

Mr Christian Porter; Mr Eric Ripper; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Paul Papalia; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Acting Speaker; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) RECURRENT 2011–12 BILL 2011

Third Reading

MR C.C. PORTER (Bateman — Treasurer) [5.42 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont — Leader of the Opposition) [5.42 pm]: I said in the second reading debate that this is a government that is greedy for revenue. Let us look again at some of the revenue figures. Between the estimates in the 2010–11 midyear review and the figures in this budget, revenue will increase by \$3.3 billion from 2010–11 to 2013–14. We have a government that complains about lack of revenue at the same time as we have that massive revenue increase. The government manages that sleight of hand by focusing on GST receipts rather than on total revenue. Total revenue in fact grows by an average of five per cent per annum, according to the government's estimates, from 2010–11 across the forward estimates. The reason, of course, that the GST share falls is royalty revenue rises. The government should really be honest with the people of Western Australia and talk about the total revenue that is available to it, rather than simply take one element of the revenue package and focus on that. Naturally, the Treasurer chooses to focus on the element of the revenue that is under threat rather than on the element of the revenue that is rapidly growing. It is also the case that the government's rhetoric about Western Australia's rights over minerals and Western Australia's rights to its royalty stream is somewhat undermined by the fact that the government's political predecessors signed up to the GST share deal, which in effect spreads Western Australia's royalty stream right across the country. Therefore, it is not the case that the federal government's mining tax is the only mechanism that seeks to tax the same base as Western Australia's royalty taxation. In fact, the GST share deal, signed when the Premier was a member of the Court government's budget committee, already takes our royalty stream, averages it out and redistributes it across the country. Another element of the revenue increase is that royalty revenue is estimated to have increased \$1.8 billion in 2010–11, which is a 79 per cent increase. That is the other side of the Treasurer's GST argument. Royalty revenue is expected to grow to \$5.3 billion by 2014–15. The truth is that the increase in royalty revenue between the 2011–12 budget and the 2010–11 budget offsets the downgrade in GST grants estimated by the state Treasury. That is why we can have a decline in GST share but a growth in total revenue across the forward estimates.

I have spoken about royalties but it is also worth looking at taxation. Taxation revenue is expected to grow to \$9.4 billion in 2014–15. Taxation is expected to increase by more than 10 per cent annually between 2012–13 and 2014–15. Taxation revenue is projected to increase by a total of 46 per cent between 2007–08 and 2014–15. Some of that revenue is due to growth in the economy and some is due to deliberate government decisions. When we were in government, practically every week the opposition moved a motion or put out a press release on the question of taxation. If it was not the opposition, it was an element of the business community; one week it was the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia, the next week it would be the Property Council of Australia, the week after that it would be the Real Estate Institute of WA and the week after that it would be the Motor Trade Association of Western Australia. One thing that strikes me as remarkable about the state of public debate in Western Australia is that we hear virtually nothing from the business community about taxation levels in this state, yet taxation levels and taxation rates have not changed since this government was elected.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You did put up payroll tax, stamp duty and land tax in your first two budgets, so you don't expect to get good publicity after that.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: While the Premier makes that observation, I make the observation that there were tax cuts in the last five budgets of our government and members of the opposition complained about the taxation rates that they have now maintained over three budgets. Moreover, not only has the government maintained those taxation rates, it has taken two concessions that were in Labor's financial plan and deferred them for three years. Those two concessions, according to the estimates of our time, would have saved the business community about \$500 million. With the growth in the economy, no doubt those concessions would be worth even more to the business community if they were offered and to the government if they were withheld.

I make two observations. I make an accusation of hypocrisy against the government because it is not implementing in government what it campaigned on in opposition. I make an observation about the business community, which seemed very happy to campaign week in and week out for lower taxes on business when Labor was in power and which has accepted the very same tax rates with very little protest now that the conservatives are in power and, in fact, has accepted with very little protest the deferral of more than \$500 million worth of concessions that Labor had put in its financial plan. I say to business that it compromises

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its own credibility and its own capacity to advocate for both sides of politics if it is not seen by both sides of politics to judge issues on their merits regardless of who is in power.

I now turn to the issue of dividend revenue. Dividend revenue to the government from government trading enterprises is expected to increase by \$492 million, or 70 per cent, across the budget year and forward estimates. I turn to a particular aspect of this dividend revenue. One of the measures in the government's budget was a so-called five per cent efficiency dividend to be applied to government trading enterprises. I was interested in how this five per cent efficiency dividend, which had attached to it a figure of \$515 million, was going to work. I therefore pursued the matter with the electricity utilities in Estimates Committee B. This is how the \$515 million efficiency dividend will work. There will be unspecified cuts in the operating budgets of electricity and other government utilities. Those unspecified cuts in the operating budgets of those utilities will increase the profits of those utilities. The government will receive its share of those increased profits through dividends and income tax equivalent payments. The \$515 million efficiency target is in fact a \$400 million government cash grab from government trading enterprises. The efficiency dividend will not be used to reduce the burden on customers. We will still see a further five per cent increase in electricity this year, five per cent next year, 12 per cent the year after and 12 per cent the year after that. Extra efficiency in government trading enterprises will not be used to benefit customers in Western Australia. No electricity customer, no water customer and no port customer will benefit from extra efficiency in those utilities. It is simply a mechanism to artificially increase the profits of the utilities and to therefore increase the payments to the government. The government will receive approximately \$400 million extra in revenue as a result of this mechanism. Also, of course, as a result of this mechanism, the impact on net debt will be reduced. This will, in effect, prevent the debt nudging \$23 billion instead of nudging merely \$22.4 billion—an outrageous figure in its own right.

A couple of disturbing features about the \$515 million efficiency dividend emerged from the estimates committee discussion. One of those features is that of course not all the government trading enterprises subject to this efficiency dividend are fully commercial organisations. The Public Transport Authority is a government trading enterprise, but it is a heavily subsidised service operation. An efficiency dividend in the Public Transport Authority probably means fewer bus routes and less frequent buses in many suburbs. That is about the only way that the Public Transport Authority will be able to meet that efficiency dividend. That will be simply a matter of a service cut to an already pressured service that is struggling to meet the demands of the people who seek to use it.

