

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON KEN BASTON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Agriculture and Food) [7.45 pm]: I certainly have some time left. At the last instance I was talking about the South Korean sugar mill that was in Kununurra. That was when we were in opposition and the owners ended up walking away from the mill. The minister responsible at the time was Hon Kim Chance and the government ended up paying some \$4 million for that mill so the sugar cane harvest could be put through that year.

We are looking at a very exciting era for Kununurra, but we need to make sure that these regional areas will be sustainable places where people want to live their lives and, of course, where business wants to invest. If business invests, the rest will virtually follow, and we will have successful communities that can grow and there will be a cradle-to-grave situation. I was there on Australia Day this year and there is a marvellous program in which each child born in Kununurra over a year is given a little boab tree that people can plant in their backyard. There is a plaque down by Lake Kununurra that has all the names of all the children born in that year, which is quite novel. I guess it is fine while someone is not breeding a lot of children, otherwise their place would be overtaken by boab trees!

While I am talking about that northern area, the Kimberley, there are a lot of pastoral leases there, with most of the land tenure under pastoral lease. At the end of last November, not long before we rose, a statement was made in this house about the pastoral land tenure. There have been some difficulties with some of the proposals that Hon Wendy Duncan read out at that time—namely, the hurdles of getting over native title in some of these issues. We will persevere and continue, because it is extremely important for the development of Western Australia, not just for the Kimberley, but for other pastoral leases in the rangelands. Another important thing is diversification and the ability to diversify out of just the grazing rights with things such as growing hay and other crops with pivot irrigation to feed cattle or stock. We have to then take that forward so there is a better opportunity to meet different markets other than just the live export market to Indonesia where animals have to be 350 kilograms—if they go over that weight, they cannot be sent there—and some of those animals then, of course, go to Egypt after that. If we can have feedlot systems and the feed, and have better control and supply, it would be beneficial to that industry. The problem with the present land act is that our diversification permit is not necessarily transferable and therefore, if the capital invested is not necessarily transferable, it is not realised and it is a hindrance to those who want to invest further. That of course needs to be changed in this new legislation when we finally get to it. I heard something interesting from a minister from the Northern Territory at a Standing Council on Primary Industries meeting at which all the agriculture ministers were present. The Northern Territory has got to perpetual lease, and looking at diversification there has been extremely important. Providing 30-year leases for diversification on the pastoral leases in the Kimberley is being looked at to encourage that investment to go further.

Another important event coming up in the Mining and Pastoral Region is the anniversary of the landing of Dirk Hartog and I bring it to the attention of this house. On 25 October 2016 it will be the 400th year since the first European set foot on the Western Australian coastline. That was at Cape Inscription, which is north west of Denham in Shark Bay. I chaired a committee that looked at what we needed to do to celebrate that event and the value to be gained for the region from that. Shark Bay, of course, received its World Heritage listing at the end of the 1980s I think. It probably has not received any great advantage out of this listing, but it does give it the opportunity to become a major tourism destination. I believe this celebration can put Shark Bay on the map. We need to invite the Dutch and British royalty, as well as the Indonesians, bearing in mind that their ships were sailing to the west coast of Australia and then turned north and headed up to Java to trade in spices. Of course, it was when the likes of Dirk Hartog ran off course that they found themselves on our shores.

Shark Bay is an interesting little town. It received World Heritage listing for its stromatolites but it also has unique dwellings made from pressed shell blocks. For those members who have not been to Shark Bay, it is worth going to see. Many of the station homesteads were made out of pressed shell as well. Basically, blocks were cut out of pressed shell with a bowsaw; they were turned into bricks, some lime was put on them and they were used for building at such places as the Carbla, Yaringa and Hamelin Pool pastoral stations. Of course, Denham has quite a few buildings that have been built in this way; and, in fact, one of my favourite restaurants is made out of shell grit brick.

In talking about the north once again, one of the people I want to acknowledge, but who passed away recently, is Ernie Bridge, who was the first Aboriginal to be elected as a member of Parliament anywhere in Australia, and also the first Aboriginal to hold a ministry in any Australian government. He was a very fierce advocate for the Kimberley and famous for his plan to pipe water down to Perth. I got to know Ernie in probably only the last

three or four years while travelling backwards and forwards to my electorate in Broome, when he was often on the plane with me. I was very privileged to have numerous discussions with Ernie on development in the Kimberley and where he saw it should go in the future. I never got the opportunity to fly around and look at some of the areas that he talked of, where dams could be built et cetera, and the value that he could see from that in the future.

I wanted to comment on one other thing, which is the motion moved by Hon Simon O'Brien. Unfortunately, time ran out; as it was one of Hon Simon O'Brien's very good motions, everyone wanted to talk to it. It was a very good motion about keeping people out of the prisons. Having been on the Standing Committee on Public Administration in the previous Parliament, I had the opportunity to visit quite a few jails—Roebourne and Broome Regional Prisons, the new prison at Derby and Bandyup Women's Prison.

Hon Alyssa Hayden: As a visitor, I hope!

Hon KEN BASTON: Yes; in fact, I visited the new Derby prison on three occasions; it is fantastic. I want to touch on that topic, because it costs a lot of money to house prisoners. Certainly we need correctional institutions, but we need also to look at how we can turn some of those prisoners around. The prison population in jails such as Roebourne and Broome comprises 98 per cent Aboriginal people, and something like 50 per cent are there because they did not have a driver's licence. I was very pleased that in its previous budget, the government allocated some \$6 million to teach driving skills, so that these people can come out of prison with a driver's licence and have some hope of getting employment. But this new prison—it is the only one in Australia in this sense—has an oval in the middle, so that the prisoners can have their own football team, and the prison is split up into cluster home-type things. There are seven prisoners to a house, and they do their own cooking and washing et cetera. Of course, many of these people have never learnt to run a house properly, so they are taught housekeeping. There are 120-odd places for male prisoners and 30 for females, and there are two separate areas with separate shops et cetera. They can also undertake TAFE training in subjects such as welding and motor mechanics. I think it is a fantastic advancement, and I will watch it closely to see how it sits there in the Kimberley. It is on about 60 acres of land—it is a large area—and I think the \$120 million that the government spent on it was well and truly worth it. I think there will actually be other football teams coming in to play, and I see Roebourne Regional Prison is now following that line.

The other thing I wanted to mention was the police and community youth centres—somebody has touched on those; I really support them. I have been in and seen what Broome PCYC is like and what it provides for the kids. It runs a course there, in conjunction with the education department, sponsored by Woodside; I sincerely hope that continues, even though the James Price Point LNG plant has been put to one side. Unfortunately, an offence actually had to be committed before it could attract federal government funding to do that type of course. Of course, Gerard Neesham's football coaching or clinics are very, very popular; the institute of training is also a major player. One thing I did forget is that the PCYC organises inter-town boxing; it is becoming very, very popular. There are fights at Roebourne, Broome and up to Kununurra, and members of the public are encouraged to go along.

I wish all new members all the best for their time in this house—welcome! I know they will enjoy it and I hope they have a productive and responsible four years, and that after that time they will feel as though they have achieved something for the state of Western Australia. I will now finish my speech four minutes early; it may have been a couple of days long —

Hon Col Holt: Adjourn it!

Hon KEN BASTON: I am not going to adjourn it again. Thank you very much, Mr President.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the motion be agreed to; Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich to resume her contribution to the Address-in-Reply.

HON LJILJANNA RAVLICH (North Metropolitan) [7.58 pm]: I welcome the opportunity to do so.

In terms of the Governor's speech, I have already canvassed a number of areas, but I want to move on to the area of economic development, which is a real weakness of the current government. I am just amazed at the mess this government has got itself into. Certainly, it is spending at a rate that has not been seen before in this state, and the revenue side, unfortunately, is nowhere near what was anticipated by the government. The Treasurer and the Premier, no doubt, find themselves in a spot of bother as things currently stand.

