labor Party had good budgets and bad budgets but I think that the community accepts that this is the worst one.

MS M.M. QUIRK (Girrawheen) [4.49 pm]: The first issue I want to talk about in this debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013–14 Bill 2013 is the implication of cuts in the Department of Commerce, and in particular, the short-sighted decision not to renew beyond January 2014 the contract with the Council on the Ageing to provide targeted housing advice to seniors. I note a number of reversals of decisions that the government has made in recent weeks, and I hope it can reconsider what I think is a very short-sighted decision.

The Seniors' Housing Centre grew out of a legislative review of the Retirement Villages Act 1992 conducted in 2010. That review recommended the establishment of a seniors' housing information service to provide prospective residents and residents with independent information and support on housing matters relevant to seniors. It was noted at page 461 of the 2012–13 budget papers, under "Significant Issues Impacting the Agency" in the Commerce division —

Seniors housing remains a priority for the Consumer Protection Division. The Western Australian population is growing older rapidly and this has been one of the important drivers for amendments to

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the *Retirement Villages Act 1999*. These amendments, combined with progressing a new code of conduct for retirement villages, will reform the Retirement Village industry. Information about these changes and the wide range of housing options for our seniors will become available from the Seniors' Housing Centre. This practical initiative will make a considerable difference to the lives of a number of our seniors faced with the challenges of navigating the many housing options available.

Ominously, there is absolutely no reference to this important work in this year's budget. With the efficiency dividend and so-called program rationalisation in the Department of Commerce's budget, it is increasingly clear that this program is likely to be a victim. The Consumer Protection Division of the Department of Commerce commenced operations of a shopfront Seniors' Housing Centre in September 2011 and COTA was selected as the community service partner, entering into a service agreement in March 2012. Both bodies—the state government through consumer protection in the Department of Commerce and COTA—have run a seniors' housing centre advice service in parallel during this period. COTA has included the provision of two FTE staff—a community education officer and an information officer. If they discern any perceived breach of state legislation, it is referred to the Department of Commerce's Consumer Protection Division's Seniors' Housing Centre for investigation and compliance.

COTA has operated a very effective consumer education and information referral service. Reacting to clients' needs through interviews, seminars and immersion in the seniors and housing communities, COTA's Seniors' Housing Centre diversified its education portfolio from a single seminar to six seminars on a variety of topics that were seen to be in demand. These free seminars were organised to be hosted through community groups, local governments, the offices of state MPs and independent bookings. Additional marketing of the seminars and the service was pursued through the COTA website, COTA events, *Have A Go News*, community events and other forums. The statistics that I got from COTA are very impressive. Between March 2012 and 10 September of this year, 167 seminars have been run with 3 677 attendees. The attendees' overall rating of the seminar was 4.6 out of five. In addition, 1 193 seniors have been assisted through appointments, via the telephone, via email and through the post. A good trusting relationship has developed between the seminar attendees and the one-on-one interviews; 60 per cent of people who had one-on-one appointments after having come into contact with the Seniors' Housing Centre first attended a community seminar. These seminars included topics such as “Making informed housing decisions”, “Downsizing—a field guide”, “Modifying your home”, “Low cost housing options”, “Reverse mortgages and accessing equity”, “Retirement villages and residential parks” and “Navigating aged care”. While I am on the subject of retirement villages, I should add that we are still waiting for an indication from the government as to when the second tranche of the retirement villages legislation will come before this Parliament.

In addition to COTA not being given a further contract, the Department of Commerce itself is downsizing its activities in this area. It originally had three full-time staff and now it has one part timer who does not even sit in the office on the ground floor where the Seniors' Housing Centre is located. She has to do other duties as well as those relating to the Seniors' Housing Centre. At a time when the need is growing, the population is ageing and the aged care reforms mean many more seniors are living independently in the community, the issue of housing availability and tenure is even more important.

The Community Development and Justice Standing Committee's report “A Fading Dream—Affordable Housing in Western Australia”—a committee that I was a member of at the time—made the following observation at page 157 —

ensuring affordable and accessible housing in an ageing society is one of the great challenges for the State. As they age, many people's housing needs change. Those preferring to stay in their own homes may need support to be able to continue to live there. Alternatively they may either want, or need, to move into housing more suited to their needs. There are several groups of aged people whose changing circumstances particularly affect their housing choices.

- those that need to down size and find no suitable housing options;
- those that once owned their homes but, due to changing circumstances, now look to rent their accommodation; and
- those that can no longer afford private accommodation, whether freehold or rental and are likely to enter residential care.

I would add another category that I think is of major concern. The majority of homeless women are over the age of 60, so that is a growing proportion of the homeless population. Because of their family circumstances, women over the age of 60 are making up a significantly larger proportion of our state's homeless than previously.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 17 September 2013]

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Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Roger Cook;
Ms Janine Freeman; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Troy Buswell

There is clearly a continuing and growing need for the housing service in the context of the growing housing crisis for seniors and the former federal government's changes to aged care, which were a result of the Productivity Commission's inquiry, which I understand received bipartisan support. That Productivity Commission report, which emphasised people staying at home rather than going to residential care, generates a range of issues and there needs to be good independent advice. That is something that COTA did exceptionally well.

I understand that the Seniors Ministerial Advisory Council, which advises the Minister for Seniors and Volunteering, supported the continuation of the Seniors' Housing Centre at a recent meeting and told the minister that it supported its ongoing existence. In its outreach role, COTA has formed working relationships with many organisations, including the Departments of Commerce, Housing, Communities and Corrective Services; and local government, in particular the Cities of Swan, Perth, Vincent, Joondalup, Melville, Subiaco, Nedlands, Gosnells, Fremantle, Rockingham, Mandurah, Cockburn, South Perth, Wanneroo and Armadale, the Town of Cambridge and the Shires of Mundaring and Kalamunda. The reach of local governments has been quite extensive. COTA also has working relationships with seniors groups, through the Association of Independent Retirees, WA self-funded retirees, Retirees WA, National Seniors Australia, Yanchep-Two Rocks Seniors Association, Osborne Autumn Club and the Nollamara Autumn Club; and seniors' education groups such as the University of the Third Age, the Mature Adults Learning Association and Trinity School for Seniors. COTA also works with a range of religious groups, ranging from the Woodvale Baptist Church to the Sikh community temple, the Dianella Church of Christ and the Salvation Army, as well as superannuation boards and Men's Sheds, peak bodies such as the Community Housing Coalition WA, Shelter WA and the WA Retirement Complexes Residents' Association, and other groups as diverse as the Water Corporation and Advocare.

COTA fills a very important gap in service delivery; it ensures that our seniors have access to independent advice when making really important decisions so that they do not make unwise decisions. It is nonsensical to cut loose COTA, which has worked very successfully and strategically to educate, inform and reassure those most in need of objective and independent advice.

In the time remaining, I will raise two topics. The first is the education cuts that a number of colleagues on this side of the house have talked about. I particularly want to raise the issue of the impact of the cuts on education assistants who work with linguistically diverse communities. It is quite clear that they will have to go. In an electorate such as mine, that is problematic and causes additional stress and strain on teachers and other staff in the schools. As one principal said to me, these education assistants enhance the ability of the school to communicate with parents and bolster relationships between the student, the family and the school, which is incredibly important.

Similarly, we have also heard about cuts to school support program resource allocation funding. Many of the schools in my electorate are categorised as at a higher social disadvantage. Nevertheless, SSPRA funding has been significantly reduced for some schools in my electorate. The assurances that somehow under the new plan our schools will be better off are simply not met in reality. When literacy and numeracy funding and access to services that enhance a child's ability to learn are taken away, one finds the assurances of the government less than reassuring. On that note, it is important to add that the \$600 long service leave loading or, as we like to call it, the teachers' tax, is not based on the actual liability at a particular school; it is levied across the board. It is nothing more than a tax.

