

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 March 2018]

p583b-591a

Dr M.D. Nahan; Mr David Templeman; Dr Mike Nahan; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Ben Wyatt

MOORA RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE

Standing Orders Suspension — Motion

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton — Leader of the Opposition) [3.14 pm] — without notice: I move —

That so much of standing orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the following motion to be moved forthwith —

That this house condemns the McGowan government for closing the Moora Residential College and intentionally misleading the public on the cost of keeping it open.

Standing Orders Suspension — Amendment to Motion

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [3.14 pm]: I move —

To insert after “forthwith” —

, subject to the debate being limited to 20 minutes for government members and 20 minutes for non-government members

What a pathetic effort by the opposition today!

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am speaking to the motion now, member for Dawesville.

The SPEAKER: He is speaking to the motion. He is allowed to do that. I am sure you know that, member.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: What a pathetic effort by the opposition today. The opposition had a chance to put up a matter of public interest. That is the opposition’s role—put up an MPI. What a gutless effort by the opposition!

The SPEAKER: Minister, tone the language down a bit, please.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Mr Speaker, what an appalling effort by the opposition—totally disorganised and chaotic.

Point of Order

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Mr Speaker, we are talking about the need for the suspension of standing orders. The urgency of it has nothing to do with an MPI. We can still do the MPI. As we know, when a member moves for the suspension of standing orders, it is usually with regard to a matter of grave importance.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order, because it deals with the fact that the Leader of the Opposition had a chance to move an MPI and he did not. That is all the minister is talking about.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Last week, the opposition had the opportunity to move a matter of public interest. If this issue is so important, the opposition should have foreshadowed before 12 noon that it would be moving this particular motion. That is what the opposition should have done. That is the normal custom and practice for the operation of the Legislative Assembly. What the opposition has chosen to do is effectively move a second MPI this week. This is the first MPI, and the opposition will probably seek to move another MPI tomorrow or on Thursday. I can tell the opposition that we will agree to do this today. However, this sort of behaviour is not appropriate. It is not appropriate to continue to allow the opposition to abuse the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly. This is a classic example of how the opposition wants to abuse the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly. We will agree to the suspension of standing orders, subject to the debate being limited to 20 minutes for each side. That is why I have moved that those words be added to the motion. However, the opposition needs to understand its role in this. The opposition had the opportunity today to move an MPI. That is the normal convention and practice of the Legislative Assembly. However, it refused to do that. Now this has suddenly become a matter of public interest, and the opposition is seeking to suspend standing orders. We will agree to debate this issue, as I have indicated, with 20 minutes per side. I am happy for that to happen.

Amendment put and passed.

Standing Orders Suspension — Motion, as Amended

The SPEAKER: Members, as this is a motion without notice to suspend standing orders, it will need the support of an absolute majority for it to proceed. If I hear a dissentient voice, I will be required to divide the Assembly.

Question put and passed with an absolute majority.

Motion

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p583b-591a

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DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton — Leader of the Opposition) [3.17 pm]: I move —

That so much of standing orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the following motion to be moved forthwith —

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has moved the wrong motion. He has moved a motion to suspend standing orders. Standing orders have already been suspended. The Leader of the Opposition needs to move the substantive motion, otherwise there is no question before the Chair.

Debate Resumed

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I move the motion.

That this is an urgent issue should be apparent to anyone who cares about education in this state. Anyone who is attending Parliament should know that this is an urgent issue, even the member for Mandurah. We have a plan to move a matter of public interest, and we will address that issue tomorrow. However, this is an urgent issue and that has made it necessary for the opposition to move for the suspension of standing orders.

The real issue here is that the government made a range of decisions on cutting back essential services to regional and rural Western Australian education. In fact, the Premier, in his various speeches of late, has identified that some of those decisions were fundamental errors. I think he apologised for the Schools of the Air decision. He said that he got it wrong. He said that it was a mistake and that it was rushed, which says a lot about the Expenditure Review Committee under this government. He said that the government did not understand how important Schools of the Air was to the Western Australian community.