I just want to quickly go through some of the debt levels. I want to put on the public record that when Labor left office, it had debt very much under control. In September 2008, the debt level was somewhere around the \$3 billion mark. The *Economic and Fiscal Outlook: Budget Paper No. 3* shows total public debt in 2012–13 as \$18.59 billion. That will continue to trend upwards over the forward estimates. By 2013–14, total public debt will increase to \$22.17 billion and in 2014–15 that will increase to \$23.15 billion. Quite clearly, these are

phenomenal rates of state debt. There is no doubt that a very hefty interest bill accompanies that debt. That is money that is paid to debt servicing at the expense of being put into those areas of need such as health, education and law and order.

There is not much to show for this level of debt, which has been basically built up by this government. We have not seen any reductions in waiting lists for people in hospitals wanting access to treatment in the public health system. In fact, we are seeing those waiting lists grow. Electorate offices are inundated with calls from people looking for assistance for access to public housing. Time and again they are turned away and we have the unfortunate duty of telling those people that the best we can do is put them on a waiting list and chances are they may be considered in two or three years, such is the extraordinary length of the waiting list for public housing.

The prisons are in a terrible state from overcrowding. I have provided figures that show the prison population has grown by close to 1 000 extra prisoners in the system, with no additional prison facilities to accommodate them.

Hon Simon O'Brien: That is blatantly false.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: It is not blatantly false, Hon Simon O'Brien.

Hon Simon O'Brien: We spent over \$600 million on new prisons. Get off the grass!

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: If the member does not like it, he can get up and have a say. If the member wants to prove me wrong, get up and prove me wrong. The member will get his turn.

Further, we can see the police resources coming under increased pressure. We know from the Stokes report into mental health services across the state that mental health is a mess. We also know that our transport system is a mess. One has only to be on a freeway, a main arterial road or even a suburban road to see the number of rat runs that are increasingly developing because the main arterial roads in and out of the city and also into major areas are pretty much blocked all the time.

A lot of money is being spent but the situation seems to be getting worse rather than better. Obviously, the debt problem that has been created by the Treasurer and the Premier needs to be addressed. The way it will be addressed is through a number of corrective measures. Some of those corrective measures, or the ones in large part that will be administered as medicine, will be achieved by making cuts to public services. There will be a major requirement for cuts to a range of services right across the board in the form of a general government efficiency dividend. Just out of interest, in 2012–13 that dividend will net this government \$244 million, which will then almost double in 2013–14 to \$394 million, which will have to be harvested from savings across government agencies. By 2014–15, the amount that will need to be harvested increases to \$553 million and in 2015–16, \$709 million must be found across already stretched public services. In total, that is \$1.89 billion that will be taken from the forward estimates right across key government service agencies such as health, education and law and order. Some other corrective measures will be put in place such as the deferral of royalties for regions spending and government trading enterprise efficiency dividends. The major government trading enterprises such as power and water are already being used as cash cows for the government and no doubt they will continue to be. This is a very, very bad sign for households because most households are already stretched to find the money to pay their electricity and water bills, and more will be harvested. Those people on the other side who say that what I am saying is ridiculous ought to familiarise themselves with page 10 of the 2012–13 *Economic and Fiscal Outlook: Budget Paper No 3*. We do not have to be rocket scientists to understand it. If members want to know what is going on in this state and across government agencies in service delivery, they should familiarise themselves with it, understand it and know how it works. Then they might have an understanding rather than just bleating the government's lines. Government members should have an understanding of what exactly is going on and then they might be able to speak with some authority. The point that I am making is that whilst the current situation is bad, no doubt gloomy clouds are forming and it will get much, much worse. That should be of concern to all of us.

It is a bit hard to work out what is going on because we hear that more resource projects are being either approved or under consideration now than ever before in the history of the state. One would think that if that were the case, there would be a great feeling of optimism out there and the government would have the revenue it needs and would not be running up such levels of debt. One has to ask oneself: What is so wrong? What is happening? A very, very interesting magazine called *Prospect* magazine is brought out by the Department of Mines and Petroleum, for which Hon Norman Moore was the previous minister. I went back to look at what was happening in the resource sector in March 2008 to compare it with what is currently happening in resource project approvals or considerations. There has been a significant increase in the resource projects that are underway, approved or under consideration. *Prospect* magazine from March 2008, under "Significant resource projects underway or planned in Western Australia" reads —

Western Australia continues to lead the way as Australia's No.1 resources investment destination, with more than \$100 billion worth of projects either underway or planned over the next few years. These projects will create more than 38,000 construction jobs and more than 9,000 permanent jobs.

That was a very busy time. I can remember it because it was a boom time. One could not get into the front foyer of Parliament House because of the number of developers in the foyer wanting to do business and wanting to show things to the government of the day. One could not get a meeting room in this place because of the number of people wanting to meet ministers. Fast forward to March 2013, it is stated in the same *Prospect* magazine under the heading "Significant resource projects in Western Australia" —

Western Australia continues to lead the way as Australia's premier resources investment destination. There are more than A\$175 billion worth of projects either committed or under consideration for the State during the next few years. These will create more than 50,000 construction jobs and more than 15,000 permanent jobs.

If that was the case, members would think there would be amazing optimism out there; there would be increased revenue flowing to the state; the level of confidence within our economy would be great; and the demand for goods and services would be heightened or increased. But that is not the case. That is certainly not what I see. We have a government that complains about not having the revenue to do what it wants. The government is borrowing money to undertake its projects. We see a government that is raking up a level of debt that is unprecedented in the history of the state, yet we have a situation, demonstrated by what I have just read out from the government's own departmental magazine, that indicates that this place should be humming like never before. Because of the mess this government has got itself into, everybody will be paying the price. Government agencies will be paying the price. They will be cutting back services, and staff will be cut right across the board. There is no doubt about that. Consumers, Western Australian taxpayers and householders will all be slugged. Quite simply, we find ourselves in a terrible situation. It is one that has been brought about by an irresponsible government and an irresponsible Premier who is just out of control.

I want to quickly take members back to a report that was spoken about in 2008; that is, the Economic Audit Committee's report titled "Putting the Public First". It was billed as a major reform for this government. Remember, we went to the election in September 2008. As soon as the government was elected into office, the first thing the new Treasurer said, in November 2008, was that the financial statements showed that a new government inherited a budget in trouble. That is when our level of debt was \$3 billion, and that was a government in trouble! As a result of that, by November the Treasurer announced that a public service performance review was underway to find out how costs could be cut because of this \$3 billion worth of debt. In November, he was still talking about the need to tighten our belts. By December 2008, the Treasurer, Troy Buswell, said that the new government would address the emerging budget deficit and debt. One of the key ways in which he would do that was to put in place an Economic Audit Committee inquiry. He first of all put forward an economic audit discussion paper. That was released on 30 July 2009. Subsequent to that he put in place a full audit committee, which was to be chaired by Dr Shergold, I think it was. That Economic Audit Committee discussion paper was basically the blueprint about how the government would deal with a whole range of reforms that were going to put it on the front foot, reduce the level of debt, ensure that everything was operating efficiently, and so forth. In fact, that audit committee comprised Dr Peter Shergold, former secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet; John Langoulant, chief executive of Australian Capital Equity; and a number of other key people. Really, the point that I am going to make is that at the time, which was November 2008—Wednesday, 19 November specifically—when Troy Buswell announced the public service performance review in the form of the template, if you like, for the establishment of the Economic Audit Committee, which subsequently led to the Economic Audit Committee report that was subtitled "Putting the Public First: Partnering with the Community and Business to Deliver Outcomes", he basically said that on that day he had set in motion the most significant examination of the operational and financial performance of the Western Australian public sector since the landmark McCarrey report commissioned by a previous incoming Liberal government under Richard Court in 1993. That was in 2008. That report was done, it was made public, and to all intents and purposes the government was committed to the implementation of this major reform program.

