

ESTIMATES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

Consideration of Tabled Papers

Resumed from 18 September on the following motion moved by Hon Helen Morton (Minister for Mental Health) —

That pursuant to standing order 68(1), the Legislative Council take note of tabled papers 506A–E (budget papers 2013–14) laid upon the table of the house on Thursday, 8 August 2013.

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [12.36 pm]: I find myself approaching this budget round with some trepidation, because I have been involved with a number of previous budgets; in fact, I read a couple of budgets into this chamber. I have had a bit to do with the process, so I am familiar with it. When I see the various budget papers and the budget speech that goes with them, I know what it means. I know that a lot of people do not know what it means or how to interpret it, and their hair might go grey very quickly if they did know what was behind it. I find in my current position as a parliamentary member that I can approach the contemplation of these papers from an inside position in a sense, but I do not have ownership of them. I was not on the Economic and Expenditure Reform Committee or in the cabinet that put this budget through, but I know what went into it and I can interpret the various threads and media statements that come out from government. Now, not being a part of that side of the equation, I am also very careful in trying to construct a commentary that is constructive rather than what may be seen as something else. That is because I support this government. When I see it getting into difficulties—it has had a bit of a minor rough trot this week and last week, and lately—I still support it. I come from a school of thought that says that when our team is having difficulties in perception or reality, or a combination of both—I think it is both—that is when we need to stand by it and offer some positive and constructive advice so it can work through things and try to come out on top again. A lot of that is best offered in private counsel rather than in a public forum such as this, but at the same time I have a need to participate in debate in this chamber. That is what gives me a slightly schizophrenic approach towards this budget. Members should fear not, because I will try not to let my timidity overwhelm me completely, as I might say some things that are worth hearing about where the government might go and what it might do.

I will tell members in this place that when I first read through the budget and was doing an overview, I had what I think people who text call a “WTF” moment.

I sat there and I looked at a couple of things and the thought that went through me—visually—was WTF! What do I mean by WTF? WTF means What Treasury Folly am I viewing here? I could have put it more strongly—under my breath I think I did when I viewed a few things, but I have canvassed these matters before.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Adele Farina): Order! Hon Simon O'Brien has the call.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I must admit that I thought “WTF” when I looked at some of the provisions about the solar panels rebate matter. I thought this is one dimensional; it had someone-in-Treasury-has-a-good-idea written all over it! Others in the system should have picked it up as the wrong thing; it should not be going in there. I thought the same thing when I saw the provisions about 457 visa holders, where suddenly they are being charged \$4 000 for each child to go to a government school. “WTF”, I thought! There is another Treasury brainstorm that should have been picked up by others in the chain, but was not, and now it has been.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Members you are making it very difficult for Hansard.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: In relation to both of those things, by way of example, the Premier came out eventually and announced that the solar panel rebate —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Those members who are participating in a conversation across the chamber should leave and continue that conversation outside the chamber. Hon Simon O'Brien has the call.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: The Premier came and said the solar panel rebate provisions in the budget were to be reversed. He said, “We got it wrong and we're undoing it.” That is why I have no compunction about raising the matter again—perhaps, it is a raw matter to be raised for some in government, but he was right about that. It was wrong. I am glad that the government swallowed its pride and sought to correct it, but I fear that some damage was done in the process and that concerns me.

Similarly, I noticed that this week the 457 visa holders' schoolchildren issue has been revisited; that situation has been eased but I am still not happy about it. Nonetheless, the government has listened and has seen that perhaps it was trying to do something that was not quite right to do; that it was something that had not been thought

through. That is why I said earlier—I know what I am talking about—that when I see a dopey, one-dimensional Treasury point of view idea come forward that has not been picked up by the quality control mechanisms that should be a part of government, that worries me, because these are two that went through the net. I am not being disloyal to the government I support by mentioning that, because it has recognised it as well, though, perhaps, not in exactly the same terms that I am using. But when a government gets things wrong it must acknowledge it because only then can it turn things around to put things right. I think the government has a few other things that it has to put right as well, and I hope it recognises it.