The SPEAKER: Members, if you want to have a meeting, go out outside, please.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: It was clear from the Minister for Education and Training's description of Schools of the Air that she did not understand the full economic ramifications of that decision, because she was going to replace Schools of the Air with funding from elsewhere. The Moora Residential College decision is similar. The government does not understand the full ramifications on the Moora community and the families who either send, or want to send, their children to the residential college, and it has put up a range of issues that are simply false. I will go through some of them. First, there was \$8.7 million in the budget the government inherited under royalties for regions to revamp Moora Residential College. The Treasurer says that he supports royalties for regions, but the money from royalties for regions for Moora has been removed. Where did it go? It did not go—if the Treasurer believes what he says—to reducing debt and deficit for the expenditure review; it went somewhere else within the royalties for regions budget. The government brays about how it defends royalties for regions. If that were true—royalties for regions is a billion dollar bucket of money—the government would move the \$8.7 million for Moora Residential College and spend it somewhere else in the royalties for regions budget; therefore, there are no savings. The government's decision on Moora Residential College has nothing to do with debt and deficit reduction; it has everything to do with other spending priorities. The government has taken \$8.7 million from the residential college and spent it somewhere else. There are no savings. The government is telling the people of Moora that it has higher priorities. The government has decided that Moora Residential College is not important enough to receive the \$8.7 million in royalties for regions funds that it inherited from the previous government and it will spend the money somewhere else. The truth is that we do not know where the government will spend that money, but most of the redirection of funds has gone to regional cities. The government has turned royalties for regions into royalties for cities. The government is misleading—I cannot say the L-word here—the people of Moora and the residents of the college about the real decision on the funding. The government did not need to do that. There will be no efficiency gained. The government chose to take money from that college and put it elsewhere.

Is \$8.7 million the right amount? The funding was for a rebuild and there were different opportunities, but we have been reliably told—we will investigate it—that the government could have had a lower cost redevelopment that would have maintained the facility for a period of time and made it safe for the children. The government still could have redirected the money to maybe the speedway expansion in Collie, or some priority area like that, but the government redirected the money, and that is what it did.

The government says that only 30-plus children are at the college. Actually, the number of children has been steady at a little over 30 kids for quite a few years. The numbers have gone down recently—do you know why? It is because the government announced it is going to close the college. If parents hear that their children's residential college is going to close, they react; they have to find someplace for their children to go. It is only understandable that when they see that the government will die in a ditch on this issue, they take their kids elsewhere.

Mr M. Hughes: How many?

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 March 2018]

p583b-591a

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Dr M.D. NAHAN: About four or five.

Mr M. Hughes: What about one?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: No, it is four or five, if we believe the only data put out by the Department of Education.

The Premier said that there are plenty of other residential colleges closer to where these people live. The school has done some analysis and found that only about one-third of people live closer to another residential college. This is a very important issue because many of these kids go to the residential college because they live in isolated places and have no other options. Importantly, these are not wealthy people. These are relatively low-income people. Many of the kids are Aboriginal. Many of them are the children of the farm workers. They do not own the farms; they work on them. They have incomes of \$30 000 to \$50 000 a year. They cannot go to Christchurch or Trinity or one of the private schools to which members on the other side of the chamber often send their kids. These kids have no options. The government is making decisions about a range of kids in year 11 now who will not have continuity at high school for year 12. There are a range of kids in Moora Residential College now, including the head boy, who is in year 11 and wants to be an engineer. He wants to finish his studies at his current high school, but he cannot do that.