I have to say that after the great big hoo-ha about how great this report was, how it would reform the public sector as we know it and how it was going to produce all these efficiencies, the fact is that anyone who has followed the development of the work of the Treasurer or, indeed, the evolution of this "Putting the Public First" report would know that it has been the biggest fizzer in history. I think that the public has a right to know what is going on here or what has gone wrong here. A number of very key recommendations were made in this report, and a number of recommendations should have been of very great concern to many people right across the public sector and outside the public sector. I will not go into the area of the funding of non-government organisations because we have done that often in this place, but I want to quickly touch on a number of

recommendations. One of the recommendations made in that report, “Putting the Public First: Partnering with the Community and Business to Deliver Outcomes”—the final report was in October 2009—was recommendation 8, which referred to strengthening the evidence base for decision-making through a number of things, including, at paragraph (c), requiring that major agencies undertake a value-for-money audit at least once every five years. We know that this has been happening to some extent, because the other day I asked a question of the minister representing the Treasurer about that specific recommendation. I asked in part —

- (1) To date which agencies have had a value-for-money audit?
- (2) Who undertook those audits and at what cost?

The Treasurer advised that the Departments of Education, Health, Commerce, Environment and Conservation, Housing, Planning, Transport and Western Australia Police have had a value-for-money audit undertaken by PricewaterhouseCoopers, KPMG, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu and Ernst and Young at a cost of \$2.291 million. These audits have been done. The police say that its audit showed that WA Police were already operating pretty close to the bone. The audits were to find out where the fat is in the system of these agencies, what they could be doing better and how they could become more efficient. When Dr Karl O’Callaghan came before the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations on Thursday, 11 October 2012 and was asked whether an efficiency audit had been undertaken of WA Police, he responded —

The very nature of the term “efficiency dividends” means that you need to become more efficient. One of the things I can point you to if you want some better advice about that is last year’s PricewaterhouseCoopers value-for-money audit of the Western Australia Police. One of the things that it raised in that audit is that there is not a lot of wastage or fat to make significant savings; in other words, the agency was running reasonably leanly and efficiently at the time. You can make as many changes to the budget profile as you like, as long as you accept that that has an impact somewhere on some level of service delivery.

I know from questions I have asked that, like all agencies, WA Police has been asked to make further savings. The fact is that if anyone here believes for a moment that these savings will not impact on front-line services, they are away with the fairies. That is really concerning. It is just an example of what is going on across the public sector. It is one very minor example of how bad things are. Those audits across the seven agencies are just the start. I am sure audits are due to be done on other agencies, because all major agencies were due to have a value-for-money audit done within the first five years of this government. This is the fifth year, so they should all have been done.

The other issue I want to point out, which is the big bogeyman here, is recommendation 23 of the Economic Audit Committee report, which states —

Agencies be required to routinely review their activities with a view to evaluating their sustainability for exposure to competition from the private and community sectors.

Its deadline was for it to take effect immediately. Obviously, this work has been happening deep in the bowels of organisations. In other words, agencies have had to be looking at activities they perform that they believe could be better performed by the private sector so they can get them ready for sale. This is the whole idea. The other day Treasurer Buswell was quoted in the paper as saying that he would not really be selling off the ports; he was just going to sell parts of what they do. I am putting it on the public record that Treasurer Buswell needs to tell us exactly what he has planned for the ports in this state. We want to know what he will sell and whom he intends to sell it to, rather than speaking with forked tongue. One minute he says the government will privatise parts of the functions of the ports across the state because they need to be made more efficient, and in the next breath he says, “Well, I don’t mean privatisation.” If he is going to sell them off, what does he think that is? There is a hell of a lot of dishonesty going on at the moment. Western Australians need to be told the truth about the government’s agenda. I believe the government’s agenda is contained in this report of the Economic Audit Committee, “Putting the Public First: Partnering with the Community and Business to Deliver Outcomes”. If that is the government’s agenda, it should go through all these recommendations and give us an update. The government has been working on this for one term. It has been burrowing around wherever it burrows around and wherever it squirrels about, and we want to know what is going on.

I will give members another one. Recommendation 30 of this report states —

Review Government Trading Enterprises ... to ensure that the governance and ownership of each business is appropriate for delivering Government’s policy objectives. The review should address the following issues:

- a) Does government need to be an active participant in the markets (due to market failure) or is it simply replicating something the private sector can do (with appropriate regulation)?

That says to me, “Have a look at what you’re doing. If it’s anything like what is being done in the private sector, you ought to ask yourself: would the private sector be better off doing this or should we continue to do it under a government banner?” I mean, gee whiz! Once again, that is nothing more than code for privatisation. The recommendation goes on —

- b) Can the GTE operate independently of Government? What policy outcomes is Government seeking from the GTE (for example, fully commercial provider of specific outputs, a source of revenue, industry and/or social policy)?

Clearly, anyone who has had a look at this document would be very concerned. Given that this was billed as the major economic reform program of this government, given that this report cost an enormous amount of money because of the high calibre of people involved in putting it together, and given that this report has basically slipped under the radar, it is beholden on this government, this Treasurer and this Premier to explain to the people of Western Australia exactly what is going on in this government’s agenda. Which parts of this report will be implemented; what is the time frame for the implementation; and what are the likely outcomes for the citizens of the state? It is no longer acceptable for the Premier and the Treasurer not to be transparent in their plans for the economic future of the state and for the people of the state.

HON NICK GOIRAN (South Metropolitan) [8.28 pm]: I rise to support the motion moved by my most excellent colleague Hon Liz Behjat in reply to the speech of His Excellency the Governor on 11 April this year. I have taken particular note of the remarks made in that speech about the responsibility of this Parliament. His Excellency said, and I quote from *Hansard*, the following —

... as in all human institutions, there is potential for error. It is the responsibility of this Parliament to preserve our democracy, to respect the integrity of the legislative, judicial and executive branches of Government and to work for the well-being of the citizens of this state to whom members are responsible. And it is essential, for a properly functioning democratic system, that there be vigorous, informed debate in this place, that the executive arm of government be held accountable and its actions scrutinised; and that the judiciary remain totally independent.

In respect of those comments by the Governor on 11 April this year, I want to make a few remarks of my own. I note in particular the remark that it is the responsibility of this Parliament to respect the integrity of the legislative branch of government. The question that needs to be asked is: how is this to be achieved? In my opinion, this can be achieved only if members of this place have a paradigm that includes the following five things: firstly, a respect for history; secondly, a respect for those who have served before us; thirdly, a genuine acknowledgement of the privilege of serving the electors of this state; fourthly, a respect for the right of each of us to express a view—preferably one that is informed—and, if required, vigorously; and, lastly, respect that the collective view of 36 hardworking members of the Legislative Council will represent a better outcome than the outputs produced by unelected public servants, albeit hardworking ones. It is my view that, in order to achieve the objective outlined by His Excellency, this important paradigm requires all five of those limbs to work in harmony; in other words, we cannot chop off one of the arms.

I begin my remarks this evening by congratulating my colleagues in the Liberal–National alliance on once again winning and forming government following the 9 March election. The people of Western Australia have clearly shown that they have confidence in the stability and strength of the government led by Premier Barnett. I would especially like to congratulate those within cabinet who have been charged with a role of such import, responsibility and accountability, and I encourage them in their task of leading the people of Western Australia. Madam Deputy President, you will appreciate that I believe we all have a role to play, and I trust that in light of my introductory remarks, it will be understood that I see my role to be the same as it was during my first term. My commitment to that role remains unchanged and, if anything, I hope that the beneficial experience gained in my first term enables me to fulfil that role to an even greater extent and degree than in my first four years.