Perhaps I can make some suggestions. I did not refer to the WTF moment in relation to some of the school reforms that are the subject of rallies and things. Why not? I actually support the Minister for Education in what he is doing. It may not be fashionable this morning to do so, but when people recognise that things have to be done, that what is happening is unsustainable and changes have to be made, I applaud those who have the courage to do it. We have a situation that we have all known about; for example, education assistants, whom this government has provided in ever-increasing numbers in response to the needs of children. It always seems to me strange that an education assistant is taken on in a school and then when the student he or she is looking after leaves school, the education assistant has to remain at that school. That is crazy. Why should that happen? It is grossly inefficient. I am not saying that the education assistant should just be turfed out of a job, but why can they not go, in an ever-expanding school population, to another school so that they can be gainfully employed? I am not offended by that, but I have heard a lot of gum flapping about the issue by a lot of people who are more determined to generate heat than light. We are certainly seeing that when we see strike action taking place, with rallies at Gloucester Park, or wherever it is.

As Hon Peter Katsambanis pointed out very tellingly last night, the vast majority of our teachers are not out on strike. They are in schools doing the job that they are very well paid to do, but, more importantly, that they are very well committed to. That leaves a lot of people—I am sure all of them are very committed to their work as well—participating in a largely political and fairly pointless exercise. We have seen that flow into this chamber with some silly notions being put to the Minister for Education that somehow he is meant to be at their stop-work meeting when he has previously been snubbed on the steps of Parliament House. Going out to confront protesters takes guts. I mean, Hon Phil Edman is pretty formidable and he was there in support, as was Hon Liz Behjat. I think I was at lunch myself because I knew they could handle it! But Hon Peter Collier went out there; he had the guts and indeed —

Several members interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: If the member wants me to put it that way, he had the courtesy to go out to face the protesters. Did the organisers have the courtesy to let him have a brief say? No, they did not. Did they let him go up to the microphone so that all the punters out there could have their money's worth by shouting at him and drowning him out? No! The killjoys would not surrender the microphone for five minutes to let him do that!

Hon Kate Doust interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Hon Kate Doust was bitterly disappointed; she would have liked the chance to get the crowd chanting a few things. Hell, I might have even come down and joined in just to make a day of it!

The central thing is that that rally occurred a couple of days before the federal election. Bill Shorten was out there addressing the crowd. The Minister for Education was denied the opportunity to do so. Opposition members have the gall to come in here, when we know their previous form, to say today, how dare the Minister for Education not leave his post in the Parliament as the leader of the Legislative Council! How dare he not absent himself from that position, to go down and be insulted or have his time wasted by being shouted down at Gloucester Park. We also know that so much of this outrage has been manufactured in the context of a few candidates in a union election all trying to show how good they can be at stirring up an industrial issue on the way to Parliament. I think that is a pity because they are playing with the emotions, the genuine motivation, of a whole lot of people who work in our school system and who have been, I think, used to some extent by being told to abandon their posts today and give up half a day's pay—I bet the union officials are not giving up half a day's pay—to come and be part of a rent-a-crowd. Will it make any difference to the outcome? No, it will not. That will form the theme to other comments I want to make a bit later in offering some constructive advice to the government about where money might stop being wasted. I tell members what: a few lefties will not like hearing it because I will talk about trimming some unnecessary expenditure in certain quarters. We will come to that in a minute.

We have heard some other comments raised by members that I just could not let go through to the keeper without giving them some commentary of my own. I have been to Canberra on a number of occasions, normally in a ministerial capacity, over the last five years or so and one of the things that struck me was the atmosphere that has prevailed there since 2010. It has been absolutely poisonous. I was over there addressing the Australian Steel Institute conference and I took advantage of being in town to visit some people. I was with Hon Kim Carr,

who was then the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, just before he got sacked in one of the great purges taking place, and I also met with Julie Bishop. I had a round of meetings, as we do when we are in Canberra, and it struck me what a poisonous atmosphere existed there and pervaded the place over the Gillard years. The uncertainty that hung there cannot have been good for Australia and for the interests of our country and its people. I was very concerned when visiting Canberra.