The government does not understand the impact of its decision on the school. There are 177 kids at the existing high school and if 15 per cent of those are removed, the cost per student in that school will go up and the options available to those kids, particularly in years 11 and 12, will shrink. The government has not taken into account the impact on the school. The government has not done a cost impact on the implications of its decision. Just like the government's decision on the Schools of the Air, it has underestimated the Moora Residential College community. The government does not give a damn about them. It took the money from them and it put it somewhere else and government members sit in this chamber and defend that decision with a bunch of nonsense.

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.26 pm]: I rise to support this motion. It was quite upsetting for me, as a mother of a boy in year 11, to listen to head boy of Moora Residential College, Andy Penny, stand on the steps of Parliament and implore this heartless government to reverse this decision. That young man is studying chemistry. He was not inspired to go on to years 11 and 12, but key to him making that decision was that he could live at Moora Residential College and not be as far away from his family as he would be if he had had to go elsewhere. He said that was one of the key things that made it easier to decide to go on to years 11 and 12 and achieve an Australian tertiary admission rank. He is 16 years old and next year he has all this uncertainty about where he will complete his high school education. He is a young man living in a regional setting. We know that kids living in regional settings, particularly those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, have poorer outcomes. I am not asserting that that is Andy Penny's scenario. As soon as the markets get thin and the number of kids attending these colleges is reduced, we know that the outcomes get even poorer for those kids, because we need a balance of numbers to have quality discussions in classrooms and to deliver quality education.

I find it really offensive that in my eight years as a member in this place I was lectured incessantly by those opposite about how quality education in Western Australia is a right for every individual. We believe that is so, and when we were in government we invested record amounts in education. We believe that it should not be a matter of luck of where people were born and happen to live, like my son, who happens to live in Scarborough and can go to a school within 15 or 20 minutes of home. He is lucky; those kids in Moora staying at this residential college are not lucky. They do not have the same privilege and right to education as every child in metropolitan Perth, because this heartless government has denied them that right. The government has denied those children the basic human right of providing them with safe residential accommodation so that they can complete their schooling in a college with some of their siblings and with other country kids in a small community that is away from some of the issues associated with larger country towns. That is why Moora college is so special; it is nestled in the heart of a small regional community and it has a strong community volunteer network around it that supports those kids. We heard those kids talk about how the supervisors at that college mentor them—they are surrogate parents—and that they would not be able to complete their education without their support. I am sorry, but saying, “Well, they can just go somewhere else”, is not what education as a taxpayer-funded right in this state has meant from the beginning of publicly funded education. That is not what it has meant. The Schools of the Air are for a very, very small handful of kids who need to be educated in very remote parts of the state. They have a right to that education. We fund it. Taxpayers have always funded it because it is the right thing to do and they should all have the same advantage.

The government should not come in here and lecture us about the politics of envy and class, when it is prepared to take vulnerable kids from regional communities and place them a further distance from their families than they otherwise have to be. We know from speaking to people at the college that \$500 000 could fix this problem. Where has the government allocated \$500 000? I will tell members where: by sending a delegation of people to the

Extract from Hansard

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p583b-591a

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United Kingdom under Local Projects, Local Jobs to sell their pet caskets. Pet caskets have been prioritised over these kids in Moora. Coffee vans have been prioritised over the education and safe placement of these children in Moora. Shame on the government; its priorities are wrong. The people of Moora and of every other community that these children come from know it, and so do all the parents and kids in metropolitan Perth. They feel like I do; they feel heartbroken that their child is being so severely disadvantaged by a heartless decision of this government.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore) [3.31 pm]: Apparently the minister representing the Minister for Education and Training does not want to make a contribution; he just wants to sit down and snipe from the sidelines, which is very disappointing and typical of the attitude of non-engagement that this government has in discussing the matters surrounding Moora Residential College and, indeed, all matters to do with recent education cuts that it has so ruthlessly imposed on regional areas. Certainly, it has caused a great deal of concern in many regional communities right across Western Australia.