The Governor outlined in his speech last month a number of the aspects of the government’s proposed agenda. By way of introduction, he said —

The Government has advised me of its legislative and policy agenda for this parliamentary term. It intends to continue to focus on the economic and social development of the State, whilst ensuring proper support and care for those in our community in need of assistance.

My summary of what the Governor has said is that it seems that the proposed agenda of the government is that we have economic and social development but in a compassionate context. This is quite a lofty goal for a government to achieve. I think it is incumbent on each of us to ask the question: where does one begin when one wants to seek such a lofty goal? In the limited time that I have this evening, I propose in my humble opinion that we begin at home. What I mean by that will become apparent shortly, but by way of brief digression and introduction to those further remarks, I want to recount a recent journey that I took to Sydney last weekend, 17

and 18 May, when I had the honour of attending the World Congress of Families. In my view, the declaration that was made at the conclusion of that congress on Saturday best outlines how we might be able to achieve the stated goal of this government in this term. I quote from the declaration that was provided at that congress—and, Madam Deputy President, bear with me, because there is some length to it. It reads as follows —

We, the delegates of the World Congress of Families VII, assembled in Sydney Australia, this 18 May 2013 affirm that the sustained prosperity and happiness of nations rests on the foundation of strong natural families.

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, signed by every nation on the earth, states that “men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family ... The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.” (Article 16.1, 16.3)

In agreement with earlier World Congresses and with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we hold that the natural family is the basic unit on which human societies are built and is the best environment for the moral, social and emotional development of children.

The natural family is the most efficient way of nurturing and educating children, of looking after the health and welfare of its members, of creating a vital domestic economy, of building cohesive communities, and of extending a compassionate hand to individuals and households, whatever their situation.

We affirm that the productive economy is sustained by strong families, which reliably shape the virtues needed for healthy economic exchange. Social and economic research overwhelmingly demonstrates that children born into stable loving homes have the best prospects for growing into healthy, intelligent, creative and morally grounded adults. On average, they become the most productive and engaged citizens and are the least likely to become dependent on the welfare state.

Accordingly, we declare that a family-centred economy requires the follow basic framework:

- The economy should serve the family rather than the family being a servant of the economic system and the state.
- A strong domestic, household economy is a true measure of a healthy society, and the basis of a robust economy.
- Economic policies should enable families to hold productive property and to be independent of the welfare state.
- Employers and governments need to respect the needs of natural families in their wage and labour policies.
- Market policies should support and encourage entrepreneurial innovation, ensure low barriers of entry into small business, and guard against excessive concentration of economic power and financial instability.
- Family-owned businesses should be encouraged as part of a market economy.

Gross Domestic Product must be defined to include the economic value of unpaid work done in the home and the community by families, so that society can recognise the contribution of this form of labour.

Governments must pursue policies of affordable housing, particularly for young first home buyers.

From these principles, we also affirm;

- Marriage as being the union of one man and one woman, voluntarily entered into for life;
- The protection of human life from conception to natural death;
- The right of children to be raised by their biological parents, wherever possible;
- That the root causes of hunger, poverty and environmental decay are the breakdown of the natural family and political and economic failures, not human “overpopulation”;
- That the real demographics dangers of the 21st century are ageing and declining populations: the world needs more, not fewer, children;
- That the great opportunities for family friendly commerce, communication and education on the internet must be made safe from the destructive impacts of pornography and other harmful content at the national and international levels;

- The concept of the family wage: wages, salary levels and taxation policy should reinforce natural family bonds; and
- That the natural family is the surest guide for the economic and healthy development of all peoples, including the indigenous communities of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.

The document concludes as follows —

This Congress appeals to policy makers, community leaders, the media and people everywhere to recognize that overwhelming research based evidence demonstrates the importance of marriage and families to our society.

Following my attendance at this congress, the question I posed to myself was: what practical measure might we take to achieve this lofty goal that is, in a sense, the goal of empowering marriages and families? It is interesting; not a day goes by when I do not read a story in the print media about young men and young women making some very poor decisions—poor judgement and risk-taking behaviour that often results in disastrous consequences: young men and young women drinking themselves to oblivion, drinking recklessly, driving recklessly and smashing bus shelters for no apparent reason. When this happens and I read about it, I think to myself not: What a wonderful world! but rather: What are we missing here? Madam Deputy President, you will realise that I am, to some extent, a pragmatist, and I know that there is no magic solution to these societal, First World problems. I am not as idealistic as to think that one solution is going to solve everything, but we have to acknowledge that there is a pattern emerging.

During my first term in Parliament, I have been to a number of most excellent organisations, one of which is Pregnancy Problem House. I saw some excellent work being done there to help young mothers with an unplanned pregnancy, often alone and in the context of a society that has little sympathy for their plight. I have spoken to people who work with disengaged youth and I have heard some fairly heart-sickening stories of the ill-treatment and abuse of which some of these poor kids have been on the receiving end. The pattern that is emerging is one of an absence of real men. By “real men”, what I mean is men who are a source of safety and protection; I mean men who have integrity and who are willing to accept responsibility. I mean men who are going to step up and engage with their children, teach their sons boundaries of respect, and affirm their daughters. It is for this reason that I am convinced that we should introduce a minister for men’s interests into the governance model of Western Australia.

It is important to note from the outset that this proposal of tailoring attention to the needs of men by no means whatsoever trivialises the issues impacting women. Despite the vast improvements in women’s rights and opportunities, there are still issues to be addressed, and we heard about some of them earlier this afternoon. These issues need to be addressed for women’s wellbeing, including a focus on the unacceptably high incidence of violence against women, especially domestic violence and sexual assault. But in my view, by respectfully addressing each gender’s unique needs, the result will be healthier individuals throughout all of society. This will include the improving of overall mental, physical and social health for males and will not come at the expense of women; rather, a positive impact will be felt in the wider community. As I alluded to in my maiden speech four years ago, we live in an interdependent society. Healthier men will also result in healthier outcomes for women and children too.

Australia has recognised and celebrated International Men’s Health Week since 2003. With the rising popularity of Movember as the forerunner of a growing awareness of myriad health issues facing Australian men, this underscores the need for the government to be proactive in this matter. Interestingly, in 2007 the federal government made a commitment to develop the first national male health policy. It identified the need for males —

to learn more about their own health, to adopt healthy routines, to have regular health checks to prevent chronic disease, and to seek medical help when needed.

In my view, this provides a framework for improving male health across Australia. Very interestingly, for those interested in this topic, there is currently no minister for men’s interests or the equivalent in any jurisdiction of Australia, nor one in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Canada or the United States of America. Notably, from the research I did, I found that in the UK in 2004 there were calls for a minister for men’s interests to be appointed to address issues such as men’s health, fathers’ rights, higher suicide rates and lower education levels. There has been some interest in this topic in Australia over the past couple of years. I guess in a very modest way, we could say that some momentum is building. I dare say that we have a long way to go.

More than 1 300 people attended the 26 public forums on national male health policy across the nation conducted by the Department of Health and Ageing in 2009, and 90 public submissions were received. In my view, politically, a minister for men’s interests makes sense. That is if we are willing to scratch below the surface. It will demonstrate a progressive government keen to foster healthy men and healthy relationships, a

proactive grassroots approach that will assist in crime prevention, reducing health service costs, decreasing antisocial behaviour, sustaining stable homes and all the subsequent benefits that these will foster in our communities.