Mr R.H. Cook: A very unjust one.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: It is very unjust and causes school communities some considerable strain and angst.

The last issue I want to raise is the road trauma trust fund. Fellow traveller of many people on that side of the house, Mayor Troy Pickard, who is a strong advocate for road safety, took the unusual step today of putting an ad in today's paper. It would have been at some expense as it was on page 4 of *The West Australian*—I am told that it would have cost some thousands of dollars. He is so concerned about the government's approach to sitting on road trauma trust fund money and cutting important programs that he took the unusual step of putting in this ad. He writes —

More than 100 communities across the State have lost key support for reducing their local road toll as the result of a recent State Government funding decision.

Very valuable programs such as the RoadWise program, which I have seen operate effectively at a local level and meet local needs throughout the state, have had their funding slashed. The ad continues —

... somehow WA Police have managed to convince the State Government that random breath testing is not part of their normal operations. They will receive funds from the RTTA well in excess of the RoadWise request and in the context that the State spends \$1.3b on police.

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In other words, his concern is that core government business is dipping into the road trauma trust fund while grassroots road safety programs are missing out.

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn) [5.05 pm]: I would like to contribute to the debate and follow on from where the member for Rockingham left off when he talked about the consequences of this year's budget and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013–14 Bill 2013. As the member for Rockingham said, the Liberal–National government came into power in 2008 with the best set of financial records it could possibly have inherited. It had a \$3.6 billion debt and a \$2 billion operating surplus—the best in the whole country. We now face the fifth budget of the Liberal–National government and each year debt has increased.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Shame, shame, shame!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: It is a shame. Two Liberal–National governments have taken Western Australia down the path of debt and ultimately led us to deficit. An argument was mounted today by Solomon Lew; he accused the former federal Labor government of squandering the benefits of the boom. Solomon Lew is taking a ridiculous line. If we go through all the things the federal Labor government did, even as a minority government, and all the investments that it made, we certainly could not say that it squandered the benefits of the boom. Particularly here in WA, the investments made by the federal Labor government were nothing short of astonishing. It is a ridiculous line for Solomon Lew to take, but it is one that we will hear over and over again from various conservative commentators such as Lew. If we take that line of squandering the boom and compare it with Western Australia's situation, we see that the Liberal–National oppositions of the past accused Labor in its period of office between 2001 and 2008 of squandering the mining boom that we went through between 2005 and 2008. Shall we do a comparison between the 2005 and the 2008 booms and the 2009 and the 2012 mining booms? Let us look at the investment that the Labor governments of 2001 and 2005 left the state. They left the state the railway lines. We invested in one of the largest pieces of infrastructure in Western Australia—the Perth to Mandurah line. It was fully paid for by the Labor government. No hereditary debt was left for a future government. Former Labor governments invested in station upgrades. If members remember, the then Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Alannah MacTiernan, made not only physical but also major technological upgrades to all railway stations across Western Australia, including signal upgrades in Perth's surrounds. Fiona Stanley Hospital was paid for and initiated under Labor. We have heard the argument by the Liberal–National government that nothing was done on Fiona Stanley Hospital under Labor's watch. What a load of rubbish! When I was the Minister for Housing in 2005, the architectural drawings were already underway and teams of people were working on Fiona Stanley Hospital. It is one of the biggest infrastructure projects ever done in Western Australia. The most complex kind of building project in the world is a hospital, so it takes a long time. An awful lot of work was done by the Labor government before the soil was turned in 2008. Construction has continued under the Liberal–National government, but it did not inherit debt on Fiona Stanley Hospital from the Labor government.

The State Theatre Centre of Western Australia was built under the Labor government. The Liberal–National government argues that the cost of Perth Arena blew out under Labor. The former Minister for Housing would know about this. Let us remember why the cost of the project blew out. It blew out because an underground car park was installed at the behest of the Treasury of the day, which believed that it was appropriate that the project should be able to wipe its face more quickly in its financial return to the government and insisted on an underground car park in, effectively, a lake.

It was always going to cost a lot more and it did cost a lot more. However, one question I have about Perth Arena, given that most of the construction happened on the now Treasurer's watch, is: What was he doing? Why did he not intervene between the Department of Housing and the Buckeridge Group of Companies to ensure that project ran properly and did not blow out?

Other investments that were made under Labor, of course, were 30 new primary schools; Roe Highway stage 7; the Perth–Bunbury highway; major science projects such as the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research buildings that are being built now at Fiona Stanley Hospital and at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital; and major job creation projects such as the investment in the Australian Marine Complex and the heavy ship lift installed there. Those investments have created hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of projects and tens of thousands of jobs over the years since they were made. That was what Labor did with the money that came out of the mining boom. We invested it in projects such as those I have just referred to. That money was not squandered; it was invested in the future of Western Australia.

Let us have a look at the other side of the ledger. What has been done in that period between 2009 and 2012 with all the money and benefits from that mining boom? Questionable royalties for regions investments have been made all across Western Australia. One of those is the Ord River expansion. Although the Ord River expansion was supported by Labor, the way in which that project was rolled out is nothing short of scandalous. How much

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money has been poured into that project and what is the return to the state? What is being done with the land there in terms of the return to the state of Western Australia and to the taxpayers of Western Australia? The taxpayers of Western Australia will not get much out of it, but the taxpayers of China and other countries will get a great deal of benefit out of it. That is a disgrace, and that legacy will hang around the National Party's neck.

There are other projects. The Northbridge Link project was funded mainly with federal money. The Elizabeth Quay project is another controversial project. The stadium is another controversial project. There was the solar power fiasco and the Muja A and B project. That is the legacy of the mining boom between 2009 and 2012 under the Liberals. What a record compared with the one I just read out of what Labor did; projects under Labor that are continuing to be completed by this government and which will provide a fantastic legacy for Western Australians for the next 100 years. Compare that record with the squandering of money by the Liberal–National government on those various projects I just referred to, all of which have been either a huge loss maker, such as the solar power and the Muja A and B fiascos, or absolutely controversial and opposed by a significant number of people, such as Elizabeth Quay.

There have been positive projects. Of course the investment made by the current government in the new children's hospital at Charlie Gairdner's is a positive investment that I would highlight. But what about the failures? What about the broken promises that could have been funded by the Liberal–National government and included in this budget process that we are discussing now? Those investments could have been made sensibly and positively. Instead of following up on those commitments, the promises that were made in two elections have been broken. I am talking about the promise to build Ellenbrook railway, which was promised in the previous 2008 election. I am talking about the promises to build the Ellenbrook bus transit system, which was promised in the 2013 election. Those promises have been pulled out of the list of commitments. Royal Perth Hospital, which the Minister for Health still crows on about —

Mr R.H. Cook: One promise at the election and one promise that he walked away from.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: In 2008 we heard over and over again criticism of our Labor government about why we were not investing in Royal Perth Hospital. Commitments were made by the Liberal Party at the time to rebuild and redevelop Royal Perth Hospital. The minister promised to walk a piece of legislation into this house in the first year of the new government to begin that process of redevelopment. Not only did that year come and go, but also the whole government came and went. We are now into the second term of the Liberal government and nothing has happened with Royal Perth Hospital.

The Oakajee project was one of the key projects held up by the Premier as a hallmark of his period.