Today a large gathering of people from Moora made the effort to come down to Perth. In fact, many of the truck drivers that could not be seen from Parliament House were up and down St Georges Terrace making their presence known. I believe some will have fines and explaining to do to the police, but they are not really concerned about that as much as the fact that they came here to make a statement and to make it known just how important Moora Residential College and education in central midlands are to the people of Moora. Not all the people who were here today are from Moora. One of the ladies who spoke was Mrs Ryan from Coorow. She is a mother of seven children who is now wondering where she will put her children and what educational opportunities will be available for her and her family. I think the upshot will be that that family will leave the district. We face that problem in many areas. When options are reduced for families, sadly, they make decisions to the detriment of the area and leave it.

I noted some of the questions that were asked of the Premier today, and his responses. In his responses he seemed to be taking some credit for developments in the Moora area—things such as Westpork and the Iluka Resources mineral sands mine et cetera. None of those things have anything to do with this government. To be quite clear, those matters were in hand long ago. In fact, Iluka was being discussed when I was president at the Shire of Dandaragan before I even came to this place. Stuff has been bubbling away in the background, but I believe from speaking to the current Dandaragan shire president that there is well over \$1 billion worth of projects in that shire alone, and projects in the catchment, if you like, of the senior high school in Moora.

One of the concerns that the community has expressed at some length, especially through the school council, is the knock-on effect of the closure of this residential college in Moora. It will have a very detrimental effect on Central Midlands Senior High School and its ability to provide quality education, especially for students in years 11 and 12. The government is denying that that will be the case. It has denied that there is any plan to downgrade the school. I do not think there will be any formal downgrade of the school—I do not think anybody in Moora expects there to be a formal downgrade of the school—but we will see a reduction in the school's ability to provide for the students and a lessening of the educational opportunities for not only the students of the residential college. Obviously, if this decision is not reversed and stands—not many of those students will be there—the students left behind will have fewer opportunities than they have at the moment.

Last week I went up to Moora with a couple of young guys from the Nationals. We walked around the streets of the town and discussed with people their concerns about what will happen if the residential college closes and if, with that, there is a diminution of the educational opportunity in the area. One of the people we spoke to, June Headland, is a Yued elder. June is the sister of Bev, who spoke out there today. She explained to me that for the Aboriginal people of Moora, this is considered to be a really threatening situation not only because some Aboriginal students have been in the college in the past, but also because if there is a reduction of opportunity for education in that area, it will affect the Aboriginal people greatly because they, traditionally and culturally, do not like to leave country. Those people do not like to leave country and go to another school. Some Aboriginal students move away, obviously, but by and large many of them will not. June is very, very concerned about what will happen to those students in the future. She spoke very, very well to us about it and explained her concerns, which come on the back of her long involvement in trying to improve educational opportunity for Aboriginal students in the area. She explained that she and others battled for nine years to get an Aboriginal liaison officer in Moora—a position that I believe this government has cut. There is already a lack of credibility —

Mr P. Papalia: A liaison officer? A police person or —

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am talking about an educational liaison officer.

Mr P. Papalia: They are called Aboriginal and Islander education officers. That is —

Mr R.S. LOVE: That is what June described the person as. She worked nine years to get there.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 March 2018]

p583b-591a

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Mr P. Papalia: We are putting them back.

Mr R.S. LOVE: She is an Aboriginal lady who worked very hard to get that position in the town, so I am not going to give her the disrespect of using different terms from what she used.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: You will have your chance. You are one of the rudest members in this house.

The SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr R.S. LOVE: Thank you.

For me personally this is a really concerning issue. I know that my next-door neighbour on the farm in Badgingarra is a single parent with two students in that college. He does not have the ability to send those kids any further afield than they already go in Moora. The upshot will be that his two girls will probably have to come back to Badgingarra, and perhaps have a very long daily commute to Central Midlands Senior High School. Their social opportunities will be much fewer than they have at the residential college. I think those kids have already had a pretty tough life, and this will certainly not help them one little bit. That is one family; there are many, many other families who will tell the government just how devastating this is to them. I think as much as anything else has been the complete lack of any consultation with the community up there. A letter went out on, I think, 13 December saying that the government is going to close the place, but nothing else happened until recently.