Economically, in Western Australia, we have been buffered to some extent from the harms of the global financial crisis. The mining boom, however, has not come without a price to the mining workers. Those members from the Mining and Pastoral Region, including Hon Ken Baston and others, will know that as a result of the mining boom, to some extent there have been feelings of disconnection, exacerbated isolation, drug and alcohol abuse and addiction to pornography and prostitution. These things have been recorded in fly in, fly out worker or FIFO studies, and of course we all know those types of stories anecdotally. These have caused issues for individual men and their families and have also caused some issues on site. Western Australian farmers also play a vital role. They have contributed immensely to the success of our state. In my view, the families that sustain farming need proper care and support.

One of the treasured stereotypes of the Australian male is of being self-reliant and having an ever-present irreverent sense of humour. The “she’ll be right” and “no worries, mate” mentality is really at odds with the demographic of today. In many ways, this entrenched stereotype may contribute to the problems that are emerging. The sense of shame amongst those who feel that they are not the men they should be could be part of the reason that men do not access the services that are in place.

What better way to honour the men who have worked hard to keep our nation afloat than to provide a ministry that gets alongside men, not in a way that says they are victims and not in a way that feeds dependency or immaturity, but in a way that is well thought out, encourages healthy masculinity and builds on the strength of Western Australian men. Despite the best efforts of mothers, boys need the influence of a trusted male in their life. Research on the socialisation of boys has shown that where there is no prominent male role model in any young boy’s life, they will learn what it means to be a male from one of three other sources: the media, their peers or by reacting in an opposite manner to the feminine influences around them. By this I mean that if boys are surrounded by female influences, their perception of masculinity can be interpreted as whatever is not female. Rather than seeing sensitivity, gentleness, visual displays of emotion and responsibility as masculine characteristics, boys socialised in this way will see masculinity as the need to be aggressive, tough and uncommunicative. In some of the research I have done in this area, I have identified three innate and basic psychological needs of men. They are relatedness, autonomy and competence. Just to unpack that briefly, relatedness is the need for men to feel they belong and are connected to a group or a tribe; autonomy is the need for self-determination; and competence is the need to feel competent at something that lets them feel a sense of pride in themselves. If these needs are not met through constructive means, they will be sought through destructive ones. If these needs are met, men will display vitality and mental health, and if they are not met, men are more likely to display aggression, irresponsible and antisocial behaviour, and to delve into substance abuse. Most will not change their lives without some sort of exterior event or structure to push them on to the path. It is for this reason that many cultures have what is known as a rite of passage. Interestingly, the Sambia tribe in Papua New Guinea, the Mardudjara Aborigines and the Satere–Mawe tribe in the Amazon are just a couple of examples of tribes whose rite-of-passage rituals launch men beyond boyhood into manhood. Arne Rubinstein is a general practitioner specialising in adolescent health and the chief executive of Pathways to Manhood. He was quoted in an article entitled “Bringing Up Boys” published in, of all things, *The Australian Women’s Weekly* of September 2004. He said the following —

“All indigenous communities had a rite of passage for birth, death, marriage and puberty,” ... “But the one they ... put the most emphasis on was the rite of passage for a boy becoming a man. That’s because they recognised the health of their community depended on having community-oriented healthy men rather than big boys not knowing how to be men.”

In his book *Dying to Be Men*, Dr Will Courtenay identifies 50 behaviours that men are more likely to engage in and that result in men being at greater risk of injury, disease and premature death. The statistics in WA are nothing short of alarming. One need only cast a cursory glance over the publication from the Western Australian Department of Health entitled “The Epidemiology of Injury in Western Australia: Current status and future challenges” to see that the physical health of males in Western Australia is an area requiring action. Some of the notable inequities in male health are as follows: lower life expectancy, injury deaths, the leading cause of death being from lifestyle diseases, and the failure to access preventative health services. Since the creation of the National Male Health Policy, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has produced a document known as the “The health of Australia’s males: a focus on five population groups”, which provides a snapshot of the health status of males in this nation. The creation of that policy aims to address this particular widespread inequity. As noted by the policy, the good health of males is not purely the absence of disease but a complete, physical, mental, social and often spiritual wellbeing. For this reason, attempts at improvements in male health will be far more effective when acting in tandem with other initiatives. A minister for men’s interests would be the best

figure to coordinate efforts on this policy in this state for Western Australian males of all ages and all walks of life. Just as having the Minister for Women's Interests recognises the variety and uniqueness among women, it is important to take into account the varied life situations and issues that impact a range of males.

I will go a little bit more into the statistics. I am a big fan of Steve Biddulph, and I will refer to my notes from his book *Manhood*, which is accessible on the internet, which read —

The statistics are all dominated by men. And hurt men tend to hurt others. Physical violence against spouses, sexual abuse of children, divorce, moral bankruptcy in business and politic ... all point to something badly wrong with large numbers of men.

In the stats that I referred to, males consistently have a higher incidence of suicide than females, with approximately 80 per cent of all suicides being men, and particularly concerning in this regard is the prevalence of suicide among young males. In 2009, suicide accounted for 22.1 per cent of all deaths among males aged 15 to 24. Interestingly, from the research, men tend to be both the perpetrators and the victims of violence. That is obviously a generalisation, but that tends to be the case. Figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that the number of male deaths from assault was more than double the number of female deaths from the same cause in 2009; the number was 149 compared with 61. Young males aged 18 to 24 are most at risk, with 12 per cent reporting being physically assaulted by a man within the last year; 77 per cent reporting that the assailant was a stranger; and 79 per cent of male victims reporting their attacker was under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and 34 per cent stated that they themselves were also under the influence. The most common location was licensed premises. Males make up 92 per cent of Australian prisoners. In 2010, WA prisons housed 16 per cent of the country's prison population, and between 2009 and 2010, WA's growing prisoner population contributed to 92 per cent of the national increase in prisoner numbers. More than half the number of all male prisoners had previously been imprisoned and male prisoners were consistently more likely to have had prior imprisonment than had females.

I would like to quote Lee Hodge, who is the manager of programs at the Ashley Youth Detention Centre in Launceston, Tasmania. Again, this relates to the book *Manhood*, which is accessible from the internet. He states —

A recurrent story is the lack of nurturing males in their lives, although usually not spoken of in this way. Frequently young men will glory in the tales of survival at the hands of violent stepfathers, mates or police, and outdo each other in their attempts to score valued points in the detention game. Rarely are the stories of caring, gentle men in their lives shared, and if they are they are done so in private. No rage with these stories, only a sense of loss for something missed.

This state has the worst Indigenous male health, employment and life expectancy outcomes. A comprehensive review of Indigenous male health conducted in 2010 by Thomson, Midford, Debust and MacRae found the following three things: firstly, Indigenous males are overrepresented in prisons, and particularly so in Western Australia; secondly, 16 per cent of Indigenous males without any post-school qualifications were unemployed in 2006, compared with six per cent of non-Indigenous males; and, thirdly, Indigenous males are disproportionately represented among the homeless.

In my view, there are myriad ways in which healthy males contribute to a positive community. One of the most far-reaching roles that men can hold is that of a father. Healthy males increase the chances of intact families, with the roll-on effect of preventing poverty, as single mothers with dependent children are often large components of the lower end of the socioeconomic gradient, placing a further strain on housing. Healthy, happy men are more likely to have healthy, happy professional, social and personal relationships. When men are interwoven into a community as fathers, sons, brothers, uncles, friends and role models, it can create positive changes in men that translate to positive changes in the whole community. Conversely, the absence of fathers has also been shown to have a link with the increased likelihood of youthful delinquency and crime, increased likelihood of teenage drug abuse, more health problems—both physical and mental—and poorer education achievements, with an increased likelihood of dropping out.