The second disturbing feature of the \$515 million efficiency dividend is that not one of the electricity utilities could say what it was planning to do and how it proposed to implement the efficiency dividend. As the shadow Treasurer pointed out during question time, the government trading enterprises got very short notice of this efficiency dividend. The Treasurer confirmed that they got notice of it the night before the budget was announced. It is an extraordinary situation that commercial enterprises responsible for billions of dollars of assets and vitally important services were not fully consulted about their budgets before the budget close-off date, with all the matters settled and with their full understanding of what would happen by the budget close-off date. No, that did not happen. The government gave them warning of an efficiency dividend the night before. The government trading enterprises have no idea how they will implement that efficiency dividend. At the very least, they had no idea that they were prepared to share with Estimates Committee B about how they might implement the efficiency dividend. We could see not so much extra efficiency in those electricity utilities and a cash grab by the government; what we might see is a decline in service in those electricity utilities and a cash grab by the government. Obviously, if utilities such as Western Power have to slash their operating costs, there is a possible implication for the amount of work that is done on maintenance, the number of people able to respond when there is a blackout or the amount of energy and resources that are put in to make the electricity network safer from a bushfire perspective. The government says that it has to subsidise electricity. As I said in my contribution to the second reading debate, that is wrong. According to the total flow to and from Treasury, the government will not be subsidising electricity across the forward estimates; it will be taking a billion dollars from electricity utilities for Treasury. This efficiency dividend is just the second instalment of the cash grab. The first instalment was the increase in the previous budget in the dividend payout ratios. This is the second instalment.

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland) [5.57 pm]: This budget is a poor excuse for a budget. It has been poorly formulated and it offers very little by way of any dividend to the community. We were told ahead of the budget that this budget would deliver some kind of social dividend to the community. It has done nothing of the sort. Some of the headline figures provided in the budget papers were the most surprising elements. The Australian dollar has been considerably above parity with the United States dollar for some time now; in fact, it has been around \$US1.04 or \$US1.05 and beyond. Yet this budget was formulated on a price against the greenback of just

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97.5c. At the time of framing the budget, there was a 7.5c difference. We know that for every cent that the dollar is down, it means a \$60 million increase in revenue. If that 7.5c difference does not eventuate this year, that will deliver 7.5 times \$60 million, which would mean the better part of a \$500 million hole in this year's state budget. The predictions for the dollar over the out years are even more extraordinary. The budget is framed around the Australian dollar falling to just 76.9c by 2014–15. I am not aware of any commentators, other than the Western Australian Treasury and the Barnett government, who are suggesting that the Australian dollar will fall to just 76.9c by 2014–15. The Reserve Bank, the commonwealth Treasury and most economic commentators expect it to remain at or above parity well into the future. In fact, most economic commentators have the dollar still well over parity in 2014–15, which is when our Treasurer thinks the dollar will be down to 76.9c.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Before the dinner break, I started to make some contributions to the third reading debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2011–12 Bill 2011, and I spent some time talking about the rate of the Australian dollar predicted by the government for this year and for the out years of the budget, and about how that prediction appeared to be flawed. It is interesting to note that when the question was raised with the Treasurer and Treasury, their defence seemed to be that their figures for iron ore prices may be equally flawed, and that would somehow balance things out. For the Treasurer and Treasury to choose a predicted rate of the Australian dollar that is different from that of all other commentators—certainly different from the commonwealth Treasury, the Reserve Bank of Australia and all official commentators—and to then choose a predicted figure for the price of iron ore that somehow compensates for this, seems to me a rather strange way of going about business.

One underlying figure that I do not think the government can squirm its way out of explaining is the ridiculous figure it has predicted in the budget for the rate of population growth. The government predicts that the rate of population growth in Western Australia will decrease. A significant number of the top 25 local government authorities around Australia that have the highest population growth—in fact, not much under half of them—are in Western Australia. Many members in this place know the rate of population growth in their electorates and the jurisdictions of the respective local government authorities, yet we are supposed to believe that, as a state, our rate of population increase will decline. We also know from business and industry that there is a huge unmet demand for labour in this state that will continue well into the future. There is clearly a huge demand for a much greater population to take up the jobs that are needed in industry and commerce in the state, particularly, and obviously, in the mining industry. In my view, Western Australia will certainly continue, one way or another, to have an increased rate of population growth, not the decreased rate of growth that these budget papers are predicated upon. Again, we can ask why an assumption like that would be put in the budget papers. I can only assume it is because we have a government that does not want to properly plan for the future, because if the population growth that is happening and will continue to happen in the state of Western Australia is acknowledged, schools, hospitals, police stations and all of the government infrastructure that goes with that population growth will have to be planned for. We do not see very much planning. A reduced number of public buildings are being built; we do not see the same rollout of new schools and so forth that we have seen in previous years.

The other interesting figure in the budget is the projected unemployment rate. Again, the government predicts that the unemployment rate will remain much the same. The unemployment rate in the last couple of years has hovered around four to five per cent. But during the term of the Labor government, just a few short years ago, the unemployment rate was down to just 2.8 per cent. If we listen to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia or the Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia or others in business in this state, they expect that the labour market will continue to tighten. I do not see why the unemployment rate would not head back down towards the 2.8 per cent rate, at the very least, that it was under Labor.

This budget does not deliver to the community of Western Australia. I said in my opening remarks that nothing much was in this budget. There is not the social dividend that was promised by the Premier. I know that people in my electorate have not heard any announcements of magnitude of any new projects or anything new happening in the Midland region or in the whole of the east metropolitan region—no proper commitment. We see our new hospital, Midland health campus, which will replace Swan District Hospital, further delayed whilst the government considers some private proponents for the hospital.

At the same time, we see household bills skyrocketing with huge increases in electricity charges. My constituents, like everyone else, have already had a 46 per cent increase in their electricity rates, with increases of another five per cent, 12 per cent and 12 per cent due over the next four years. If people in this state are crazy enough to re-elect the Liberal–National government, in a few short years they will see a 107 per cent increase in

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electricity alone. The increase is already well over the 50 per cent mark with this year's budget; and with the next four years' worth of electricity price increases, the total increase will be over 107 per cent. This is hurting families; it is also hurting businesses. This year we have seen the cost of electricity for businesses go up even more and those costs are in turn passed on to consumers—householders—in all our electorates.

Water rates have also skyrocketed. In the last few days the new drainage fee that will be charged to an enormous number of households has been highlighted. This fee is over and above the increase in water rates. This is just plainly and simply another charge that householders have to face. It is a charge that will have a compounding effect on those households, because those households that will have to pay the new drainage fee are also likely to be targeted by their insurance companies for an additional cost on their insurance premiums due to the fact that they are in low-lying areas where drainage services have had to be provided.