Mr W.J. Johnston: The Liberal Party website says it's complete!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That is how deluded the Liberal Party is becoming at the moment, if it thinks the Oakajee project is complete! The current Acting Speaker of the house (Mr I.C. Blayney), would agree with me that things in Geraldton would be in a far, far better position had that Oakajee project gone ahead and had the commitment been made by the current Liberal–National government to develop that project. That project has fallen over. It was one of the key projects of the Premier. It was going to be the hallmark of his final career here at the Western Australian Parliament.

Of course the other project that he hitched his star to was the Browse Basin project, which of course has fallen over as well, partially due to the Premier's arrogance in the way he dealt with determining where the Browse Basin project was going to be established on the peninsula and partially because of Woodside Petroleum's failure to follow through with the Browse Basin project and its decision to instead go with floating liquefied natural gas. Again, not only have commitments on those projects resulted in broken promises, but also they are a reflection of the squandering of benefits that came out of the mining boom between 2009 and 2012.

The member for Albany talked about the Albany gas pipeline project and the broken promise on that commitment of the Liberal–National government. The member for Albany tabled some documents in this place that highlighted how the Liberal candidate went around Albany with the Premier promoting how the Albany gas pipeline project was one of this government's promises should it be returned to government at the 2013 election. That project is obviously not going to happen. Again, it is a project that could have been built had this government wanted to do it and had it not squandered the benefits of the boom. The Premier has a bit of a problem with pipelines, does he not?

Mr W.J. Johnston: That's right.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The Premier has a bit of a problem with pipelines. I think the best advice that this side of the house could give to the Premier is: stay away from anything to do with pipelines. That is because pipelines always bring the Premier unstuck. The Windimurra pipeline was a spur pipeline proposed to go out to a failed project. It is still sitting there, heating up and cooling down in the desert sun. It was to take gas all the way out on

a spur pipeline towards the vanadium project. Anyone going out there looking for the vanadium project would wonder where it was. It was cut up and taken elsewhere many years ago. It probably has another life processing gold somewhere in the goldfields. However, the pipeline is still there. It cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars to put that spur pipeline out to a project that no longer exists.

Ms S.F. McGurk: What about the Kimberley pipeline?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That is right; I was just getting to that, member for Fremantle.

Let us look at the Kimberley pipeline project. First of all, of course, it was the far canal from Kimberley to Perth. Obviously that became so much of an embarrassment that the then Leader of the Opposition changed it to a pipeline supported by Transfield. What happened with the Kimberley pipeline proposal? Not only did it bring the Premier undone, but also he lost the election on that proposal.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.19 pm]: I appreciate the opportunity to make a couple of remarks on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013–14 Bill 2013. The health budget, of course, represents a significant portion of the overall budget; I think 26 per cent is the current going rate. In the finest tradition of health spokespersons, I say long may it continue. This particular budget has some interesting aspects to it that I will refer to in a little while, but first I want to reflect on the themes raised by the member for Cockburn. I am reminded of the extraordinary speech of the Minister for Planning earlier today when he berated the Labor opposition for wanting good outcomes for teachers on the one hand, but not being prepared to stomach the cuts to education that this government is bringing forward on the other hand. The minister said, “You can’t have it both ways.” This is precisely the point that we have been making since this government came to office. It cannot promise everything during the election campaign without the capacity to fund those things and without stopping this state from going into spiralling debt. This is the issue that we have been trying to get through to the rather robustly thick craniums of those on the other side of the chamber. They cannot go to an election promising everything: “We will do a railway line, we will do our Metronet, we will do our light rail, plus the redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital and Fiona Stanley Hospital.”

Mr B.S. Wyatt: You can have it all and there will be no financial consequences!

Mr R.H. COOK: And there will be no consequences.

Mr F.M. Logan: Where’s the money going to come from?

Mr R.H. COOK: That is right. The money will come from the federal government or the never–never—that is, the children and grandchildren of the future. The government is just ramping up debt in the hope that either the iron ore price or the federal government will save it. As we know from the outcome of the election on 7 September, the federal government will not save this government. While we are facing such extraordinary levels of debt, it is fair for the opposition to say that the government cannot say to the people of Western Australia prior to the election that there will be no cuts to education and then turn around after the election and say that there will be. It cannot repudiate issues around tax and tax increases prior to the election and portray itself to the electorate as the low-taxing government and then bring in a land tax and other measures directly after the election.

Dr A.D. Buti: An education tax.

Mr R.H. COOK: As the member for Armadale has pointed out, there is now the teacher tax on the schools of Western Australia. The government is going for a cash grab to try to rip as much as it can out of the schools of Western Australia to make up for the fact that it has mismanaged and stuffed up the finances of this state.

Health is a very important area of government expenditure. It is probably as important as education. They are the two big ones. There can be no more fundamental responsibility of a state government than to get those two funding models right. What has come out of the debate on the health budget is what is widely referred to in the health sector as activity-based funding, which is also known as after-budget funding. After-budget funding essentially sticks all those things on top of the health budget that the government does not have the stomach to stick in the health budget. Basically, in its proper form, it is about the health budget expanding or retracting depending on the demand for health services. Under this government, it is about adding those things, avoiding difficult decisions and simply putting more cost burdens on the Western Australian taxpayer. Activity-based funding is based upon the average price per weighted separation for a patient in a hospital. Currently, that is set by the national efficient price. The current price for weighted hospital activity in Western Australia is about \$5 319. We know essentially what will be the cost to the WA taxpayer on the basis of predicted business activity for the hospital sector going forward. The problems occur when that state-based price is higher than the national efficient price upon which all hospitals in Australia will now be judged. The average price for weighted hospital activity in Western Australia is basically \$167 higher than the projected average cost in Western Australia struck

under the national ABF framework. That means that there is a community subsidy to the WA hospital sector from central funds to reflect those aspects of the WA health system, which is about the cost of doing business in this state. That will cost the state about \$387.4 million over four years. It is imperative that we get the projected business activity of hospitals right. If we under-forecast the projected demand, there will be an extra cost to the WA taxpayer, which will be writ large in the midyear review. Currently, the department predicts that there will be a 2.6 per cent increase in hospital separations between now and the end of the financial year. Once the current activity levels are taken into account, it is projected to be about 3.2 per cent. It will be incumbent upon the Minister for Health to nudge his mate sitting next to him in the ribs and say, “Treasurer, we actually need more money; we got the numbers wrong.” The indication at the moment, based upon the current hospital level, is that they will have got the numbers wrong. The Minister for Health will have to add more money to the budget through after-budget funding.

As a result of this debate, we are now aware of other surprises that will happen in the budget. For instance, negotiations are currently going on with Serco, the private operator of hospital services at Fiona Stanley Hospital, over the mitigation costs associated with the delays to that hospital. The minister was unable and unwilling to explain to Parliament the nature of those costs. But those costs will in fact come back to bite us, as Serco sharpens its teeth around what it believes are the state’s contractual obligations. Part of the problem with these privatisation contracts is that they are non-transparent and lack accountability and, at the end of the day, when there are problems associated with the operating activity in the state asset that it manages in this case, the state wears the financial risks. Although the key competitive advantage of privatisation is to outsource the financial risks, the fact of the matter is that the state will wear the risks associated with the failures of that project going forward.

Mr W.J. Johnston: And it did so well managing the risks with the Muja power station!

Mr R.H. COOK: Exactly, member for Cannington. We are continuously reminded about how the private sector will manage these risk factors associated with a range of public sector contracts, but, in fact, that is not the case. In the midyear review, we are likely to see an announcement from the minister about how much the cost will be to the WA taxpayer, but there will be more.