We have had a change of federal government and that may or may not be cause for great acclaim from the four corners of the land, because those of us who have been around for a while know that Western Australia always gets duded by Canberra no matter who has the reins over there. Sadly, Liberal-led governments tend to be more efficient, which meant we got duded quicker and more thoroughly when John Howard was in power than when there was some useless shower like the Rudd government or the Gillard government or the Rudd government mark 2. Either way, there is very little comfort, and I look forward to hopefully a change with the newly appointed Abbott government. Members opposite have already had things to say about the make-up of that. I think the outlook is fairly good from Western Australia's point of view. It is very good from the point of view of the standing and the self-esteem of Western Australia that the deputy leader of the main government party and the new foreign minister comes from Western Australia and that she is, indeed, the first female foreign minister in the commonwealth government—I refer to Hon Julie Bishop. I congratulate Julie because I think she is quite an outstanding federal member from Western Australia and she joins a number of others. In fact, all the women in federal cabinet have come from Western Australia, I notice. There are also some other prominent Western Australian members and I will not run through all of them.

Several members interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Hon Julie Bishop will make a fine federal cabinet minister again, as she did before, and I think she will conduct herself with distinction as our Minister for Foreign Affairs, as will our new Minister for Finance, Senator Hon Mathias Cormann; Senator Hon David Johnston; and a range of other Western Australians who have places in either the inner cabinet, the outer ministry or as parliamentary secretaries. I hope that indicates that we might be able to break the nexus that has existed whereby Western Australia always gets the rough end of the stick from federal governments regardless of their political persuasion.

The other issue raised several times in this place yesterday and, indeed, even today, I think, that I could not help but notice, was the number of women in the federal cabinet. That may be a subject for comment but I notice that there are a number of women in the group that includes the outer ministry and the parliamentary secretaries. I am sure we will continue to see more and more women, women of quality, going through the ranks and into cabinet itself. Either way, whoever they are, I wish them all the best in what is a very difficult job. It is interesting that the people complaining that there are not enough women around Parliament are from the side of our friends over there and they are almost all women.

Hon Kate Doust interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Hon Darren West is one of a shrinking —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Adele Farina): Order, members! We were doing so well there.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I had another comment to make about that issue, but the company is too polite so I will not! I will make one observation though. When it comes to competent women, and I acknowledge all the very competent women we have as colleagues in this chamber, we cannot go past Margaret Thatcher. This is a rhetorical question: how many female cabinet ministers were in Margaret Thatcher's cabinet? Perhaps members opposite would have liked to have seen more Margaret Thatchers!

Several members interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I think it would have been more than the world was ready for then and perhaps more than it is ready for now. I want to talk a bit more but I notice Madam Deputy President has her eye on the time so she can leave the chair, so I will hold over my concluding remarks about another matter until we have returned from the luncheon break.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Before lunch, I indicated my discomfort at finding myself in the first budget round for some years when I am not a minister. I do not want to be seen as providing some sort of critique of the government's performance for fear that it might look like I have got my nose out of joint, because I am not a person who has any sort of agenda. As I said in my earlier remarks, I wish the government well and I feel for my former colleagues in the discomfort that they must be feeling at the moment. I acknowledge that the Premier has come out, with some eating of humble pie that goes with such things, and addressed a couple of things he has

acknowledged might have been errors of judgement. None of my remarks should be taken as anything less than supportive, but I want to offer some advice about what could be done in the future.

Something that has become increasingly obvious to me with the experience of passing years in this game is the way that I see people advocating or lobbying for their points of view. It always amuses me when I receive documents such as the one I have here. It probably was not meant for me, I just happened to be on someone's email list and it went to a lot of people and found its way to me. This document, which I am sure is from a very nice person, is headed: "Script for phoning MP's about the amalgamation of shires". It says —

Each person phoning an MP's office should: (you will seldom get to speak to the member but rather an office person) State the reason that you are calling ...

It then gives a list of instructions that do not look like very good instructions. I would have drafted them quite differently. I might go into a consultancy role in another 20 or so years when I leave this place. I suspect that the document was not meant to be sent to me. Why? Because it concludes with —

Please call any, or all, of the following Liberal/National Party MP's as they will be voting on whether to ...