At this stage I do not think we know yet how much gas charges will go up by. There has certainly been considerable speculation about gas bills and nothing is being done by this Premier or this government to put the lid on gas prices and to keep the prices down.

We talked in this place today about the fact that the government has directly put up the Fire and Emergency Services Authority levy, and the flow-on effect that will have on local government rates. The increasing cost of electricity and water to local government authorities has forced local governments to put up their rates considerably as well. All the charges that I have talked about so far—council rates, electricity, water, drainage, sewerage and gas—have not gone up by just the consumer price index or five per cent a year; they have gone up by unprecedented amounts. The average household is really struggling to pay these charges. We know that in Western Australia the cost of housing has gone up considerably over the course of the last decade, and also that the rental market situation is very tight. This government is putting many households under financial stress. What is the heartless Treasurer's response? It is to talk about electricity price rises being necessary to balance his budget. The opposition has said that it would have liked to have seen electricity prices frozen in this year's budget, because enough is enough, and there has been too much pain, too fast. That has been the case particularly with electricity prices, as householders have had to suck up a 46 per cent increase in their electricity bills in just two years. It is time for a year without increases. The Treasurer responded by saying that if the government froze electricity prices for the next three or four years, it would cost the state budget X billion dollars. The Treasurer gives the game away with that kind of response, because what he is saying is that, as a government, the Treasurer and the Premier see electricity and water bills as all part of the tax mix. The government needs to put up those bills to balance its budget. I ask members to consider this: why does the government need to do this? In my view, it is for a variety of reasons, one of which is that we have seen massive expense growth over the two and a half years of the Barnett government. We have seen 36 per cent expense growth in the government sector. We have also seen state debt increase from just \$3.6 billion in June 2008 to over \$14 billion currently, and the prediction in this year's budget that overall state debt will go to about \$22 billion. This is staggering. I have no idea how any of the three Treasurers that we have had in this government in the past three years—the current Minister for Transport, the member for Vasse; the Premier; or the current Treasurer—can hold their heads up, or even approach people and ask them to vote for them in the future, when they have blown out state debt so badly. That will be a debt burden and an interest bill for the public of Western Australia to pay of over \$1 billion a year. It is totally remarkable that in less than three years, we could see state debt blow-out so far—from \$3.6 billion to \$14 million currently and \$22 billion into the future.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [7.14 pm]: I rise to talk about the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2011–12 Bill 2011. I first want to support the comments made by the member for Midland. At the beginning of her speech, the member for Midland referred to some of the very dodgy assumptions that this budget is based upon. In the estimates hearings process we found more and more issues and assumptions that had not been dealt with properly. From an economic point of view, it is a huge disappointment to have a budget presented in this Parliament that does not truly reflect the nature of the state's finances. I will touch upon a few of those assumptions.

The member for Midland referred to the oil price and to how the government's assumption about the value of the Australian dollar varies significantly from the assumption in the federal budget. If we applied the Australian government's estimates to our budget, there would be a significant impact. We saw examples in which revenue from particular funds is accounted for, but the expenditure is not. The Perth parking levy is one example that shows that the government is expecting to generate over \$128 million over the next four years. But it has accounted for only \$55 million of expenditure, and it is not accounting for, or including a prediction on, how it will spend the revenue it will collect. This is helping the budget bottom line.

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I also want to talk about road safety funding. The government made a big deal of saying that it would spend 100 per cent of the money raised from red-light and speed cameras on road safety. However, this budget accounts for this revenue but not for its expenditure. Again, I find it incredible that the government has seen fit to come into this Parliament and show revenue and not expenditure. In fact, the statement of risk in the budget papers includes the expenditure profile under the road safety levy. It is more than a risk; it should be shown as an actuality, because the government made the commitment. The government made that commitment in this Parliament and in its media statements, and I believe that the budget should properly reflect that commitment.

There are other items that are not properly reflected in the budget, and one relates to the Geraldton Port Authority. In the estimates hearings covering the Department of Treasury and Finance, and later confirmed in the Transport division, we discovered that significant estimated revenue had been built into the budget bottom line for dividends and tax equivalent payments from the Geraldton Port Authority. That will not happen. Although the Treasurer did not quite answer the questions on these issues, I understand that the Minister for Transport said, basically, that he does not believe those forecasts are right. That is another key item in the budget that is wrong, and the government knew it was wrong when it presented the budget.

Another issue that shows this government does not believe in accountable or transparent budgeting is the efficiency dividend in the Department of Education. We heard again today the Treasurer talking about this government meeting its efficiency dividend in the normal public sector. The Treasurer went on and on saying how the government had achieved more than it had forecast. It was an absolutely bold statement! I asked the Minister for Education—remembering that Education is the second-biggest spending department after Health—how the department was meeting its efficiency dividend given that the Treasurer was claiming this was such a big win for it. I asked the Minister for Education whether she supported the Treasurer's claims that 90 per cent of the efficiency dividend was being delivered. The minister said that she did not know how the Treasurer came to that conclusion. Basically, the department had said that it was no longer accounting or reporting for the efficiency dividend and it was something that was introduced a couple of years ago but was now being ignored. I find it very hard to understand that the Treasurer is saying that the government is meeting the efficiency dividend, yet the second-biggest spending department is saying that it does not know anything about it. In the estimates hearings the Department of Education could not tell me how much of that efficiency dividend it was producing. The reality is that the Education budget had a significant structural adjustment made to it in this financial year and over the next two or three years of the forward estimates. That structural adjustment will replace the efficiency dividend that has been cut out. The Treasurer's claim that these departments are meeting their efficiency dividends is wrong.

I will also touch on something that we learned in Estimates Committee B on Education. That is the issue of school-based police officers, which is another key election commitment that was made by the Liberal Party in opposition. Through the estimates process, we again saw a government that does not care about the commitments it made to the community. I will touch on Ellenbrook rail line in a minute. The promise to reintroduce school-based police officers was a key election commitment of the government. It is all about improving standards and behaviour in schools and getting police back into schools. I have pursued this issue over the past two and a half years because Ballajura Community College wants a school-based police officer. Given the Barnett government had given a clear commitment to reintroduce school-based police officers, we thought the school would have a chance of getting one. However, we have been battling for two and a half years and there has been no reintroduction of school-based police officers. We learned from the budget estimates process that the minister does not support a core election promise made by her government. Again, I find it incredible that the government says that it will reintroduce school-based police officers and has a go at the Labor Party, and then the minister comes in and says that the government does not support school-based police officers after all. I find that absolutely ridiculous.