Further to the budget, between now and the midyear review, an EBA negotiation will be struck with the Australian Medical Association. The AMA is quite happy with the EBA outcomes for nurses. I remind members that as a result of the Barnett government’s EBA negotiation of a 14 per cent increase for nurses—good luck to them; it is a great outcome for our hardworking nursing workforce—the impact on the budget will be \$31.3 million in 2013–14 alone. The costs across the forward estimates are \$236.6 million for the nurses’ EBA—that is, the negotiations that were struck during the caretaker period during the state election campaign. Do members think the AMA will be interested in the constraints associated with the government wages policy? Do members think the AMA will settle for the bare minimum, when the nurses the AMA works with in the hospitals are enjoying a 14 per cent increase in wages? No, it will not. The doctors are cupping the minister’s avocados in the palm of their hand. That is because they know they will be able to drive a very hard bargain that will go significantly north of the current wages policy. That aspect of the recurrent funding will also impact on the midyear review.

We will see the health budget continue to grow and bleed, and the Minister for Health, unable to control the budget, will simply come back to the Treasurer time and again and ask for more. The minister will say, “We have mismanaged the EBA negotiations with the doctors and we have not predicted properly hospital activity in the future; we need some more money”. There will also be other outcomes associated with the after-budget fundraising process.

I now want to touch very quickly on two other parts of the recurrent funding in this budget. The first is the great fraud behind the government’s pledge to increase funding for medical research in this state by \$30 million over the forward estimates. We now know through the budget papers that there is only \$4 million of extra funding on a year-by-year basis over the forward estimates for medical research.

Ms M.M. Quirk: That is disgraceful, when we are already underdone in funding!

Mr R.H. COOK: That is a disgrace, member for Girrawheen. The minister knows, I know and everyone in the health sector knows that we are already underdone in medical research in this state. It is outrageous that the minister promised one thing before the election yet we now know from the budget papers that there is an \$18 million shortfall in new funding for medical research in this state. That is a result of the fraud and the lies that the Liberal Party spoke before the election and that we are now seeing written large in the budget papers.

Extract from Hansard

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Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Roger Cook;
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Finally, before the member for Mirrabooka provides some further commentary on the recurrent expenditure in this budget, I want to say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. During the election campaign, the Western Australian Labor Party promised that we would fund an extra 26 mental health beds at Joondalup Health Campus. It is great that the minister has seen fit to copy our policy and that although he was not up to the job of promising those additional beds during the election campaign, the government will now be funding those extra beds at Joondalup hospital. People at Joondalup hospital tell us that the greatest difficulty that is being confronted by the emergency department is not the flow-through of general patients—it can deal with that high level of demand—but the extraordinary demand from mental health patients at that facility. Therefore, the creation of these extra beds, utilising the new capacity of that hospital, is an important step towards ensuring that we can provide mental health services to the people of the northern suburbs.

MS J.M. FREEMAN (Mirrabooka) [5.32 pm]: In speaking on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013–14 Bill, I would firstly like to put on the record my thanks to the Chairs of the estimates committee hearings. In fact, the member for Kwinana and I worked out that this was the fourth estimates committee hearings in which we had the privilege of participating in the health estimates for most of the day and analysing the health budget. There was a rotation of Chairs during that time, and all those Chairs paid great regard to the scrutiny that we wanted to give to this important area of the state budget. I would like to place on the record my thanks to those Chairs. As a Chair, I would also like to place on the record my thanks to the Deputy Speaker. It is never easy to put together a roster, especially when two of our members said that they could not be in the chamber during certain times because they had other commitments. I therefore take my hat off to the Deputy Speaker for being able to negotiate the roster.

Previous opposition speakers have outlined clearly that the government’s mismanagement of the budget process will impact on all Western Australians, not just those who voted for this government, but also many people who are unable to have their voices heard at the ballot. It was somewhat concerning that during the member for Albany’s contribution to this debate, the Premier seemed to suggest that the member for Albany would not be able to contribute to the policy making and the debate on what is delivered in his electorate. I remind all members on the government side that they are elected to government to manage the executive and the public sector and to deliver to all the people of Western Australia, whether they endorsed the government by voting for it or whether they endorsed the opposition by voting for us.

It is with that in mind that I want to make a few comments about transport. I am pleased that the Minister for Transport and Treasurer is in the house. Although I have put on the record many times that my preference is for heavy rail along Reid Highway, I am pleased the government has made a commitment to deliver the Metro Area Express light rail. The people of Mirrabooka expect that MAX will be delivered within a certain time frame, and the people of Mirrabooka will hold the government to account for its honesty and its commitment to that project. There is great expectation in my electorate about that project, and the City of Stirling is going through the town planning and management processes that will be required. However, that is causing me great distress, because it means that the planning around the land that people have heard me discuss in this place on many occasions—namely, the corner of Milldale Way and Chesterfield Road, Mirrabooka—has again been delayed because of the further planning that is taking place due to the expectation that light rail will be built in that area. If the government raises expectations that change the nature of how people develop an area, and if it then does not deliver on those expectations, it will fail those people greatly, because everyone is waiting for that investment to occur.

It was a disappointment to me—although it did not come as any surprise—that the federal Labor government was not re-elected at the recent federal election. That was even more disappointing because the election of the Liberal–National Party in the federal arena means that we will not receive the promised \$500 million for rail projects in Western Australia. That money was committed to by the federal Labor government but has been absent from any commitment from the new Prime Minister. In fact, the new Prime Minister has made it very clear that he wants to stick to his knitting and not fund rail. That is causing great concern, because this government had relied on this funding to deliver the Metro Area Express light rail to Mirrabooka. My fear is that in the absence of this money, the people of Mirrabooka will get a substandard public transport system. My fear also is that we will get a privatised transport system and therefore a profit-based system instead of a rail system run by the Public Transport Authority. A profit-based system will look for a return from people in the community who may be least able to afford it. I put the government on notice that if it delivers a privatised rail system in the Mirrabooka area, the cost should be borne by the government and not the residents of that area. The residents should pay the same transport fares that everyone else in the community pays. Either not delivering the MAX light rail on time or delivering it in a way that is not as cost effective or as affordable for the public of Mirrabooka would be inequitable and unfair.

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Also inequitable and unfair is the impact of the education cuts on the Mirrabooka electorate. I stood in the matter of public interest debate and talked about that, but I want to elaborate on some of my comments. Previous speakers last week predicted that the decision to charge fees for the children of 457 visa workers to attend school would be wound back. They were clearly correct; that has now occurred. It was unsustainable. Despite this announcement to defer the fees for children of 457 visa holders, I put on record that I oppose the fee. Apart from its unfairness to people who pay taxes and come here to assist the economy, I mostly want to put on record that I oppose such fees because this is the introduction of a compulsory fee in the public education system. This fee is the beginning of an intention to undermine the equity of public education in Western Australia. Public education should be free to all people in our community because it is a cornerstone of our community and a foundation of the health of our economy.

The \$1.6 million education cuts in the Mirrabooka electorate will impact on students and the community. In the earlier matter of public interest debate, I quoted a report from Save the Children. The US report “Does Education Reduce Participation in Criminal Activities?” demonstrated that if the completion rate of high school was brought up by just one per cent for men between the ages of 20 and 60 years, it could save the United States of America about \$1.4 billion per year in reduced crime costs. It is dishonest to claim that there is increased funding; what is happening is decreased funding, as detailed by the director general of the Department of Education to the Education and Health Standing Committee in response to a question asked by the member for Forrestfield. In his questioning, the member for Forrestfield outlined how the budget for the school support program resource allocation had not increased and that the salary pool and relief teaching was restricted because schools could not buy as many days. He asked —

Effectively, could you not say that a school cannot buy as much or get as much bang for its buck?