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Premier) [3.38 pm]: I note the suspension of standing orders has come on a day when the opposition has a matter of public importance that it could have moved. I think what has occurred here is that it forgot to put its MPI in, so it did not —

Several members interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Because it is so incompetent and does not understand how Parliament works.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, please.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is because the opposition is so incompetent. It does not understand how Parliament works and has no appreciation of its traditions or the way it has operated for the 21 years that I have been here.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It acts like a parliamentary rabble. We saw that during question time with those inane points of order and the ridiculous interference with your role, Mr Speaker. Now the opposition has failed to put its matter of public interest in by 12 o'clock, as is always the rule—95 per cent of MPIs go in by 12 o'clock on a Tuesday; the remainder are left for other days for whatever reason. We gave the opposition the benefit of the doubt.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Churchlands!

Mr M. McGOWAN: We gave the opposition the benefit of the doubt on the basis that it was probably going to move something on another day because there had been the rally out the front, which might have sucked up the media, but because the opposition is so incompetent, it forgot to put its MPI in and it has now moved the suspension of standing orders. That is exactly what has happened here. The member for Churchlands is the manager of opposition business and he is responsible.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Churchlands!

Mr M. McGOWAN: The pretender there, the pretender to the throne, the bloke undermining the leader, is the one who is responsible for this.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: We know you are under pressure when you make personal attacks.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Yes, right; okay. Yes, I am under a lot of pressure. I can tell members that any pressure I am under is not because of the opposition.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 March 2018]

p583b-591a

Dr M.D. Nahan; Mr David Templeman; Dr Mike Nahan; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Ben Wyatt

Mr M. McGOWAN: What I will say about it is this: I will explain briefly, because other members want to speak. I appreciate that many people in Moora would hold this issue dear, but I will just explain to them again, because I think some misleading is going on. This is the boarding hostel. By definition—I have explained this to the journalists as well—the students do not come from Moora; they come from elsewhere. As I said in question time, a range of students come from locations from which they go past existing hostels with positions available in order to go to Moora; they go past. Some of the students come from Marble Bar, Eighty Mile Beach, Sandstone and Geraldton. Positions are available at the existing hostel in Geraldton. Other students live in the wheatbelt and because they live in a hostel, their parents, their family or their carers, by definition, in order to see them or bring them home, have to drive a distance. Alternative options are available for them at Northam. Northam Senior High School is a bigger school with a wider range of course offerings, and Northam hostel is currently about half empty, with positions available. We are saying to people that around eight of these boarding hostels are out there, of which four, or five if we include Moora, are in the wheatbelt. Other opportunities are out there for students. It is not as though, as some of the language suggests, there are somehow no other opportunities for people. It is patently wrong to suggest that.

Secondly, we want to see Moora prosper. I think what is being lost—I will advise the council of this later today, I will advise the opposition and I will especially advise the local member—is that all of this talking down of Moora does not do that community any good. When people talk down a town they create fear, unhappiness and a self-fulfilling prophecy in the community. That is what they do.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Dawesville.

Mr M. McGOWAN: That community had discussions with the Minister for Regional Development; Agriculture and Food. A range of opportunities that she has been working on, and may well have worked on for some time, are opening up. People in Moora should be talking up that community, the council should be talking up that community and the local member should be talking up that community, because a range of opportunities are opening up, with families moving there because of the enhanced confidence in the Western Australian economy under Labor. We will see families moving there and, therefore, more students at the school. I want to see that happen in Moora. I mentioned that earlier today. There is Iluka, a mineral sands company, and Westpork, but a number of other companies out there are looking at Moora to put operations into it. When that occurs, local people will get employment and other families will move in. That is a good thing. I want to talk up Moora and that is what we should be doing—talking up the local opportunities.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will explain it again. I have the report by the architects—the project definition plan.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Mr M. McGOWAN: The scaremongering Leader of the Opposition, the harbinger of doom and gloom, does not understand. Here is the report that was tabled today—the Moora Residential College project definition plan report—compiled by architects, not on the back of an envelope, as the opposition has been saying. It states that the cost of refurbishing the boarding hostel is between \$7.2 million and \$11.2 million. That is what it is for 26 —