I want to talk about some other issues that we found out about during the estimates process. I will talk about some of the major projects. Another key theme that the Treasurer runs is that the government manages the budgets of major projects. The Treasurer has come into this place and said that the average cost overrun for projects worth over the value of \$100 million is two per cent. That figure is simply wrong. I straightaway point to the Perth City Link project. At the estimates committee hearings we learned that the government originally estimated that the project would cost \$468 million. This budget now shows the cost of that project as \$737 million. That is a massive increase in the budget of that project. Members should remember that the project has not even started properly. I ask members to imagine what the project will eventually cost. The government comes in and says that for 100 years people have been demanding the sinking of the rail line. I have not done the research, but I am not sure whether that is entirely accurate. The question always must be: at what cost? This project was said to cost \$468 million, and in just over a couple of years, without the project commencing in any

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significant way, the cost has blown out to \$737 million. What is the excuse? The government now includes the cost of building the city square. While the government attacks the Labor opposition about the car park for the Perth Arena project, it oversees a massive increase in the budget of one of its core projects. Maybe those government advisers who were writing cute little notes to ministers and the Treasurer to help them attack the Labor opposition should have figured out that they should have included in the initial budget for the Perth City Link project the cost of paving the city square that will sit on top of the hole for the sunken railway.

The government is keen to attack the Labor opposition, but it did not budget for the project that it started. The government attacked the opposition about the car park for the Perth Arena, but it forgot to include the Perth city square in the initial budget. The initial budget for the Perth City Link project was \$468 million, and that has now blown to \$737 million. At the same time, the government claims that its average cost overrun on projects worth over the value of \$100 million is two per cent.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): The member for Swan Hills can defend the minister, but he should make sure he is in his seat before he starts defending the minister.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The government greatly increased the cost of the project without major works being underway.

The true cost of Hale House was presented in the budget—\$25.5 million for the fit-out, construction and renovation of Hale House. We also found out through the budget estimates process that, long before the Premier came into this house and said that he did not know, he knew that the cost of Hale House would be \$25.5 million. The cabinet submission that was taken to cabinet in late January said that the estimated total cost of the project was \$25.5 million. The additional cost of relocating the people in Hale House takes the total cost to \$27 million. The Premier came in and told us that he did not know the \$25.5 million figure. But from information obtained through both FOI and the estimates process, we know that in late January the figure taken to cabinet was an estimated total cost of \$25.5 million, which included both the renovation and the fit-out for the project.

I am glad the Minister for Planning has come into the chamber, because I want to reiterate the massive blow-out in the Perth City Link project. As I said, there is no use in the government coming in and attacking the Labor opposition for blow-outs while at the same time it is overseeing massive blow-outs. A new structure and process is meant to be put in place to stop these blow-outs happening, but they are still happening.

I want to touch upon the drainage levy, which is an issue that the member for Midland raised. Maybe I was not listening to the entire budget speech—maybe I was distracted—but I do not remember hearing that the drainage levy will now be extended to thousands more people across Western Australia. I know that the budget papers show that the Water Corporation will pay more dividends, but I do not remember hearing that thousands more people in the metropolitan area will pay a new drainage fee. I talk specifically about the people in Ellenbrook. In a couple of weeks, up to 1 500 homes will be levied with a new drainage levy. The budget was meant to provide social dividends and be a budget for the community, yet it contains further massive increases in household fees and charges. On top of that, households that previously did not pay the drainage levy must pay an extra \$85, \$90 or \$100 a year. Again, I do not remember seeing that in the budget papers. Maybe I missed it, but I hope that the government did not try to sneak this in and blame it on the Water Corporation, because this decision would have been approved by government. The decision impacts on the dividends that are paid to the government. Therefore, it cannot be simply a Water Corporation decision. This is a government decision, because the government would have known that increased revenue and dividends would flow from this decision. This is not simply a government trading enterprise sort of exercise; this decision was made by the government. At the end of the day, the government owns the Water Corporation and the government is responsible for this decision.

Lastly, I will touch upon the impact of the increases in electricity and water and how those impacts flow through the whole community. Today we heard about councils. I have the table that the Minister for Local Government tabled. I am still trying to figure out what his point was, but the point that I see is that large, growing councils, such as the City of Swan, are under enormous pressure to satisfy the growing demand for new parks and new roads for the new homes that are being built throughout the area. Those demands are significant. The minister stood and spoke about the Town of Mosman Park and how it spends seven or eight per cent of its revenue on roads. I find that an absolutely ridiculous argument. I do not go to Mosman Park very often, but I know that it is a well-established suburb and that thousands of homes are not being built there. I do not know what point the minister was trying to make. Large councils on the urban fringe are trying to cater for massive increases in demand. These increases in costs will be passed on to the ratepayers. Regardless of what the minister says, this is another result of the government's decision. It is not the councils' decision. The government's decision has

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increased the price of electricity and, therefore, the councils have to pass on that cost. I am still trying to figure out what the minister was talking about when he referred to the Town of Mosman Park. Councils such as the City of Wanneroo and Shire of Serpentine–Jarrahdale—I could list more—are struggling to meet the demands in the area.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro) [7.28 pm]: What a fortuitous occurrence that I follow in the debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2011–12 Bill 2011 the member for West Swan, who was talking about metropolitan councils and how troubled they are with the challenge of providing services for the massive growth in that part of the state. Those councils' troubles are magnified by the callous and unhelpful acts of the state government and by the attitude and response by the ministers responsible, such as the Treasurer, whom we heard today telling the people of Western Australia that they are whingeing and that they have nothing to complain about.

The Treasurer was saying that this state has the lowest cost of living in the country and that we should all be happy and revelling in the fact that we have it better than any other state. He was reflecting the views of that past conservative Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, who said that we had never had it so good. The Treasurer has that same attitude, and that attitude was reflected in the observations of the member for Ocean Reef, who said the same thing. Basically his experience as a councillor suggested that councillors today have it easy. He said that they are under pressure to increase rates beyond the amount they would like to increase them, or to an amount that would result in a great deal of pain and hardship for the householders in their cities and towns, but they have to do it because they are confronted with the challenge of providing services for a growing population, particularly in those outer suburbs covered by the Cities of Wanneroo, Swan, Armadale and Rockingham. These are the councils that are feeling the real pain.