That sums it up really. The \$300 million is simply for the year 7 transition, new schools and independent school funding. Therefore, in effect, after these cuts, we get even less bang for our buck. For schools that need funding, there is nothing at the moment but uncertainty and cuts. At the schools I represent in Mirrabooka, staff are anxious, parents are angry and principals are really distressed at having to terminate the positions of workers who have been employed at their schools for up to 20 years. One thing I can never understand about the Department of Education, given that it runs on such a tight full-time equivalent cap is that many teachers are on temporary contracts for many, many years. Under the leadership of United Voice, many education assistants were able to get permanency —

Mr P. Papalia: A legacy of the previous Labor government.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: It is definitely the case that the previous Labor government gave them permanency. That permanency was required for some of the lowest paid workers in our education system who deliver some of the most important assistance to teachers; they can give that really valuable one-to-one tutelage that children need to excel. As we know, children who excel in education can excel in life. That has now been to those workers' detriment because this government has to turn around and say, “We have to cut you.” But the government can say to teachers, “We're not going to cut any permanent employees.” That is because the government can effectively cut all its temporary employees. Although those temporary employees may have been on rolling contracts for years and years, it looks like the government is not cutting permanent employees, but it is. That is detrimental to those staff and the principals who have to tell those people that their services are no longer required. It is not because the principals do not want them there or think they are not valuable and it is not because the education assistants are not delivering to the students; it is because the education department and this government no longer wants to deliver services to the same high-quality standard that they have been delivered for the past few years.

Professionals are also being impacted on by the outrageous release of school accounts, targeting schools on the front page of *The West Australian*, such as Balga Senior High School, which was on the list of schools with reserves. I want to put on record the details in the paper of Balga Senior High School's reserves. I have to tell the house that Balga Senior High School is in desperate need of funds, particularly for its facilities. Apart from anything else, it needs a good coat of paint to ensure that young people who enter that school, especially the newly arrived Australians who go to that school, can see that their worth is valued as much as anyone else's worth is valued. If members go to that school and look around, they will see that everything has been targeted at education and service delivery on the ground, so a school such as Balga Senior High School needs more not less. I want to put on record that half of Balga Senior High School's reserves was for things such as replacement buses, manual arts machinery and furniture. The rest was for expenditure this year on electricity, water, uniforms, police rangers, bus fuel for the Noongar kids program, the photocopier agreement and computers. It is appalling that schools had to justify why they were keeping those reserves. The decision by the education department and the government to release details of those reserves was an effort to discredit schools.

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I am assisted by the member for West Swan's contribution in demonstrating that during the term of the previous Labor government, there were ongoing increases in the education budget. The figures the member for Forrestfield used did not take into account the accounting treatment and the capital user charge at the time.

What is distressing for many people in the community that I represent is the reduction in ethnic assistance. The discontinuation of English as a second language cells means that many schools in the Mirrabooka electorate will be disadvantaged. There are also cuts in the number of education assistants for kindergarten to year 2 students and the Aboriginal education Indigenous officers. This causes hardship for teachers, students and parents. Many of the schools I represent say thank you to and thank goodness for the national partnership agreement money, but that has only two more years to run. Those things need to be ensured so that we can deliver quality education.

The reality is that the cuts to funding mean that the health and safety of workers is undermined. As the Premier dismisses the ratio of teachers and lack of education assistants as spreading them more thinly, it is disrespectful of the nature of the need for teachers to have student-to-teacher ratios that are manageable. An increase in the student-to-teacher ratio from 13.15 to 13.53 will be to the detriment of teachers' health and may be a false saving when there is an increase in health consequences and a resultant cost to the department because of this. Indeed, in answer to a question from me about the 2009 review of the physical safety of cleaners and the recommendation that cleaning staff be allocated two-way radios, I note that in the Mirrabooka electorate, other than Dryandra and North Balga, no such safety processes have been provided and schools are relying on cleaners to have their own mobile phones. This is irresponsible and disrespectful, if not bordering on negligent, to these workers. I wanted to put that on record, because it was a cleaner at one of the schools in the Mirrabooka electorate who suffered an appalling sexual assault.

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [5.49 pm]: In the 15 minutes that I have to contribute to the third reading debate of the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013–14 Bill 2013, I want to pick up on a few issues that are, in my view, particularly relevant to my electorate of Maylands. In doing so, I will use the “2013 Cost of Living Report” that the Western Australian Council of Social Service released a couple of weeks ago as the basis of some of my comments. I have not heard much in the house that refers to the cost-of-living report, but I think it is very valuable for all our work and should inform many of the decisions that we make on what kind of priority we give issues in our own electorates. In reading the cost-of-living report, members would not be at all surprised to see that the community sector is providing over half a million services to Western Australians who are in trouble and need some support, advice or assistance to get through a hard time that they may be experiencing. Most of those more than half a million Western Australians are on low incomes, and their circumstances mean that they simply do not have enough money in their homes each week to allow them to keep up with the basic cost of living. A small but growing part of our population is being left behind by the rising costs of essential goods and services. In particular, the Western Australian Council of Social Service household model for measuring the cost of living is a bit unique and different. It is not the same one that the government uses and that Treasury uses. It looks in particular, and, I would argue, more realistically, at the lives of people who are on low or fixed incomes and makes a more realistic assumption about the kinds of things that they might be able to afford. So, it tends to focus on housing, utilities and the weekly bills that we might experience for food and living costs. It does not tend to include whitegoods, cars and the like, because the average, low-income family is not going to buy them every week. A considerable attempt is made to make this model more effective for low-income households.

I want to go through a couple of the key findings of the WACOSS “2013 Cost of Living Report”. WACOSS uses three categories in its modelling in this report. The first is a single-parent family, using either a single parenting payment or a Newstart allowance. According to the WACOSS modelling, that family will be out of pocket or unable to meet its commitments by \$35 a week. We then look at what WACOSS defines as a working family. It will be just able to meet its cost of living by \$12.90, so it can party on; that is a big Christmas present for the family on \$12.90 a week. According to the WACOSS estimate, an unemployed single person will be out of pocket by \$61.54 a week.

I will go on to specifically focus on housing, because these figures show that housing is the major weekly expense that faces each of our model households. It accounts for between 29 and 45 per cent of their weekly income, which is an increase on previous years. We know, by the way, that if a person is paying 30 per cent or more of their income on housing, whether that be for rent, a mortgage or any form of housing, they are in what is termed mortgage stress or housing stress. As a consequence, the 8.6 per cent rent increase was the biggest single cost increase for our households and accounted for 61 to 74 per cent of the total rise in living costs. WACOSS points out that this is a conservative estimate that assumes the model household can access housing at below market rates, which is becoming increasingly unlikely.

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I want to specifically mention some of the statistics that refer to my own electorate. Back in the 2011 census, 36 256 people were living in Maylands. At 1 500 extra people a week coming to Western Australia, I assume that there will be a few more than that now, two years on. Nevertheless, we will go with the 2011 statistics. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics figures, 3 800 families are paying more than 30 per cent of their income on rent. That is about 12.5 per cent of the total number of families in Maylands. Therefore, 3 800 families—or 12.5 per cent—in Maylands are in housing stress. Again, there are 3 800 family couples in which both are unemployed; that is 12.7 per cent. There are 6 000 Maylands residents who are single-parent families; that is, about 16 per cent of the families in my electorate are single-parent families. I am talking about the statistics that tend to be prevalent in low-income or fixed-income situations all over the state, not just in my electorate. These are the figures for people who will experience the most negative impact from the fact that the cost of living has far outweighed the increases in income. There are 3 500 Maylands residents who are employed in what is called community or personal services industries; that is about 9.4 per cent of the people in my electorate. The fact that 3 500 people are employed in those industries means that they are employed, by their very definition, in the lowest-income brackets. These are community service employees, and they do not make a lot of money. They are on the lowest incomes of all our residents, apart from those on a fixed income or no income. The median weekly income in my electorate for an individual is \$725, and for a family it is \$1 834. I raise those two figures because I think they are quite comparable with the WACOSS statistics. I think the unemployment figure is at a four-year high. I seem to remember that it was about 2.8 per cent when Labor was last in power, and that the unemployment rate has grown substantially in the subsequent years to a recent high. Along with unemployment and the increase in the cost of utilities, housing is by far the biggest expense that people face.