Do something about the Dadour provision. The document continues —

The ones that are asterisked need to be "worked" on as they can change the vote in the upper house!!!!

Hon Stephen Dawson: Are you?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Some of the people in this place are asterisked and some are not.

I am asterisked, so I will be worked on —

Several members interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: — but it is not only me.

Hon Ken Travers: When was the last time you were worked over?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I will not involve the chair in this debate.

There are some interesting people who are asterisked. It is basically everyone on this side of the house including the ministers and the Leader of the House. We should expect a few phone calls, and if members have read this document they will feel a sense of *deja vu*. We could have a laugh about this, but this is a well-meaning person trying to organise others of like mind, and they would be annoyed with themselves if they realised that this had gone to me, and probably others as well.

Hon Ken Travers: It worked. It convinced you to stand up and fight for it.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Yes, it dragged me across the line.

Several members interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I will also mention that I have had 1 796 emails—I checked a few minutes ago and there have been some more—in relation to another part of my parliamentary duties. Somebody in a group has decided to put on their website for all their members something they believe people need to have a say about. The website has a simple link to click on and it sends messages that people can add opening remarks to, to me and the other members of the standing committee of which I am a member. Each of the members is now getting thousands of identical unsolicited emails. They are cluttering up our system. If anyone has tuned in to this speech outside of these of hallowed walls—it is surprising that sometimes people do —

Hon Ken Travers: I understand that the whole internet is crashing because of the number of people coming on to watch you.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I imagine they would be. People need to understand that these emails, like the other document, do not actually work and may even be counterproductive. When we have independent inquiries, we mean just that—we all know that in this place—and we are not going to be browbeaten by weight of numbers into adopting a view. It would be a bad thing if we were.

Hon Ken Travers: That is your Premier's view.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Well, he sits in another house.

Hon Ljiljana Ravlich: In another world!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Now, do not be unkind.

The point I am making is that these sorts of messages actually detract from what we are trying to do. If there are literally hundreds of these messages, other important messages in which somebody, perhaps, with a keen need and no other avenue of recourse apparently available to them, might come to me or one of my colleagues on that particular standing committee with a request for help and it can be lost in the morass of other emails. I looked at some of these emails—I cannot possibly look at them all—and I found that some people added their own personalised comments at the start, but only a sentence or so. That is all very well, but if someone was actually writing to me about this same matter, because they were a genuinely concerned person who wanted to engage with me in a sensible chain of correspondence, unbeknownst to me, they will find themselves consigned to this other scrapheap where all these emails are going to end up. I am sorry because that is the only thing we can do. I was prompted to think about this. What I am receiving from these messages from various luminaries whom I have never heard of —

Hon Peter Katsambanis: Tell us who they are from? Tell us some names.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: There was —

Hon Stephen Dawson: Harry Potter.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Harry Potter was one, and that might be legitimate. But three later, there was one that I traced to a similar address, called Albus Dumbledore. I am just trying to think whether I went to school with any of those blokes; they sound familiar. They sound awfully familiar, unfortunately!

Several members interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: When I looked at the emails earlier, I noticed that a number of them came from the same address. That is the sort of thing people do. Again, as I say, it is a misguided thought.

Let me give some advice to the government about how it might save some money, because it needs to. It is something that has attracted my attention.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Why don't you come and sit next to me?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I could give the member a number of reasons, but I am on limited time!

Hon Ken Travers: We'll extend. We have enjoyed your speeches!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I will come and sit with Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich a bit later.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: You're speaking more like an opposition member; but keep going. We like it!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: No; I am a supporter of the government.