The boom is on. For everyone except the Premier, the boom is on. That means that there will be an increasing demand for workers to come into this state from either interstate or overseas and, as they come, they will demand services. They will add to the challenges confronting people in Western Australia over housing, they will reduce the availability of rentals and they will also demand services. Those councils in the outer suburbs now have to pick up the slack of this state government, which has demonstrated no interest at all in the hardships confronting the householders of Western Australia. The government is quite content to place onto councils the cost of delivering a lot of services that in the past were provided by the government, and to not provide those councils with any assistance. The only councils that appear to be getting considerably more assistance than they were prior to this government's arrival are those outside the metropolitan area. I do not begrudge those councils getting money. But what I am observing now is a two-speed economy within the councils of Western Australia, outer metropolitan councils in particular. All the metropolitan councils are getting no assistance from this state government. They are treated as second-class citizens. All those members on the other side who represent city electorates should consider that. They should consider that they are part of a government that is lavishing an enormous amount of money on councils in the regions in a manner that demonstrates that it does not really care about how it is spent, as long as it is spent. As long as that money gets out the door and enables the minister for pork-barrelling—the Leader of the Nationals—to fly the government jet into a town for a short moment, cut a ribbon, get his photo in a local newspaper, get on ABC radio and then leave, that is okay. In coming weeks and months we will see more evidence of the lack of supervision and the lack of transparency with regard to a lot of the money that has been spent, particularly from the country local government fund and other funds in the regions. This is not a criticism necessarily of councils; it is a criticism of the minister and of the government who are delivering that money and not providing oversight.

Mr J.M. Francis interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The country local government fund was first announced in 2008 by the Minister for Local Government without his knowing what it was. He said it was \$70 million. Subsequently, they took that fund off the minister and upped it to \$100 million. In 2008, \$100 million went out the door to country local governments. A good thing, members might say. The argument was that money from the fund had to go out quickly because we were in the midst of a global financial crisis. The GFC was descending upon us and money needed to be spent to buoy the economy, to support jobs and to support the economy in the regions. So, the money went out the door. It is now three years down the track and still money from that \$100 million has not been spent. That is not necessarily surprising, as some of those councils were small and some of them had some significant projects to undertake. But of that \$100 million, some \$4 million has not even been touched. Therefore, the projects for which the money was bid and which were used to justify delivering the money under the country local government fund have not even started. The justification for getting that money out the door without transparency and without oversight was that we were in the midst of a global financial crisis and it had to be spent really quickly. If it is true that there was a priority to get some of that money out into the regions to try to

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reduce the impact of the global financial crisis, we could accept that. We could accept it if we had been able to look three years down the track and foresee that the money had been spent, the people who needed it had received it, and the projects that needed to go ahead to ensure that the economy in those regions was supported had gone ahead. But \$4 million of that money has not even been touched. Beyond that, there is another \$3 million worth of projects that have only partly commenced. We are therefore talking about seven per cent of the \$100 million from three years ago that has not yet been acquitted. That is evidence that there is additional money sloshing around in the National Party coffers that could have been directed, I feel, to better use in those outer metropolitan areas that are now starting to suffer from the need to increase their revenue. They need that revenue not just to stay afloat, but also to provide additional infrastructure and services to the people who are leaving the city, flying into the regions and working to create those royalties, and then coming back home to live in the outer metropolitan areas.

This is not an argument about whether royalties for regions is a good thing. It is a good thing, provided that it is managed in an appropriate way, that the money is used to the best possible purpose and that it is supervised in a transparent and fair-handed manner. I do not get any confidence from the budget and the estimates process that that has occurred. There are significant questions to be answered on behalf of the minister for the regions, not only on what has happened with that allocation of money in 2008, but also on what will happen to the money in subsequent years. Producing a glossy document that has 20 or 30 pages of National Party advertising in it, with a few photographs of happy people around the state receiving their money, and having one-line items for a region, does not give any insight into what has occurred with the funding. Sadly, as a result of the constraints imposed on the estimates process, a lot of that real detail did not come to light through estimates.

I will seek the indulgence of the house a little and return to my own electorate with regard to the estimates and the budget process. I have to say that, not surprisingly I suppose, I was disappointed greatly with the outcomes of the budget process. When people come to the southern suburbs of Rockingham, that outer metropolitan growth area, they come to Baldivis, Karnup, Secret Harbour, Golden Bay and Singleton; and, when they go to the north, they go to Ellenbrook and other suburbs in the north with which I am not as familiar.

Mr J.M. Francis: And Wanneroo!

Mr P. PAPALIA: And Wanneroo.

Mr J.M. Francis: Golden Bay and Singleton are down there. Did you miss out Mandurah?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Maybe. Regardless, I am speaking on their behalf because I still represent them, unlike the member for Swan Hills, who completely happily threw away all the citizens of Ellenbrook this afternoon when he said, "They've gone. They are not mine anymore. You can have them." I am hoping that that interjection was captured in *Hansard* because that was wonderful!

Mr F.A. Alban: I hope so too!

Mr P. PAPALIA: That will be wonderful fodder for the next election.

Mr F.A. Alban: We'll see who the Leader of the Opposition will be!

Mr P. PAPALIA: Unlike the member for Swan Hills, I care about the members of my current electorate.

Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Even after I lose them I will still be advocating on their behalf because they are in the outer metropolitan suburbs that are suffering. They are covered by a council that has just put up its rates by 12 per cent.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: It's all right, the member for Midland cares about the constituents in Swan Hills.

Mr P. PAPALIA: There you go. Member for Midland, fortunately other people are keeping watch over the concerns of those constituents out there in Ellenbrook who have just been dumped by the member for Swan Hills.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: They've been abandoned!

Mr P. PAPALIA: They have been abandoned and publicly thrown on the scrap heap by the member for Swan Hills. The outer suburbs are hurting; they need assistance. Rockingham has received a lot of bad press about its rates rise, and I am not inclined to defend the council over that 12 per cent rate rise. I share the concerns on the scale of that rise; it is too much.

However, it must be understood that for the last three years that council was well motivated in attempting to alleviate the pain and pressure felt by households in Rockingham as a result of the massive increase in household

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costs imposed by the state government. The council tried to reduce the impacts of increases in costs imposed by the state government, and now it finds itself in the position in which, if the council does not put up its rates, it will not be capable of operating its current activities and meeting its current costs, and also expanding to meet the demands of the outer suburbs. Suburbs like Settlers Hills, which is part of Baldivis, are desperately short of infrastructure and services, and they need assistance. The only way they will get it, other than through council rate increases, is through the state government. The federal government has actually come to the party. In the last three years the federal government has thrown enormous amounts of money at all the suburbs of Rockingham and every outer suburb of the metropolitan area with a school. Councils have received massive amounts of money directly from the federal government for infrastructure projects. Over the last three years, the federal government has taken up the slack that has been left by the state government; I refer to the failure of the state government to provide funds. The only way the state government has managed to evade public responsibility is through that federal government funding. If that had been removed from the economy, the Barnett government would have been exposed as having spent very little, particularly in the outer metropolitan areas.