Dr M.D. Nahan: There was \$8.7 million of royalties for regions money.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Yes, and it was \$8.7 million, so the opposition's figures of \$500 000 are again wrong. Its figures were wrong. The former government's budget, or its cabinet decision—I am not even sure whether it was in a budget—indicated \$8.7 million. Let us just think about that. There are 26 students who have a range of other alternatives, often closer to where they live, and the opposition wants to spend more than \$300 000 per student on that boarding hostel, which needs all that repair work, when there are other opportunities, often closer to where they live.

Mr R.S. Love: That centre has been there for generations.

The SPEAKER: Member!

Mr M. McGOWAN: From memory, it has been there around 40 years. It is a boarding hostel.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Moore, you had your opportunity to speak.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is not the school; the school will continue to operate. It is a boarding hostel. It is a set of rooms with beds in them. I will let other people speak. The member for Moore has a choice. He can continue to talk down that community or he can talk it up. The government has made its decision. Its decision will stand, so it is up to him now whether he has the backbone to talk up his community, encourage investment —

Dr M.D. Nahan; Mr David Templeman; Dr Mike Nahan; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Ben Wyatt

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Dawesville, I call you to order for the first time. You are lucky you did not get a second.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Will the member for Moore lack backbone, integrity and the sense of duty to talk up his community or will he continue to run around scaremongering and creating false issues, when we clearly have explained that this issue can be managed and we are working hard with the families to ensure that the students are not disadvantaged?

The SPEAKER: The minister representing the Minister for Education and Training.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Tourism) [3.47 pm]: I am rising in that role. In response to the member for Moore, continuing on from the Premier's comments, the member's reflection on me earlier was pretty gratuitous and a bit snide. I was waiting to hear what he had to say so I could respond to his comments on behalf of the Minister for Education and Training.

I have to say that there was not much to respond to in the context of the Leader of the Opposition. I cannot recall that he said anything worthy of reflection. I do not remember much of what he said. It certainly was not anything of any substance in this debate.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will make a couple of points about the member for Scarborough. The last time the member made this attack in one of her speeches on the program that is delivering an intervention for at-risk children in an economically challenged community and is providing it in the form of training in hospitality and mentoring, I suggested that she not do it again. I suggested that she did not know what she was talking about in respect of that coffee van. She did not know the purpose of that program. It was a valuable contribution to a multicultural community that needs to work to try to prevent its children from getting into trouble, into crime, into unemployment and associated challenges. I suggested that the members for Scarborough and Vasse reflect upon that observation and refrain from doing that, yet the member for Scarborough did it again today, and I am disappointed by that. With respect to her claim to be offended by the government calling into question the former government's contribution to education, it is extraordinary that she has completely erased the memory of inflating TAFE fees by 500 per cent. The previous government drove thousands of Western Australian youngsters out of the TAFE system. It put the education of thousands of Western Australian youngsters out of reach with its increases to TAFE fees. It is incredible that opposition members have the gall to stand here and contemplate that we might be making it difficult for people in the field of education.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Scarborough!