I want to read from an article in *The West Australian* some months ago by Barry Doyle, the executive officer of the Community Housing Coalition WA. Barry states —

Massive inflation in house prices has put home ownership out of reach to many low-income earners, leaving them to rely predominantly on a private rental market which has been turning the screw on them since WA's boom began.

Rents have risen at a far greater rate than incomes in WA in the past decade, up 174 per cent while the WA average weekly income rose 71 per cent and the minimum wage by only 40 per cent.

A decade ago, the median rent required just 23 per cent of average weekly earnings. In September, —

That is, last year —

it required 37 per cent of average weekly earnings. The clearest manifestation of the failure of the housing market is the sharp increase in the number of people applying for social housing provided by the State Government (public housing) and the community sector (community housing).

Between June 2003 and June last year, the number of applicants on the public housing waiting list jumped almost 80 per cent ... to 22,871.

Over the same period, the average waiting time more than doubled from 63 weeks to 131 weeks or 2½ years. Many of those on the priority waiting list for housing can be classified as homeless.

The failure of the housing market to provide for low-income households and the inability of our social housing system, which is tiny in comparison to those in other developed countries, has created a new face of homelessness in WA: households that cannot secure appropriate affordable housing in the market proper and for whom a place on the waiting list is all the State can provide.

What is to be done? WACOSS has made seven suggestions in its cost-of-living report, and six of them relate directly to state initiatives. The first one is about an increase to the Newstart payment, which I would agree to. I think it is unlikely, but I would agree that the federal government should look at that. The next six relate directly to the state government, and I would like to put them on the record. I think they are worthy of the consideration of this government. I know that this budget is a tight budget, and we have listened to the list of broken promises and the list of budget cuts, but if we are to address the needs of those in hardship and cut the flow-on effect and costs that people incur through homelessness and social isolation, these are serious considerations that any government worth its salt should be thinking about. The first is an annual increase in the state minimum wage by the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission that takes into account the increasing cost of living in WA. Secondly, WACOSS suggests significant investment in public and community housing. I know that this government has invested in social housing. There is still a huge gap. The government cannot fund the whole market for this, but significant things could be done around taxation and the like that might ease the crisis slightly. There should be incentives to create more affordable rentals and increased assistance to low-income and

vulnerable people. The next suggestion is inclusionary zoning policies for new housing projects that require 15 per cent of developments over 10 units to be affordable to those in the lowest two income quintiles.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm

Ms L.L. BAKER: Before the break I was discussing some of the challenges that my electorate is facing from the budget cuts and I was talking about the government's inadequate focus on issues that are important particularly to low-income, disadvantaged and vulnerable members of my community. In the few minutes I have left I want to talk about an issue that I am getting very tired of raising in this house. My main concern is that it tends to be raised along the lines of asking where the police are and why we are not doing more, and that these questions are asked after the fact rather than before the fact. I refer to antisocial behaviour, street drinking and the like. These problems emerge seasonally—when summer comes and it is a bit sunnier and warmer outside. I was speaking with the Nyoongar Patrol just this week about how to deal with this situation so that we do not end up just trying to move people on, locking them up or bullying them off premises.

There are issues concerning the dialysis centres, particularly around The RISE in Maylands. Country people, particularly our Indigenous colleagues, are flown down to Perth for dialysis treatment. The Nyoongar Patrol tells me that these people are often put on planes or buses when they have an alcohol dependency issue and without first going to a sobering-up shelter, so they get down to Perth and the first thing they want to do is to get a drink. We end up having gravely ill people indulging in alcohol and not being given an opportunity to manage that problem in any way before they are taken out of their communities and put on trains or buses to come down here. Indeed, as I am sure my colleagues would agree, there are many instances when the carers who are sent down with the dialysis patients also suffer from alcoholism, which exacerbates the situation as both the patient and the carer then take advantage of the 17 liquor outlets that are in a one-kilometre radius of the hostels in Maylands. I suggest that it would be money well spent if some funding were put into the budget for the Nyoongar Patrol. At the moment it gets piecemeal funding for patrols in the metropolitan area. The patrol also goes to Fremantle and Vincent, but it does not come to Bayswater, Maylands or other eastern suburbs unless the local government authority funds it to do so. It would be a far more intelligent way to go for the state to put some funding into the Nyoongar Patrol and to contract it to deliver that service. It could even be called a taxi service.

The Nyoongar Patrol has good links to other services in the community such as the churches and Mission Australia. The Nyoongar Patrol could perhaps help if the state would just put in some funding at the front end so that the patrol did not have to chase its tail to find ways of getting funding to meet this need. The services of the Nyoongar Patrol would be of enormous benefit to citizens in the metropolitan area who experience these kinds of problems. The other issue is the need for sobering-up centres. It is very clear that we need better facilities at the point of departure for these people who suffer from alcoholism.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [7.04 pm]: I rise to speak on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013–14 Bill 2013. I will begin by pointing out one area that I think is quite remarkable under my portfolio area. One of the current revenue streams within the budget papers is the proceeds from pastoral properties, which is found on page 254 of the *Budget Statements* under the lands portfolio. It is estimated that revenue from pastoral leases will be \$4.86 million for this financial year and also for each of the 2014–15, 2015–16 and 2016–17 financial years. I find that remarkable, because there is no way known that exactly the same amount of revenue will be coming into the lands portfolio each year from the proceeds of pastoral leases; that amount will not be consistent. As members well know, there is certain to be a fairly dramatic change in the number of pastoral leases in this state and of the revenue to be derived from those leases because of the changes that will occur with the renewal of leases in the middle of 2015. On 30 June 2015 those 500 or so pastoral leases will expire and will be up for renewal. A lot of decision-making must be done in government before those leases can be reissued. It is an interesting point that some of the pastoral leases, indeed perhaps the majority of leases south of the Kimberley, are held as pastoral leases but that the activity going on at those properties is no longer that of pastoral activity. It is hard to understand how the government could be reissuing a host of pastoral leases when the income derived from that land is not really from a pastoral activity.

During budget estimates I referred to two reports. One is called “A Report on the Viability of Pastoral Leases in the Southern Rangelands Pastoral Region Based on Biophysical Assessment” by Dr P.E. Novelty and Mr D. Warburton, dated 7 September 2012. The other is titled “A Report on the Viability of Pastoral Leases in the Northern Rangelands Region Based on Biophysical Assessment”, again by Dr Novelty and Mr Warburton and dated 7 September 2012. When I raised these reports and their contents with the Minister for Lands he dismissed them as being desktop studies. I do not think that is right. These reports come on the back of inquiries conducted and chaired by Hon Monty House when he was in this place and a host of other reports, and represent a synthesis of the land capability assessment work that has been going on for many years. The reports presented to me were censored. I obtained the reports through freedom of information. I was not given access to some areas of the

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reports because there was a feeling in the Department of Agriculture and Food that the information might somehow be confidential. I question that confidentiality when what we are talking about here is, after all, a public asset. We want to know about the health, wellbeing and viability of that public asset, yet we are not to be given that information. Clause 4(2) of schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 1992 was invoked to constrain or hide from me some of this important information. That is unacceptable and I plan to contest it. This is important, because we are talking about a modest revenue stream to government of \$4.8 million a year. However, we are talking about the viability of pastoral leases throughout the state. The reports that we have been given, which the minister was keen to dismiss as desktop studies, have provided some very important information on the viability of pastoral leases. They refer to the number of pastoral leases that probably do not meet viability thresholds. In looking at the report on the southern rangelands, we see there are about 131 leases that do not meet the viability threshold when all available land area is considered, and 181 that do not meet the viability threshold when only land with a potential carrying capacity greater than 5.5 dry sheep equivalents per square kilometre is considered.