I brought to the attention of the council in Rockingham a development the state government was doing at Golden Bay that in my opinion would probably bring in around \$320 million to \$350 million in windfall profit to state government coffers. My opinion, I suggest, is far more accurate than that of the Minister for Housing, who has been very conservative in his public comments. That development would also throw at least 4 500 people into the electorate, most of whom will be in high-density housing, which will not have backyards for the kids to play in and will not have adequate sporting facilities. The responsible minister has downsized the profit at only \$200 million. All we asked for down there was a contribution to ease the challenge to the council and to support the people who will live there and those who currently live there. In the order of \$15 million was needed to get a new surf club, Australian football facilities at the magnificent Lark Hills Sportsplex and a dual-use path between Singleton and Golden Bay and to upgrade some facilities in Golden Bay. None of that has been funded—nothing. The consequences are potentially terrible. Beyond that, there is space for a school. A school was to be provided as part of the successful tender for that project, but there is no money in the budget for that school. Comet Bay Primary School has 912 children; Secret Harbour Primary School, over 700; and Singleton Primary School, 690. Those schools are beyond capacity now.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale) [7.43 pm]: Simply put, this budget, outlined in the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2011–12 Bill 2011, has no good news at all for the electorate of Armadale. Let us look at utility charges. By the end of 2014–15 the Barnett government will have increased utility charges by about 107 per cent. It will be the government's fifth budget by then, and there will have been a 107 per cent increase in utility charges. As was mentioned earlier by the member for Warnbro, these increases in utility charges have a major effect on households; they also have a major effect on local councils. From my understanding, the City of Armadale rates increase has been between 0.75 per cent and one per cent this year as a result of the utility charges imposed by the Barnett government.

These cost increases also have a major effect on sporting organisations. I have had representations from a number of sporting organisations in my electorate in the last week or so indicating that they cannot afford to pay the electricity charges and other utility charges as a result of the Barnett government's continual increase in utility charges. The Barnett government does not seem to have the ability to stop significant increases in utility charges. The one constant of the Barnett government in the time it has been in power since 2008 is an increase in utility charges, which is affecting not only local households, but also local sporting clubs and the various local government councils.

An increase in drainage costs has occurred, as the government has decided to implement a drainage fee. It is not a fee; it is not a rate. It is a new tax, because the moneys collected from the drainage fee will not be utilised to improve drainage services. They are really another way for this government to increase revenue. In other words, it is a tax and should be called a tax. Besides being hit by these charges, are there any benefits to the electors of Armadale as a result of this budget? There is none. There are hardly any benefits to the entire south east metropolitan area. I imagine the member for Darling Range is happy with the upgrade of the Mundijong Police Station, which of course needed an upgrading, but, generally, no benefits are to be found in this budget for the south east metropolitan area.

I was very surprised to find, especially from the Treasurer who is also the Attorney General, and therefore well aware of the state of our courthouses, no funding for the Armadale courthouse. The Treasurer received representations from the Mayor of Armadale and from the federal Liberal member for Canning on this matter. The Armadale courthouse is in need of a major upgrade. In fact, Armadale needs a new courthouse. Last week I was given a tour of the existing courthouse by officers of the Attorney General's department, and it became bleedingly obvious on that tour that the courthouse cannot cope with the demand it must meet day in, day out.

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For instance, walking down the passageways of the courthouse, I saw solicitors receiving instructions from clients and seeking to give advice to clients. All this was in full view without the privacy of a separate room. In other words, the advice being given by the solicitor to their client could be heard by everyone. It could not be argued that there was any client–solicitor legal confidentiality or privilege, because everyone in the vicinity could hear what the solicitor was saying to the client and what the client was saying to the solicitor.

The Armadale courthouse, which is the major courthouse in the south east metropolitan area, has only three holding cells. A recent trial in the Armadale courthouse required 17 prisoners from one of our corrective services establishments to be in attendance as witnesses, but only three holding cells were available. At the same time, other matters were being heard. Therefore, 17 prisoners and other witnesses had to be held in holding cells, of which there were only three. This presented major issues for the security personnel of the courthouse. If one takes a quick tour of the Armadale courthouse, one is struck by how old, decrepit and undersized it is. I would challenge any government minister to take a tour of the Armadale courthouse and not argue that it requires immediate improvement. In fact, what is really required is a new courthouse. As I have said, the Attorney General is fully aware of this, because he has received representation from the federal member for Canning, and also from the Mayor of the City of Armadale. Armadale courthouse does not service just Armadale. It services the whole of the south east metropolitan area. That includes people who live south of Armadale. How the budget could not contain funding for a new courthouse in Armadale is beyond belief.

Last year, I invited the Premier to come on a tour of Armadale with me. The Premier has since come to Armadale, and I hope he will come to Armadale again. If the Attorney General and Treasurer came to Armadale, I could take him on a tour also, and we could perhaps also go for a run along some of the very nice running tracks that surround Armadale and the hills. I am incredibly disappointed, and my constituents are incredibly disappointed, that there is no funding in this budget for a new courthouse in Armadale.

There is also no funding in this budget for an underpass at Davis Road in Kelmscott. As anyone who has tried to cross the railway line in Kelmscott would know, the experience is a nightmare, particularly if it is just before or after school hours. The banking up of traffic is unbelievable, and it is becoming worse every day. However, once again, there is no funding in this budget for an underpass at Davis Road. There is also no funding in this budget to improve the Champion Drive–Tonkin Highway intersection. That intersection is a death trap. In the recent RAC motorist survey on the most dangerous intersections in the metropolitan area, the Champion Drive–Tonkin Highway intersection came out as one of the top 10. However, once again, there is no funding in this budget for that intersection.

My neighbouring colleague, the member for Darling Range, who is a man of much integrity, campaigned very hard and very well before the last state election on the need for funding for a southward extension of Tonkin Highway. I congratulate him on that campaign. It was a very effective campaign. However, there is no funding in this budget for that extension.

In fact, there is no funding in this budget for anything in Armadale. All there is in this budget for Armadale is an increase in utility charges. That increase in utility charges will not only have an effect on individual households; it will also have a catalyst effect on local government rates and on the capacity of local sporting clubs to meet their financial demands.