But it is not all doom and gloom. There are a lot of great programs out there and a lot of good things happening. We only have to see the burgeoning popularity of men's sheds to know that men in our community are getting alongside each other. I take this opportunity to thank Warwick Marsh from the Fatherhood Foundation. Warwick is based in New South Wales, and I have met him on a number of occasions. I would describe him as a tireless and passionate campaigner for fathers and good fathering. Locally, I thank Dean Dyer from the Men's Advisory Network. I have been researching this area over the past couple of years and have had the opportunity to interact with Dean; he is a real pioneer in this area. He is at the coalface and he is the one talking to men. If members ever have the opportunity, I recommend they have a chat with Warwick. Although he is in New South Wales, he is the kind of guy who would be very happy to talk to people on the phone, as would Dean more locally. If members do that, then they should expect to hear some gut-wrenching stories because that is part of what the

whole issue is about, but they can also tell some amazing stories of men who, with a bit of side-by-side mentoring, were able to make some really positive changes to their lives and the lives of those around them.

I will touch on something in Madam Deputy President's neck of the woods; this one is in Busselton, so not too far away. Busselton MATES Men's Support Group has been recognised by the Injury Control Council of WA for reducing domestic violence in the area. In the last year I went to a briefing given by this organisation, and this program has a restorative rather than a punitive approach. The program focuses on removing the male from the house and giving him an opportunity to cool off, as opposed to removing the women and/or the children from the family home. While away from the site of conflict, the male is given counselling and taught strategies to help prevent and deal with future conflict, and it has been a remarkable success. A minister for men's interests would facilitate a healthy masculinity and its affirmation of manhood and womanhood—healthy men and healthy women standing side by side, complementing one another rather than fostering a culture of sexism and reverse sexism.

In my view, every person's life is a story and each life tells a different story. Western Australia is founded upon a rich heritage of personal stories. Many of those stories have themes of compassion, heroism, adventure and fun. I had the opportunity to hear some stories of incredible fortitude and bravery last Anzac Day. However, many stories of abuse, destruction and hurt also exist. Just think of those things I mentioned earlier in my remarks this evening. Sadly, these things cause harm to not only the men themselves, but also women, children and other men. In my view, each person possesses the capacity to make choices affecting their story. They can be educated, encouraged and empowered to change their story through means of self-exploration, mentoring and modelling. A minister for men's interests could truly change the stories of the future by promoting proactive measures that validate healthy masculinity, promote healthy male psychology and teach skills including communication, reconciliation, humility, service, community development, family empowerment and forgiveness.

In conclusion, I recognise that at first instance the idea of a minister for men's interests may not be appealing to everybody, but I hope that when they consider the context of my remarks this evening, they will understand that it is not a case of being in competition but of working towards the same goals.

HON KATE DOUST (South Metropolitan — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [9.07 pm]: I rise to comment on the Address-in-Reply in response to the speech by His Excellency the Governor, Malcolm McCusker, which was delivered on 11 April. We are indeed fortunate to have a Governor in this state of the calibre of Malcolm McCusker. He is a man that we all admire for not only his great legal expertise and philanthropy throughout the state—I am not sure whether we have ever had such a generous individual in that position—but also his strong sense of social justice. He is a man who certainly has left a mark in our community by standing up for those who may not have a voice and seeking to right wrongs. He is a man to be greatly admired. When his term eventually expires, he certainly will have left a very solid and positive mark on the state. It is always a great pleasure to have the opportunity to listen to him speak, be it in a formal arrangement as we had on that particular occasion, or on occasion when we are fortunate to share functions with him. I have read his speech and tonight and possibly tomorrow, I will reference some of the matters that he canvassed broadly that were of interest to me.

First of all, I am very pleased to have been given the opportunity to be elected for a fourth term to represent the constituents of South Metropolitan Region. It is indeed a privilege to work on behalf of the constituents in that region, which is a large area. Sometimes when we have been here for a while, we forget about how significant and how important it is to be in this place to speak on behalf of people who may not necessarily have that opportunity and to raise matters on their behalf. That is something that we need to remind ourselves of. I was very pleased tonight to listen to Hon Samantha Rowe. Her comments about why she wanted to be here as a member of Parliament were a very well-timed reminder to reinforce to all of us the importance and the value of the work that we need to do in this chamber. To new members, we do not always take a combative approach. It may get a bit loud and robust from time to time in here but, at the end of the day, I agree with Hon Norman Moore when he commented that we all want to achieve the same outcome for people; sometimes it is just the way we go about it.

From the work that I have done in committees, I know that it is a rare occasion, on which a committee puts out a minority report. Most committees usually reach common ground, if you like, on the types of outcomes they want to see from inquiries. I want to touch on that briefly. Today we saw the election of all our parliamentary committees for this chamber, be they joint parliamentary committees or single-chamber committees. For new members, it will be a very interesting experience once they settle down into the business of those committees, be it dealing with petitions in the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs or something else. It is a brave new world and I hope that members enjoy the variety and diversity of the work that is involved in the environment and public affairs committee and other committees. They are all great opportunities to learn about what is happening in our state. It is important to use those committees to listen to voices in our communities, to

take on board their concerns about matters and, hopefully, in most situations, provide a vehicle for solutions for their concerns.

I was very pleased to hear that the Standing Committee on Legislation has been touched upon in a couple of speeches and I think even Hon Norman Moore referenced it in his speech last night. There may have been a vague tinge of regret on his part that perhaps in the last term there were not many opportunities for that committee to meet. If we were to go back through *Hansard*, we would see that only three reports arose from that committee during the last term, one of which, of course, was from the stop-and-search inquiry, which pretty much stopped the work of that committee, unfortunately. It was an excellent report, but it did not seem to go any further. Here we are on the threshold of a new term of four years. We have a group of members on that committee. I am not too sure who the chair of —

Hon Liz Behjat: Hon Robyn McSweeney.

Hon KATE DOUST: It is Hon Robyn McSweeney. I think Hon Adele Farina is quite possibly the only other member here who was also on the initial committee; I do not think Hon Robyn McSweeney was on the legislation committee in the first term. When I was first elected, there were initially seven members on that committee; it was later reduced to five. When we were in government, we accepted the need to conduct inquiries on a regular basis into legislation that came to this place. We met on an extremely regular basis. We met during non-sitting times and after sitting times. We had Hon Peter Foss, Hon Bill Stretch and Hon George Cash come on from time to time and the other Liberal member from East Metropolitan Region, the opera singer —

Hon Sue Ellery: Derrick?

Hon KATE DOUST: Yes, Hon Derrick Tomlinson was also on that committee from time to time. I say “opera singer” because I know he sometimes used to belt out a bit of Gilbert and Sullivan in the chamber. That committee dealt with some very interesting pieces of legislation. They could be short, sharp inquiries. We also had uniform legislation as part of that committee’s work at the time. There was a lot of work out of that. Hon Giz Watson was also on that committee. We got things such as the Corruption and Crime Commission legislation, the State Administrative Tribunal legislation and the one vote, one value electoral reform legislation. We had a whole raft of uniform bills to do with child protection and the transportation of children.

I remember the first batch of bills we dealt with were the four corporations bills. Let me say that as a brand-new member to this chamber without a law degree that was a real eye-opener, but a great learning curve. The members on that committee worked fairly well together, on the whole. Sometimes an inquiry would last 12 months and we would come back into this place. I know it was very frustrating for the government, but the committee could be asked, “When will the committee’s report be completed? When will it be tabled? We need to get on with the legislation.” That committee was really thorough and was able to bring back into this chamber time after time full and detailed inquiries, quite often with a raft of recommendations to amend the bills, which, in more cases than not, were agreed to by all members of the committee regardless of party. It was always an interesting exercise when those reports were tabled and we had to work our way through. Even though we took those bills outside this chamber, and even though it may have taken a longer period, it gave committee members—it certainly gave the interested stakeholders—a much fuller opportunity to have their say on the bills and to provide the committee with a response on how it could be done better. When we brought the bills back here, even after some discussion behind the Chair, quite often we could work through the bills in the chamber with the report in a much more timely fashion than we might have done had we not had that opportunity for a full and proper inquiry.