There are certainly some areas for concern with the way this matter is being treated. We have some debate ahead of us about the diversification of pastoral leases, and perhaps that would go some way to enabling this recurrent revenue stream to be somewhere approaching the amount that is in the budget papers. If we were to allow for some degree of diversification, some of the \$4.8 million could be approached. During estimates, the Minister for Lands and I discussed this issue of diversification and how, under the act as it is, it could be feasible to enable that diversification to take place. It may not be necessary to amend the Land Administration Act 1997, although I gather that the minister is foreshadowing that. My understanding is that the potential is already there in the act as it stands—I have taken outside advice on this—for the minister and the Pastoral Lands Board to do an assessment of diversification proposals and approve and then monitor those projects. I need to be very clear about this; I think some diversification projects could be disastrous. Some people will come up with proposals that involve the use of plant species that might grow in great abundance in some areas but could also be environmental weeds and therefore extremely costly to the state when it comes to controlling them in the future. There are all sorts of ideas that people might have for diversification.

The idea that often comes to mind is tourism. There is lots of potential for diversification on pastoral leases using tourism assets, recognising that many pastoral leases contain some absolutely stunning country. If a pastoral lease holder is given the opportunity to share that with the broader community, and recognising the growing demand of people to get out and really experience our outback and the essence of what this great state has to offer, I think there could be a real demand for what is on offer, especially with the expert guidance of someone who is resident on a pastoral lease. This is where I would love to engage the minister in further discussion. This is a comment that was made in the reports I referred to before: if we just go ahead and renew the whole lease as it is, we may be lumbering people with 250 000 or 400 000 hectares that they do not really want or require. They could, through a negotiated process, be much happier with a 1 000-hectare freehold block that includes their homestead. That block would enable them to have some pastoral activity and some tourism activity—in other words, some diversification of their lease. This would ensure that we still have people in the rangelands who are perfectly skilled and capable of acting as rangeland managers but who would not have the situation that they currently face of having to stock vast areas with all the difficulties, especially the viability problems, of managing a 250 000 or 400 000-hectare lease.

There are some exciting opportunities there, if we approach this matter correctly. Within the Department of Lands it seems that there is a desire not to merge the rangelands reform process with the pastoral lease renewal process. This gets back to the revenue stream in the budget papers that I am talking about. It does not seem to make sense to try to separate those two things. We have to accept that we need rangelands reform and we need to undertake that rangelands reform prior to reissuing leases. I am very concerned that if we do not do something about this, we could be issuing leases for 36 per cent of the area of the state for 50 years and just hoping that we can muddle on in the same way as we have done in the past and we will miss the opportunity before us to reform and review things. That would be a great shame. After all, it is for not only the wellbeing of those who hold the leases, but also the protection of this public asset.

I have done some research on the history of pastoral leases and it is very interesting. In the nineteenth century, when the notion of pastoral leases was first being considered, it was only ever to be a temporary land use determination or approach until the actual land use capability of areas was worked out. That is where we are at now. Thanks to reports like the ones I have referred to, we have that land use capability assessment and we should use that information to make decisions for the future in the best possible way.

There is much more to say on this whole issue; it is a very important one for us. As well, I am disappointed to see that there is nothing in the budget papers to deal with the native title arrangements that would be involved in the changing of the leases. There is a need to look at the future acts situation, and there should be money. Given

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the proximity to the all-important deadline of 30 June 2015, I thought a sensible allocation of money would have been put aside for that purpose. I note that the Department of Agriculture and Food is one of the few agencies to receive a significant boost in its funding. I had hoped that in that increase of funds we would see money set aside for the assessment of pastoral leases. That work could have been done in combination with the Department of Lands. That would have given me heart, but I do not see that in the budget papers. I raised this with the minister during estimates and he was surprised that I was making such an issue of it—that concerns me as well. He can rest assured that there is a growing interest in this matter right across the state—all sectors of society want to know the future of our rangelands. I welcome that public debate; I think it is vital that we have that debate so that we do not miss this opportunity before us. We need to get the best possible outcome; an outcome that enables people to get out and experience the state's many assets and does not reserve them just for those few people who currently hold a pastoral lease, and that provides diversification opportunities for those who do hold leases. This situation presents all sorts of opportunities for additions to the conservation estate; we might actually recognise that some people do just want to hold a pastoral lease for land conservation purposes. I would certainly welcome that option being officially available to people rather than the current set of circumstances in which it is almost a little bit "blind eye" and we pretend that someone is running a sheep station or cattle grazing operation when in fact they are managing that land for conservation purposes. I have concerns about this element of the budget as presented and I look forward to further engagement with the minister on how to improve things for the future and to get the best possible outcome for the state.

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland) [7.19 pm]: In the brief time allocated to me, I rise to speak on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013–14 Bill 2013. The budget this year was one of broken promises and wrong priorities. I intend to briefly talk about both issues. In terms of wrong priorities, there is no more wrong priority than the cuts to the education budget that were made in this year's budget. Slowly but surely we are finding these things out. The government was not honest about these cuts when the Treasurer delivered his budget speech in this house just a month or so ago. We are now finding, as we go through those budget papers, some very wrong priorities. I have certainly discovered that about \$1.5 million will be ripped out of schools in the Midland electorate. I suspect it may be more. They are the preliminary calculations I have made; I prefer to be conservative about these things. I expect that when I get the tally back from all the parent groups in my electorate, I will find out that the cuts to education amount to more than \$1.5 million.

We have heard from the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Education, who resides in the other house, that this is somehow part of some new strategy—this is not about cutting the budget; this is about a new way forward and restructuring things so that funding goes to areas of greater need. I want to make it very clear in this house that there are very few more needy areas than the electorate of Midland. As a whole, Midland is not an affluent area. As a whole, many families struggle to make ends meet. Families have been struggling even more to make ends meet under the current government. Families have seen their electricity and gas prices go up. The cost of rent and housing has gone up, as have public transport costs. We found out, for example, that families in my electorate will no longer be able to park for free at Midland train station, even if they get there early enough. They will now have to pay \$2 a day. The Treasurer scoffs at that and says, "It's a gold coin donation!" Maybe it is for people in the western suburbs, maybe it is for people in Busselton, maybe it does not affect people in Busselton and maybe the Treasurer does not care about it—but I care about it. People in my electorate will struggle to pay that. Two dollars a day is \$10 a week. It will cost people \$500 to park at Midland train station for 50 weeks a year. On top of that, I have calculated that an increase in public transport fares will mean another \$500. Someone who currently parks at Midland train station for free, and who travels to the city and back each day, will be out of pocket by \$1 000. That is a lot of money.

On top of that, children attending school in my electorate will find they have fewer resources, not more. I have been in touch with a number of schools in my electorate. Concerns have been raised by parents of children at a range of schools in my electorate, and guess what? I cannot find one who is doing better under the so-called new funding arrangement. Swan View Senior High School, which does not have an affluent cohort, will be subject to cuts. From information I have gleaned so far out of this total mess, schools with low numbers will actually get less money, not more. Unless someone can tell me something different, I understand that Midland has the highest proportion of Aboriginal people of any metropolitan electorate. I have schools that have 20 per cent-plus Aboriginal enrolment. I do not have to lecture this house about Aboriginal disadvantage. I also would not have thought I needed to lecture this house about the disadvantage of people in lower socioeconomic groups and how important it is that those children get extra assistance by way of education.