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am appreciative that this is a really critical issue for some families in the Member for Moore's electorate, and I understand that, empathise and feel sorry for them. As a person who went to high school and primary school in country state schools and had to go by bus to the high school and had a brother who went to a hostel, which is now closed, I have some degree of empathy. I understand that it is disruptive for people to have to move midway through their education from one location to another, noting of course that none of these people resides in Moora; they do not. They stay at the hostel so by definition are not locals. I want to make the observation that it is incredible that the member for Moore would come into this place making such comments having been in government for eight and a half years. Clearly, he did not have much of an impact in his party room during his time in government, because there was expenditure—despite what the Premier indicated earlier—in the seat of Moore from royalties for regions during both terms of the last government. It was not insignificant. Over the course of the eight and a half years, \$37.6 million was allocated from the country local government fund, the community chest fund and the regional grants scheme—all funds from within royalties for regions allocations. But the member for Moore saw fit throughout his two terms in government—a little more, because he got eight and a half years—to concede that none of that money would be spent on the Moora hostel; it was not one cent. He did nothing to stand up for the people of Moora when he had the opportunity in government—and now it is Labor's problem!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr P. PAPALIA: Labor has inherited the problem. It is all our fault because the previous government racked up \$40 000 million worth of debt and we have to deal with the consequences and repair the mess that we inherited from members opposite. Now it is our fault. It is our problem. I find that incredible. What is really interesting is

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 March 2018]

p583b-591a

Dr M.D. Nahan; Mr David Templeman; Dr Mike Nahan; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Shane Love; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Ben Wyatt

that despite all that money that the previous government chose not to spend on Moora hostel when it was in government, there was a seat under the complete control of the Nationals the entire time of its eight and a half years that got even more money from royalties for regions than Moore; it was even in excess of that \$37.6 million that Moore received. It was Central Wheatbelt, which received \$54.5 million from those three schemes. Was one cent of that dedicated to Moora college? Was one cent dedicated to fixing the hostel? Was one cent dedicated to righting the wrong that the member for Moore is so egregiously offended by at the moment? Let us try to recall which members of Parliament occupied the seat of Central Wheatbelt during the two terms of government. I seem to recall there was someone pretty influential; someone who might have had the capacity to shift a bit of money around. There was someone who might have had the opportunity to dedicate a little time and determine that the priority might have been Moora hostel, but they did not do it. In fact, do members know what happened throughout that time? Moora never once appeared on the hostel list of priorities until the emergency cabinet decision right at the death knell of the previous government to provide a fig leaf to the cabinet that knew it was on the way out. It was on the slippery slide; it was approaching the election and it knew that it had to try to pretend that it cared about Moora—and that sadly is what members opposite appear to be doing now.

I recommend to all the people on the other side, particularly the Nationals, to take a little responsibility now and encourage those families to get in touch with the Department of Education and start planning for next year, because it is unfair for them to hold out to them the suggestion that if they keep going out the front of Parliament House and protesting or they keep going on social media, or they keep volunteering for the Nationals, there will be a change. That would be wrong. Do the right thing.

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park — Treasurer) [3.54 pm]: I rise to make a few concluding remarks in this final five minutes. I listened with interest to all members in this debate.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: No, it was with great interest, member for Moore. I find the faux outrage quite extraordinary. The other week I said in this place that during the time of the huge largesse, the spending without restraint, the member for Moore, either through him or through the local council, spent \$32 million in his own electorate through various grant programs. The member for Moore and the local government decided they did not want to spend any money on the Moora Residential College. They made that decision, and so be it. This faux outrage now from the member for Moore, who comes in here and says, “Aboriginal people want to stay on country”, and at the same time sat over here in silence as his government threatened the closure of remote communities, is not something I am going to sit here and cop. The Minister for Tourism has already made the point about the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. “Ms 500 per cent increase in TAFE fees” said—I wrote it down I was so startled—that apparently we have denied a basic human right to these children with the decision around Moora Residential College. There was a 500 per cent increase in TAFE fees during her time as minister, and she sits there and cries about some form of denial of human rights.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Thank you.

Mr B.S. WYATT: “Ms 500 per cent” she will forever be known by—I assure members of that.