It is a shame that the Leader of the House is not here because I know that it will fall to him on a regular basis to make that decision. Picking up on the comments made by Hon Norman Moore last night, it is important to remind ourselves that we are a house of review. We are not the Legislative Assembly. This is not some sort of bolshie theatre where we get through things quickly and do not pay attention to the detail. We know that when bills come up to us, that is our job. Our job is to pay attention to the detail. It is our job to question: Are we doing the right thing? Is this going to work? Is it what the community needs? We have a better capacity to refer bills off to a committee that specialises in this work and bring them back into the chamber after the work has been done, and to then go through that report and have it in front of us and look at the recommendations when we deal with bills. More often than not the bills we dealt with in that first and possibly second term, between 2001 and 2008, were able to be amended and they came out of this place as much better legislation than when they arrived, because of the work done by that very important committee. It is an absolute tragedy that during the last term the legislation committee did not have the capacity to operate and did not have the opportunity to have bills referred to it more frequently. In the last term we found that we would get bogged down here going through parts of those processes. When the government brought in contentious bills, we might have taken three or four weeks to work through them. Some members will recall bills such as hoon bills, graffiti bills or the prohibited behaviour orders bill, to name but a few. From memory some of those bills were raised as potential referrals to that committee but

were rejected by the Liberal government, unfortunately. I am still of the view that if they had been referred, which would have enabled a full and open inquiry to be made, with the capacity for public comment, we may have been able to deal with those bills much more expeditiously when they returned to this chamber.

I know that the Leader of the House wants to do a very good job in his time as leader, and I think he places some value on the importance of this place as a house of review. I hope that in future when there is an opportunity to refer a bill to the Standing Committee on Legislation, rather than getting an automatic rejection, the house gives it proper consideration and gives the members of that committee the chance to do their job and bring back to us the bill as it was, if it is good enough; or, if it is not, provides us with the opportunity to make changes and bring it up to the standard that this place would like it to be at. I encourage Hon Peter Collier in his capacity as Leader of the House to perhaps take on board the comments made last night by Hon Norman Moore. I think it would be a much healthier way of dealing with legislation outside the chamber and, in some cases, a swifter away, because there were a number of occasions in the last term when we probably spent more time in this place arguing about matters that could have been dealt with in another way, and on some occasions arguing about the nuts and bolts of an amendment in this place, when we could have had a committee doing that work for us and receiving the professional advice. I know that I have stood outside this chamber with the member on a number of occasions with advisers, when both he and I and also Hon Giz Watson disagreed with the advice coming from the advisers; we were all on the same side—on a couple of issues. If we are establishing a committee, let us use it. Let it do its job. Let us refer matters to it. We do it for uniform legislation. We enable bills on the odd occasion to go to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs. We enable a whole raft of other inquiries to happen, but we do not let legislation be sent to the Standing Committee on Legislation. I would have thought that it was a no-brainer that we use those people and that committee as the best vehicle possible to ensure that we are able to conduct our business as a house of review.

I just wanted to make those few comments on that issue because I listened very carefully to that very detailed farewell speech of Hon Norman Moore. I thought that he made some very salient points. As I said, I wish he had turned the clock back because we might have saved a lot of time and angst in the last term with some of the bills that we dealt with. With that said, I look forward to the work with other members on committees over the next four years. I have always enjoyed committee work. It is a great challenge and it is certainly a great learning opportunity. I hope that members take it on board with that as well.

As to the election campaign that we have gone through, you guys won and we lost. It is pretty simple. I think enough has been said about that. I cannot remember who referred to it earlier. Those opposite outspent us. The amount of money that was blown on that campaign was just incredible. There was no way we could compete with that. But out of adversity comes opportunity. I think those of us on this side will learn from our loss; we will learn how to do things better; we will learn how to campaign in a different way in the future. Sometimes we need to take a step backwards before we can take a leap forward and, for us, that is how we should treat this. I am not one to moan and wail about having lost those things. The political game is about swings and roundabouts. Whilst members opposite might be enjoying the Treasury benches for a little bit longer, it may not always be the case. I encourage them therefore to enjoy all the opportunities afforded to them as members on the Treasury benches. I encourage members opposite also to make the most of those opportunities to fight for everything they can for their constituents. Unfortunately, they probably have an easier road than we on this side will.

It was a very interesting campaign. I want to put on the record a couple of situations I came across that I found unusual. In 30 years of working on political campaigns, be they trade union or party campaigns—I am feeling a bit old now that I can say 30 years —

Hon Sue Ellery: That's because you feel it!

Hon KATE DOUST: I know that; thank you very much for that. Hon Sue Ellery is two weeks older than me.

As most members know, my husband, Bill Johnston, is the member for Cannington. I must say that Bill is a very hardworking member for his constituents in Cannington. I know that because of the amount of time he spends away from his family working in the electorate at nights and on weekends in his office when he is not here in Parliament. He has always enjoyed campaigning, but this campaign was a very interesting one in his seat. A lot of it he kept from me until the end. Fortunately, his staff let loose. The way the Liberal Party conducted the campaign in that seat was very disappointing for me, personally. I found the behaviour from the opposing party was something I had not seen before. I will explain to members why. Bill's mobile phone was used to sell concert tickets on eBay and Gumtree, so his mobile phone was ringing all the time at night in our home. His car was advertised on Gumtree, eBay and in the *Quokka*. This happened only after the close of nominations and when his phone was made available. His phone was linked to an online sex chat forum. We worked out how it had all happened and a complaint was lodged with the state security. The people who were doing it were not breaking the law but what offended me in the last week was when the people involved in that campaign sent me

a tweet implying that my husband, the candidate, was using that sex chat line. That tweet was deleted but because I responded to it I still have a copy of it. I found that really offensive. I think everyone in this place enjoys campaigning. On the whole, people are professional in the way they conduct themselves in the campaign. We all know that at the end of the day, one person will win and one or others will not. But we give it our best shot and use whatever campaign tactics we have to, be they how we advertise, doorknock or letterbox drop or how ever else we get the message out. I have no issue with that, but I was terribly disappointed with the types of tactics employed in that particular campaign. Bill kept it to himself because he did not want us to know about it. But it was very distressing for our children when they picked up the phone or heard about what was going on. The Liberal candidate tried to talk to me about it but I was at the point at which I was not interested because I do not think that type of approach to campaigning is appropriate, no matter where we line up on the political spectrum. Even if it were someone on our side, I would let them know that. Unfortunately, both my daughters let the candidate from the side of members opposite know what they thought of the things that had happened to their father.

Hon Michael Mischin: Are you blaming the candidate?

Hon KATE DOUST: The candidate knew about it, and discussed it with my daughter and told her what else they had planned to do to Bill during the campaign. The candidate condoned the behaviour. All I am saying is that from my experience I thought it was appalling behaviour. I think it is probably behaviour that no-one opposite has had to deal with. I certainly hope it is behaviour that I do not have to deal with again in a campaign. Anyway, that is over and done with. We will learn from these things and I think we can look at how we can be better organised.

We ran some very good candidates. In the south metropolitan area and the Southern River electorate, we had Susy Thomas, who worked extremely hard. Susy made just under 7 000 phone calls to constituents in that area. She certainly put the effort in. We had Hannah Beazley, a fabulous young woman running for us in the seat of Riverton. I certainly hope that down the track Hannah is able to give it another go. In Jandakot, we had Klara Andric, a very vibrant and very intelligent young woman. We had a range of other people, and it is a real shame that we do not have Anne Wood here with us in this chamber. Sadly for us, we missed a lot of opportunities but we had some fantastic candidates. We had Simone McGurk in Fremantle, and we are very proud of Simone for bringing that seat back to the Labor Party.