One of the things I have noticed over the years, both in opposition but more particularly when in government, is that there are some things that a relatively well-off community like Western Australia tends to acquire. A range of items of expenditure are set up for all the right reasons and with all the best of intentions, but there is no sunset date or provision. There is an understanding that this is what this group is set up to do, here is its purpose and we need it done to a certain level for a certain period and then it is going to be cut off at that point. A lot of these projects can be funded by government but then they keep going in perpetuity because their very being is the end in itself. They sustain the people who are there as executive directors or whatever the employees are called—there is a number of them, I know, in a whole range of areas. This is an area in which government needs to look. The body that is set up, or the project that is created, or the funding channel that is initiated to some very worthwhile project or other, achieves what it set out to achieve, is possibly past its use-by date, but those who are involved in the project have entered into a comfort zone. They are supported perhaps by a very decent salary and lifestyle. In some cases I know of family members—not my family, but family members of the person running the show—who have become part and parcel of it. It becomes the family business or the individual's business, all on the taxpayer. Heaven forbid if anyone suggests that this should be stopped. Do members know what will happen? Any supporter or beneficiary of that program will suddenly be asked, perhaps by being given a script, to contact their local MP, or members will be bombarded with emails to say how dare the government stop this program or threaten to wind it up at the end of the year, because if it does, it means that the government is callous and does not care about medical research or babies and the future of children, or messages to teenagers. Whatever it might be, an angle will be found to oppose the government. Governments, particularly in good times, will find it easy to say, "Actually, this is too hard to get rid of at this time. Let's give it another year or two." They are the sorts of things that we need to look at.

A related area of expenditure is when government provides funds to non-government organisations to do things that governments should not be paying for. I am a big fan of governments engaging non-government organisations to deliver services that they can deliver better and in a quality way to the Western Australian

public on behalf of government. I am a big fan of it. Just the other day, at three o'clock on Sunday morning, St John Ambulance attended our house to deal with a life-threatening emergency. Thank heavens for that; I thank the good folk from St John Ambulance. That is a good example of a non-government organisation providing, with some taxpayer support, a quality service that I dare say government might be struggling to provide as well, for anything like that cost. I might add that I got a good bill the other day. I am very grateful, too, to HBF, to which I shall refer the bill in due course!

There are other areas in which governments have progressively been paying for the operating expenses, or a portion of the operating expenses, of groups that do not seem to provide direct services to the taxpayer; they seem to provide advocacy services. As a former Minister for Disability Services—indeed, in opposition, an opposition spokesperson for disabilities—I know a thing or two about advocacy and how advocacy per se is an essential service. Sometimes an individual, or the family of an individual, with severe disability issues needs an advocate to help them obtain the basic services of an agency. But there are other forms of advocacy that basically, in my mind, could be more correctly characterised as “activism”. Activism is an important thing in our social landscape. We certainly would assert the right to resort to activism on behalf of the issues that we are passionate about. We spoke about the activism that went on earlier today at Gloucester Park in connection with a dispute.

What I would question is how much money we are giving as a government—as taxpayers—to activists to sustain them to practise their activism. I look at groups such as the Conservation Council of Western Australia and ask myself: How much state or commonwealth taxpayers' money goes into groups like these? What do we get in return? Already, there might be some hackles going up. If anyone is listening to this outside of this chamber, they would be very defensive because my remarks are attacking their livelihood; their reason for being. We are employing people to be activists. Whether they are attacking the government or supporting the government does not matter, but I just question, ministers, whether this is the sort of thing that we should be doing in government. Is it something that ought to be done with taxpayers' money? It is something we need to be vigilant about.

I noticed in recent weeks that a group called Healthway, funded by state funds I understand, bought the sponsorship and advertising rights for the WACA for \$2.1 million. If my memory serves me correctly, I think that was about the figure—\$2.1 million. That was so that organisation could go in there and very self-righteously, and in the interests of everyone's health, take down all those nasty Coca-Cola and beer advertisements and put up “healthy” advertising. Are we really getting \$2.1 million worth of value for that expenditure? The money obviously looks the same to the WACA, or does it? What is the other thing that happened with the WACA in recent weeks?

Hon Peter Katsambanis: No test match.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Yes, no test match. I do not have a view about this but I wonder whether that was a case of cause and effect to some extent. When a test series goes from five matches to four and one of the venues has to miss out on hosting a game and Cricket Australia is weighing up which one has to go, I wonder whether that sponsorship deal had anything to do with it. The point is that I am sure there is unnecessary expenditure to be found. Frankly, I encourage the government to look for it. I hope that we have a community that is mature enough to say, “Okay, we recognise that a bit of belt-tightening is needed, and we are not going to greet every measure the government has to pursue with a litany of complaint or an email or telephone campaign based on some vested self-interest.”