All these things have a context. We cannot spend our time in government doing what the previous government did to the finances of the state without a consequence. I said this when I sat over there and I have said it since I have been over here. Let me quote again from page 139 of volume 1 of the Langoulant report. This is in respect of royalties for regions, quoting the CEO of the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder. I will be quoting this for quite a few years, just as a heads-up everybody. It states —

“Another project was the Ray Finlayson Centre. A \$16 million project. Did we need it? Probably not. We had quality sporting fields already. But because there is a lot of money there, it had to be spent.”

When members shoved \$16 million down the throat of a regional local government that it neither wanted nor needed, and then come in here when they find themselves on the opposite side of the chamber worrying about how money is being saved, do not be surprised if we do not listen to a word they say.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Carine!

Mr B.S. WYATT: When the Leader of the Opposition, the former Treasurer no less, says today, “You only need \$500 000”, but in his own budget had \$8.7 million, is there any wonder that we have these sorts of financial problems today?

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 March 2018]
p583b-591a

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The SPEAKER: Member for Carine!

Mr B.S. WYATT: Every single day we have to make decisions as a consequence of all opposition members—you, in particular, you villain, member for Riverton. All of you, particularly those on the front bench, sat there and gorged yourself during that time.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warren–Blackwood!

Mr B.S. WYATT: The Leader of the Opposition sits there with the deputy, like Lloyd and Harry, wondering why we have to make decisions to fix the mess that they made.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, that is your last chance.

Mr B.S. WYATT: That is what we had to do.

I noticed there was a reference to the Shire of Dandaragan and I met up with the shire president just the other week at the opening of the Emu Downs Solar Farm. She is a positive, highly impressive leader of that community who has nothing but positive ambitions for her community. I say to the member for Moore that he might want to get on board with that leadership because I was very impressed that she is taking a positive embrace of the opportunities that her community and the surrounding communities have in respect of the vast array of opportunities for that community. But do not think for a minute that the member for Moore’s time in government will not be hung around his neck, as it will be every single day for “Ms 500 per cent TAFE fees”. I will remind her of that every single day because ultimately it may sting, but it is not going to stop.

The SPEAKER: Minister, you will call the member by her proper name in future.

Division

Question put and a division taken with the following result —

Ayes (16)

Mr I.C. Blayney	Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup	Mr W.R. Marmion	Mr K. O’Donnell
Mr V.A. Catania	Mr A. Krsticevic	Mr J.E. McGrath	Mr D.T. Redman
Mrs L.M. Harvey	Mr S.K. L’Estrange	Dr M.D. Nahan	Mr P.J. Rundle
Mr P. Katsambanis	Mr R.S. Love	Mr D.C. Nalder	Ms L. Mettam (<i>Teller</i>)

Noes (38)

Ms L.L. Baker	Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr P. Papalia	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr S.J. Price	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr D.T. Punch	Mr D.A. Templeman
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke	Mr M. McGowan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr P.C. Tinley
Mr R.H. Cook	Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms M.M. Quirk	Mr B. Urban
Mr M.J. Folkard	Mr K.J.J. Michel	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Mr R.R. Whitby
Ms J.M. Freeman	Mr S.A. Millman	Ms C.M. Rowe	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Ms E. Hamilton	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Ms R. Saffioti	Mr D.R. Michael (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr T.J. Healy	Mr M.P. Murray	Ms A. Sanderson	
Mr M. Hughes	Mrs L.M. O’Malley	Ms J.J. Shaw	

Pair

Ms M.J. Davies

Ms J. Farrer

Question thus negatived.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Mr Speaker, as she crossed the Parliament, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said the words, “The worst Speaker ever.” I notice that the member for Scarborough has left the chamber. I am seeking for you to ask her whether she said those words. If she confirms that they are the words she said, I invite you to apply the standing orders.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. What happens on the field stays on the field.