There is a desperate need for funding to increase technical and further education facilities and services in Armadale. There is an abysmal lack of quality TAFE services in the Armadale region. The Premier is fully aware of this, and I hope the Treasurer is also aware of this. Due to the demographics of Armadale and the surrounding areas, Armadale would naturally lend itself to an increase in TAFE facilities and services.

A number of public servants work in Armadale. However, they are scattered around the city. That of course creates its own inefficiencies. Those public servants should be housed in one building. However, once again, the budget is silent on that.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Which departments are you referring to?

Dr A.D. BUTI: I am referring to both the Department for Communities and the Department of Education. The problem is that those public servants are scattered around the city. They need to be housed in one building. In fact, my dream is that, one day, a government department will be relocated to Armadale, because that will provide a number of benefits for the region. However, at least in the interim it would be good to have a central facility to house the various public servants who work in Armadale.

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This budget also contains increases in utility charges. That will affect not only the voters and residents of Armadale, but also the businesses in the region. There is a lack of benefits in this budget for the electors of Armadale. I hope that will be corrected very soon.

MR A.J. WADDELL (Forrestfield) [7.55 pm]: This budget and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2011–12 Bill 2011 are nothing but a disappointment to the people in my electorate. They are a disappointment to the people of High Wycombe, who have received nothing in this budget. It is a disappointment to the people in Maida Vale, who have received nothing. It is a disappointment to the people in Forrestfield, who have received nothing, and it is a disappointment to the people in Wattle Grove, Kenwick and Maddington, who have received nothing. Not one suburb in my electorate has come out in front in this budget. A conga line of constituents have been attending my electorate office to tell me how they will be worse off under this budget. Recently, I was approached by a number of constituents who are very concerned that this budget will impose on them a new drainage charge. I said to them, “What drainage charge? There is no drainage charge in this budget.” The Premier did not stand in front of the people of Western Australia and say that the government has a grand new scheme to raise money. The Treasurer did not stand in this Parliament and say that the government has come up with a new way to balance the budget. There was no announcement. A letter was sent in the mail to a number of my constituents, indicating that there has been a review of some boundaries, and, in the case of one of my constituents, they will now be hit with an annual drainage charge of \$105.25.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): Members, when you get on your feet, you want to be able to be heard. I am sure the member for Forrestfield wants to be heard too. I say that to members on both sides of the house.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: This constituent of mine made the point that nothing has changed in her street for the past seven years. There has been no additional run-off from her property. The topography of the area has not changed. There have been no earthquakes. No great hills have formed or anything like that. No new drainage is being put through the area. Yet as of 1 July this year, my constituent will be required to pay an additional drainage charge of \$105.25. Do not tell me that this is not a revenue-raising prospect. The government has worked out that by a simple stroke of the pen, it can raise more money to balance the budget. The government did not announce this drainage charge. That is because this is a tricky budget. There are many measures in this budget which will deliver increasingly greater pain to the people in our constituencies, but on which this government has attempted to avoid scrutiny.

During the estimates process, I asked a question about the hardship utility grant scheme. I am interested to know how the hardship utility grant scheme has been used over the life of this government, and how it has been impacted upon by the never-ending increases in electricity charges and other charges under this government. The minister kindly provided supplementary information about how these grants have been paid out. I would like to inform the house that in the period August 2008 to June 2009, 1 680 grants were given out in the metropolitan area. This represented 62.52 per cent of the total grants that were given out. I will not go through all the regions, but in the Gascoyne it was 0.38 per cent, in the Goldfields it was 2.09 per cent, in the Wheatbelt it was 4.76 per cent, and in the South West it was 9.56 per cent. In 2009–10, we saw the number of grants in the metropolitan area jump from the previous year’s 1 680 to 4 401. That is a massive increase. This is not largesse on behalf of a government saying, “Here is some free money.” This money is being pumped into our community because people are suffering, and suffering badly, under the increasing charges constantly being hammered into our households. Those 4 401 grants represented 65 per cent of the total. I note with interest that in that year we saw the rate of grants to the Wheatbelt drop from 4.76 to 2.88 per cent. If we look at the period July 2010 to April 2011, the metropolitan area has continued its meteoric rise, and is now at 5 598 grants. Keeping in mind that we started with 1 1680 grants, over the life of this government that number has increased to 5 998. Each one of those grants represents a household in dire need. Not every household is eligible and there is a great deal of hidden pain behind that. I note again that grant numbers in some of the regions have fallen. I think that shows a government focused on taking money out of the metropolitan area only to shovel it as fast as it can out to the regions to prop up the deal done to stay in government. People in my electorate are hurting, and hurting badly. A lot of the members opposite will attack us by asking: “Don’t you support the royalties for regions program? Don’t you support the mining industry?” I would like to remind members that a great deal of the mining industry is made up of fly in, fly out workers; and I can tell members where they live. They live in my electorate. They live there because it has close proximity to the airport, because housing prices are low and because they just need somewhere to camp out for a couple of weeks. We suffer a great deal for that fly in, fly out mentality, yet we see very little investment in the electorate. As I have said, there was nothing in this budget other than pain for my electorate. One of the key issues that I outlined in the lead-up to the budget and that I was hoping to see some money for was, for instance, the intersection at Berkshire Road and Roe Highway. This is considered a black

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spot in Western Australia. I have written to the minister on occasion, seeking information about when we will see movement on that intersection and when the work to improve it will commence. I am really asking how many people we will have to see killed before the government takes any action.

I have been told and I have a copy of a letter from Main Roads stating that its preliminary estimate to fix the problem indicates that it will cost \$11 million to realign Berkshire Road, which is quite peculiar. A constituent of mine, Mr John Angelini, regularly corresponds with me. He works as the operations manager at a large transport concern in the area. He has given me the detailed plans for his solution for the area, which basically involves putting up a stop sign and one extra traffic light. I suspect that that will come in a little bit under the \$11 million that Main Roads is approaching the problem with. I suspect that the Main Roads approach is the Rolls Royce version. It is probably the one that, in a blind taste test, I would pick because it will have the best design and the best aspect to it. However, at the moment, parents have to go through that intersection with their kids every day as they go to and from school. A lot of traffic events happen at that intersection that I would like to see happen safely. If we can do that on the cheap, if we can take up Mr Angelini's suggestions and implement them, that would be terrific. What was in the budget for Forrestfield? Unfortunately, as I said—nothing; nothing but increases.