I will conclude with one more example. I was reading my copy of the *Conservation and Hunting* magazine from Field and Game Australia Inc. Hon Rick Mazza, I am getting with the program. I am not sure which edition it is, but it would be the current edition. There is a story on page 3 that attracted my attention. It states, in part —

British Conservative MP Glyn Davies told a packed House of Commons earlier this year that he 'wanted his RSPCA back'.

“In my mind the RSPCA was always an animal welfare body —

I think that is how we think of the RSPCA. I applaud that. I love animals; I have pictures of my dogs in my back pocket and all the rest of it.

Hon Kate Doust: Do you have a picture of your dead dog tattooed into your skin like Joe Francis?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: No, I do not have any tattoos. Let us not go down that path. The story continued —

“In my mind the RSPCA was always an animal welfare body, that's how I always saw it. But I must admit I'm finding it more to be an animal rights body,” he said.

That struck a chord with me. I only picked this magazine up this morning.

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: He's got the animal coming out of him now.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: It is all coming out now.

As I said in my remarks earlier, I identified a concern that has gradually grown whereby the initial very worthy purposes that government sometimes subscribes through taxpayers' money, sometimes then morphs or develops into something beyond what was intended. Here is a classic example whereby Mr Davies, a member of the House of Commons, is concerned that the RSPCA, an organisation that he apparently has always supported and felt some ownership towards and has always seen as an animal welfare group—I am sure none of us would disagree with that—is now behaving as an animal rights body; that is, a group that is a support mechanism in the form of pay, office support and a platform for activists to take on the mantle of the RSPCA and use it for other things. In particular, Mr Davies was speaking during a debate on the controversial decision by the UK RSPCA to spend £326 000 taking the Prime Minister's local hunt to court. I do not have a particular desire to support hunting. I am not that familiar with the issue because I am not a Brit. It seems a very foreign thing to me. At face value, I would not be a fan of it. That is not the issue. I do know that it is a potent issue in Britain, with strong support for and against. For a body like the RSPCA to spend £326 000 was seen by many MPs as a decision that demonstrated that the RSPCA in the United Kingdom is being driven by animal rights activism rather than animal welfare concerns. Another MP, Simon Hart, said that the RSPCA's prosecuting role needs to be monitored, given its political and commercial activities. The story in the magazine states —

Mr. Hart said there is a “gulf between the very good activity of inspectors on the ground whose principal concern is animal welfare and the leadership whose principal concern seems to be animal rights”.

That is a very good example of how governments have to be vigilant that the organisations they support in whole or in part do not apply public funds for purposes that were never intended by the taxpayers who, through their representatives, have provided those funds. Nonetheless, to withdraw or stop that flow—to put the foot on the hose—is sometimes tough and it will cause people to squawk, but sometimes we have to have the bottle to do just that. I encourage the government to look at those things because the time is potentially ripe to do it.

In conclusion, the government and its budget are being contemplated at a time when things are perhaps not going as well as members of the government would like. It is at such time that people such as me, who support the government, have to stand up and say they support it, even if it is not fashionable to do so, and constructively offer advice. I will be offering a lot more privately to members of the government if they have enough brains to accept some advice, and I think most of them have. I know what it is like to be down in the political game. I was a foundation member of the Fremantle Dockers.

Several members interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Members should save their sympathy. I do not need it. Saturday is coming. I know what it is like to sit there in my seat, season after season with my heart in my mouth watching Scotty Chisholm take the kick out after the other mob had scored a point. It did not matter how fast they ran around, he could hit them on the chest. I have seen defeat snatched from the gaping jaws of victory but I retain an optimism about that team because I know it can dig deep and overcome adversity and rise to the top. It has done it before and it will do it again, just the same as the team that I support here in this Parliament. Good luck to the government.

Hon Ken Travers: I hope they're going to have a better week than your team in Parliament had.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: That is perhaps something for next week. For Saturday, go Dockers and send Sydney back to where they belong.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Hon Peter Collier (Leader of the House)**.