If one believes the Premier's word, one would think that he was somehow going to rob from the rich and give to the poor, but he makes no pretence of it. He has stood in this house and said that Churchlands Senior High School will get a lot more money. Churchlands Senior High School has a lot more money in the bank than has Swan View Senior High School or Governor Stirling Senior High School. Schools in my electorate collect a lot

less when it comes to school fees that parents are charged—fees that have been put in place under the Barnett government. The amount of school fees collected in an electorate such as Churchlands vastly exceeds the amount of school fees that schools in Midland are able to collect. I have produced figures to the house in previous years; I do not intend to do so again. Midland schools are struggling schools and collect less fees. We have fewer affluent parents. Kids have fewer opportunities in life. It is more likely that they struggle in terms of their basic literacy and numeracy skills. We have more Indigenous kids who need an extra hand-up, and there are other kids who could do with a hand-up, too. The Premier has scoffed at small class sizes. It shows how out of touch he is.

Flyers were distributed in my electorate during the election campaign in which the government patted itself on the back that it had finally delivered Governor Stirling Senior High School. That was a school committed to in the 2008 budget by the then Carpenter government. I lobbied to get funding in the budget for that school for a period of four or five years. Finally, in May 2008, there was \$63 million in the budget for that school. When this government was elected, over the next 12 months the works program at Governor Stirling Senior High School slipped backward. Suddenly we found that other schools, such as Applecross, that had an Independent member—whom the government needed to help it govern—were doing better. The former member for Churchlands, the so-called Independent member whom the Liberal government needed in the last Parliament, got about \$20 million for an extra music block at Churchlands Senior High School. That is where Liberal–National priorities lie—in the western suburbs. I am absolutely furious about the wrong priorities of this Parliament. I am furious that \$1.5 million will be taken away from children and schools that need that money the most.

While I am on the topic of things not being delivered for my electorate, I note for this house that during estimates hearings I sought some answers from the Minister for Police about what was happening with the closed-circuit television network promised during the election. The member for Morley and assorted other people put out a press release along the following lines. The one in Midland stated —

Building a better CCTV network in Midland

- **\$13.5million for more CCTV cameras, establishment of a State CCTV Strategic Plan and centralised access, meaning more cameras in more places;**
- **Will allow better coordination of CCTV and possible police response in real time;**
- **Plan expands on the Liberals’ commitment to community safety.**

Premier Colin Barnett said a Liberal Government, if re-elected, will fund additional CCTV cameras and introduce a coordinated State CCTV network, which will assist in targeting problem areas and ensure more effective police tasking in the Midland electorate.

One of these statements went out in just about every metropolitan electorate. The press release continues —

“By funding additional CCTV cameras in crime hotspots and integrating the State CCTV network, the Liberal Government will provide a coordinated approach to CCTV use by police, local government and businesses,” he said.

It sounds good. It goes on —

Daniel Parasiliti said an important focus will be on areas with high pedestrian traffic and crime hot spots, particularly those outside train stations and bus depots, such as Midland Train Station, Woodbridge Train Station, East Guildford Train Station and Guildford Train Station.

“It is as people leave train and bus stations and walk to their cars, homes, or businesses that they can feel unsafe—people are entitled to feel safe as they travel to and from their homes and this continues the Liberals’ commitment ...

The member for Morley’s press release is just about identical. The government promised \$13.5 million—\$5 million of that was for a community grant fund and the rest was for establishing the network. Talk about not delivering on a promise. Where is that money? The need was now, and suddenly there would be cameras. I would love to know how many cameras we were ever going to get for \$5 million between about 20 different local government authorities. I know how many of those will be delivered in Midland. The fact of the matter is that, under questioning, the Minister for Police admitted that there is only \$200 000 in the budget. That \$200 000 is just there this year. How much is there next year? Zero. The year after—zero; and the year after that—zero. The \$13.5 million is not there at all. It is not in the forward estimates and it has not been committed to. The Treasurer might say, “Well, we can commit to that next year or the year after; we will make it up as we go along,” but the fact of the matter is that if he puts those figures in and puts all those commitments in, he will not have a surplus in any of the next few years—and there is the lie of it. Colin Barnett and the whole team went out and promised \$13.5 million over the next four years. The government came into this place and produced a budget in August, about four months after we had anticipated it—we normally expect the budget in May—and

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Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Roger Cook;
Ms Janine Freeman; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Troy Buswell

then we find out that the money is not all there. The \$13.5 million that people had every right to expect is not there. This is the \$13.5 million that deals with a real need to meet a real expectation and a real priority in the Midland electorate, the Morley electorate, and probably Forrestfield and every other electorate that had a similar press release.

It will cost \$200 000 for the government to work out what it is doing as there is no plan. I can understand why the government might want to do some strategic planning, because it admitted it did not have a plan. It had been in government for four and a half years and did not have a strategic plan. It did not care about closed-circuit television networks or linked up plans for the first four and a half years, but it then said it would do this when it was re-elected, even though it did not even have a plan. It is now going to spend \$200 000 on a plan. Guess what? Local government authorities had a real expectation that something was going to be delivered. The City of Swan thought: “Yay! There’s going to be \$8.5 million for them, and \$5 million in a grant fund. How much of the \$5 million can we put up our hands for?” It turns out that this year there is nothing—a big, fat zero—for what is clearly a community priority. No money is available in the out years either.

The other matter I raise in the three minutes available to me is the absolute sham of the road trauma trust fund. What we have seen this year is nothing short of disgusting. Contrary to a recommendation of the Road Safety Council, more than \$10 million is being syphoned off into administration costs. Further, we were not even given the papers for scrutiny ahead of the budget process. These things were not announced in the budget and were not available in the budget papers. As I pointed out, the previous Minister for Police; Road Safety provided this information. It is an absolute sham. We finally got one page out of the minister that was handed to us on the night of the estimates hearings, and I will quote from business case 4, which is one of the headings on the A4 page; it reads, according to my notes, “Enhanced speed enforcement administration costs, WAPOL, \$7.395 million. Enhanced speed enforcement administration costs, DoT, \$2.5 million. Enhanced speed enforcement administration costs DOTAG, \$103 000”. Therefore, more than \$10 million was taken away in administration costs of that fund. We also learned that the Road Safety Council wanted to allocate \$104 882 050—so nearly \$105 million. It clearly believed that that money was available to it.

Upon further questioning, we found out from the Minister for Police, and she has now confirmed, that about \$55 million is sitting in the road trauma trust fund. The government allocated just \$76 million—\$76 481 857—which is \$10 million less than was allocated last year, despite the fact that the government had accumulated \$55 million—plus in the road trauma trust fund. This is another Barnett government lie. It said it would spend 100 per cent of the money from speed and red-light camera fines on road safety, yet it is syphoning it away and keeping it in a trust account to try to balance the Treasurer’s books.

MR T.R. BUSWELL (Vasse — Treasurer) [7.34 pm] — in reply: It is my understanding that the member for Midland’s comments close, effectively, opposition members’ contributions to the debate this year on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013–14 Bill 2013. It has been quite an extensive third reading debate. My recollection is that very few members opposite who have been present to participate have not used up their full 15 minutes.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: I only used 14 minutes.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I think the member for Midland is in her fifteenth minute. I am not going to say much more, other than to thank those opposite for their participation. We move now, of course, to the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2013–14 Bill 2013, and no doubt debate will be directed very closely at matters of a capital nature as they appeared in the budget.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.