I think we ran a good campaign. We certainly attracted attention with some of the proposals we put up. Certainly Metronet caught people's attention. Unfortunately, on the day that was not the way it was going to work out and, as we know, in politics, once the roll is on with a swing, it takes everyone with it, and that is pretty much what happened with us. So, there we are. We have another four years and I look forward to the challenges of campaigning in my electorate over the next four years and taking up issues for my constituents.

Coming back to the speech given by the Governor, I was pleased to note that one of the changes the Premier has decided on is to take on the science portfolio. I thought that was great, as the science portfolio has always called for a senior minister, and we had three different responsible ministers in the last government. I know that members have listened to my view on a number of occasions in this chamber that the science, innovation and technology portfolio in this state had gone backwards in the vast bulk of areas.

Hon Sue Ellery: It wasn't just your view; it was a fact.

Hon KATE DOUST: It was a fact; thank you very much, Hon Sue Ellery.

I thought it was great that the Premier would take all this on board. I thought he would have a vision for science in this state and would see the value in it. I thought that he would not just talk about science in schools, but also see it as a vibrant, fully sustainable industry that should run alongside the mining and resources sector that he is so very passionate about. I thought here we go—he is going to do all these great things. Then I read an online newsletter called *ScienceNetwork WA*, which I get on a weekly basis. It referred to an interview with the Premier, and I picked up in that interview that the Premier will take on the big, visionary stuff. When he goes off travelling, he will talk to people about science and he might establish a science council, but he will not deal with innovation and technology. I think he talked about that being placed in the state development portfolio or in the commerce portfolio. He is certainly not going to touch the Technology and Industry Advisory Council. The Premier needs to come out and clarify fairly soon what he is really going to do, because we need to know which parts he is going to manage and which parts the Minister for Commerce will perhaps be responsible for. I was therefore quite disappointed.

We also had the Premier's commitment to Scitech made during the election campaign, which I understand is to allocate \$15 million and a site at Burswood. I know that this has always been the preferred site for Scitech and that the people at Scitech have been looking for a place for quite some time. With what we have heard over the last few weeks, as the government has realised that it has some financial difficulties and has talked about

cutbacks and ministers tightening up on expenditure, I am concerned that Scitech will not necessarily have a place in the future. I will not spend much more time on that issue, but I might pose a series of questions to the relevant ministers. I think it is very important that we continue to have a place such as Scitech in this state. It is not just a place where kids and young adults can go and have a great time and a bit of a play around on a weekend; it is a very important place for the education of science to children throughout the state. Scitech has a very strong role in outreach services to children in remote and rural areas. It does a fabulous job of helping those children to connect with science and to develop an appetite for a career pathway in science as they move through school. It also has strong potential for collaboration with a range of industries to assist them with work.

I travelled to Hong Kong in April on a trip that I organised through the Hong Kong trade office. It did a fabulous job of arranging the appointments that I needed. At that point, I still had the shadow portfolio of science. I was fortunate to go to a couple of places in which the Hong Kong government had invested significantly in the science portfolio. It is a very interesting story. The first place I went to was called Cyberport, which is a digital technology park. It was set up from about 1999 after the Asian financial crisis, when the Hong Kong government realised that it needed to look to the future, it needed a vision, and it needed to invest in the cutting edge of science. It identified that people would use the internet for every aspect of their lives, so it entered into a public-private partnership with a company. The whole site is owned by the Hong Kong government. It offers a range of facilities. A couple of hundred companies operate out of the site, which I think is about 24 hectares in size and is half an hour from the Hong Kong CBD. Large international companies are based there. The facility offers incubator services, it has research facilities, and it even has a hotel. It holds forums. I was lucky enough to go to a digital technology forum while I was there. It was fascinating to hear about the type of work and research that is being done and to see the interaction between the predominantly young people—they all looked as though they were under 25—who were doing incredible work developing apps for phones, computers and television shows throughout China. Sadly, no Australian companies were represented at this forum. I had the opportunity to be shown how Cyberport works and the philosophy behind it. From 1999 until now, it has had this incredible presence. People are on a waiting list to go into this place. It is not like the type of technology park that we are used to; it is on a much grander scale. It has full government backing and support, because the government understands the importance of identifying change and where people need to go in future employment. That has been done very successfully with Cyberport.

Although the Premier has taken on the science portfolio and says that he understands its importance, he needs to understand that to get the outcomes and benefits, he has to be really bold, plan for the future and invest in science. He has to put real dollars into it, not just throw in \$5 000 or \$10 000 here or there in small grants. He has to invest substantial amounts of money to develop these types of facilities and to attract business and future work opportunities to our state.

The other place that I was fortunate enough to go out to, on the Friday of my visit—it was a bit of an adventure getting there—was Hong Kong Science Park, which is out in the New Territories. This is a project that was established in the late 1990s, when the Hong Kong government looked to the future and invested about \$HK10 million to develop the initial stage of this park, on 22 hectares of land. They are now in the process of completing the stage 3 green buildings, which are fantastic buildings to go into. Four-hundred companies are based there, ranging from companies at the incubator stage, to multinational companies such as Philips, to a couple of large Silicon Valley companies. The park focuses on five key areas of research, not digital technology necessarily, but medical research, agriculture and a range of other areas. They have decided that these are the areas that they will focus on and these are the companies that they want to attract. They have built relationships with the universities. They share the cost of equipment in the universities and on site, and that helps the universities and their students.

I would encourage any member here who has an interest in the potential that science and innovation has for our state to visit places like Hong Kong Science Park. I understand that replicas of this type of facility are now springing up all over China, because the Chinese government understands that these types of facilities assist people at the tertiary level, help develop companies and help attract other businesses to come in.

We have not reached that level in this state. When we look at the development of these places in other parts of the world, particularly in Asia, it is clear that we are being left behind, because the investment is not being applied in this state. That is an absolute tragedy, because we will lose people in this space, and we will lose the capacity to develop these skills and knowledge.

I would say to the Premier that if he is really dinkum about grabbing the science portfolio and making the most of the opportunities, he needs to have that grand vision. Quite frankly, if the Premier wants to leave a permanent memorial to his period as Premier, he should develop a vibrant and sustainable science and technology industry in our state so that we can secure futures for our young people, attract businesses to our state, and export the outcomes of that science and research work. The Premier should be smart about it and bite the bullet and really invest. He should do what the Hong Kong government has done. If that means that the Premier will need to enter

into partnerships to achieve that, then that is what he should do, because 20 or 30 years down the track, we will reap the benefit.

Places like Hong Kong are looking to the future. They have identified the things that they need to do in order to change, and they have invested in that change, and now they are able to grow and expand. Hong Kong Science Park is an incredible set-up. It fosters interaction between students and universities, and industry. It provides the opportunity for people to set up their own small businesses and to tap into the resources of the park. It assists people to learn how to market their products. It also assists people to learn how to market themselves and build up their self-confidence, because quite often the people who work in this space have great ideas, but they need support to implement them.

When I say that, I think about Barry Marshall, because I know that you, Mr President, are a strong admirer of Barry Marshall. He certainly is a person who not only has great ideas and has delivered the outcomes, but has confidence and knows how to market his product. We need to be able to get more people like Barry Marshall and Fiona Wood—we would like to replicate them, if you like, in this state. But until the government acknowledges the real value and importance of developing a vibrant science and technology hub in Western Australia, something akin to what has been developed in those other places that I have mentioned, we will not be able to do that.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.