The Forrestfield United Soccer Club is one of the biggest soccer clubs in Western Australia. It has an excellent youth program and is trying to move its way up the leagues. It has approached me about the problems it has maintaining its night league simply because of its concern about being able to afford to meet the electricity costs to run its large light towers at night. What is the alternative? To increase the fees the kids have to pay? The club's objective is to keep its fees as low as possible to ensure that as many kids as possible are able to be members of the club and participate in club activities, and to give kids in the area some meaningful activity. Believe me, there is very little else to do in the area. This club is taking hundreds and hundreds of kids under its wing and is ensuring that they are not out on the streets, that they are supervised and that they are mentored. The club is turning these young people into very good upstanding adolescents and, later, adults. This is good work, and yet the club is saying that it will have to put up barriers to entry; that is, it will have to put up club fees to meet the ongoing electricity costs. Clearly, we have our priorities fairly out of whack if that is what we want to see happen.

What was in this budget for public transport? There was an announcement of new buses, but there was no indication of where. Certainly, there is a dire need for additional routes in my electorate, not only for those needing to get to Midland health campus when it is constructed, but also to improve the general level of service. At the moment, the policy is to send older second-hand buses to the electorate simply because the newer busses cannot be serviced by the refuelling station in Kalamunda. None of the new buses will service the High Wycombe–Forrestfield parts of my electorate. I have spoken about the need for refurbishment of the train stations at Maddington and Kenwick. Again, we are talking about one of the highest crime ridden public transport routes in the country. How much was in the budget to redevelop those train stations? Nothing.

What else is there? Many have spoken about the impact of this budget on their rates. Earlier today, the member for Jandakot made a lot of fun about seeing street lights on in the middle of the day; clearly local governments can waste money and can therefore afford to pay the increased price for electricity. He loses sight of the fact that local governments have absolutely no control over their streetlighting. And if they did, I fear the solution to these ongoing price gouges would be the lights going off earlier and earlier, and being on in fewer and fewer streets. And then we would see an increase in the crime rate. We would see our streets become more unsafe. Again, is this the direction to take ourselves in?

There is no money for the flyover on Maida Vale Road. There is no money to deal with the ongoing crisis of year 7 entry. There is no money to improve any of the sporting grounds in my electorate. There is a lack of anything for anything.

I would now like to mention the government announcement about the wrapping up or winding up of the solar feed-in tariff. Only people who apply before the end of this month will be eligible for the feed-in tariff at the current rate, thereby cutting the major part of the incentive to invest in solar cells. I invested in solar cells earlier this year. I was in the middle of the process when the government brought in this change. I had sent off my paperwork prior to the announcement only to have it sent back to me because, according to the department, I had not written a certain number on the form, which I had in fact written on the form—it was on the back of the form. I sent the form back. And yet again, the department sent it back to me, saying that now I needed to put in a new form acknowledging the fact that if I did not get this form in by 30 June I would not be eligible for the feed-in tariff. So for the third time, I sent them the same form with the same information. I hope and pray that the department accepts the form before the 30 June deadline rolls around. I do wonder whether this is a deliberate policy. I do wonder why the department is suddenly so fanatical about every “i” being dotted and every “t” being

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crossed. I do wonder whether the department is sending back a form that contains no error—for no other fact than it is not the current form, even though it is the form the department sent me a week before—to ensure that a number of people will miss out on the feed-in tariff. I am fairly certain that some of us will be making grievances in a few weeks when our constituents tell us that they put up their solar cells in good faith and they missed out not through their own fault but through the bureaucratic machinations that Synergy and Western Power put them through.

The final point is that that form also required that I have an appropriate meter installed. I thought that was quite humorous because I have absolutely no control over the installation of that meter and it is entirely up to the people who told me that I would not get the tariff if I did not have the power meter installed to install it. It is really within their power to lock me out of the system. Whilst I probably can afford it, many others cannot.

MR P.B. WATSON (Albany) [8.10 pm]: The other day I went to a budget lunch in Albany and listened very intently to the Minister for Agriculture and Food, who spoke for an hour about everything that the state government was doing. The first question asked afterwards was from the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, who said, “What’s new? There is no new money there.” The minister for agriculture said that the government has not done anything new.

Mr C.J. Barnett: What about your hospital? Aren’t you happy about that?

Mr P.B. WATSON: I knew the Premier would raise the hospital. I have continually said that it is great that we will have a new hospital in Albany. We both went to the election with it. The Liberal Party won, and I applaud it. It is good that the Premier has raised the issue of the hospital because it relates to the Albany Community Hospice, which is an issue at the moment. I will give members some background on the Albany Community Hospice. It was given to the people of Albany by Paul Terry, the millionaire who tragically died in a helicopter crash in Hawaii. Paul Terry and his family gave us that hospice. I was on the hospice board in the early days. We could not maintain the hospice on the foreshore so we moved it up to the hospital. I am now back on the board and I realise the difficulties of running the Albany hospice, which is owned by the people of Albany. We have an ideal situation in which the hospice has a connection to the hospital. There is a walkway between the two so the doctors can come through or anyone in the hospice can go to the hospital to get blood tests or any other tests that some of these patients need in the later stages of their lives. When the hospital shifts, the hospice will be 320 to 350 metres away from the hospital. When that happens, an ambulance will have to be called to transport people. Our ambulance service is under pressure all the time. It does a tremendous job. It looks after a large region. We have an ageing population. We will have a problem if one of the ambulances is taken out of normal service during the day to transport a patient from one facility to the other.

The board has applied to royalties for regions for \$5 million. We have a perfectly good facility there. We were willing to go to the state government and say that we will give in kind to the hospice building the difference between what it will cost to build a new hospice right next to the hospital, which can be used by the hospital for visiting doctors or things like that. When I raised this during the budget estimates committee, the Minister for Health said that it was not a priority. It is a priority to the people of Albany.

Dr K.D. Hames: I don’t think that’s what I said. I said I didn’t personally see it but I am happy to take the advice from the health department.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I have excerpts from interviews the minister gave on the radio, when he said he did not think it was a priority.

Dr K.D. Hames: I don’t.

Mr P.B. WATSON: That is what I just said.

Dr K.D. Hames: No, you are talking about the health department, which didn’t think it was a priority. There is a difference.

Mr P.B. WATSON: That is fair enough but the people of Albany think it is a priority. We raise funds to run the hospice. The way things are going, if we cannot get support for the hospice, we will probably have enough funds for only the next three years. I do not want to be scaremongering. We have tried to keep a lid on this. People do not realise how valuable the hospice is until they or members of their family use it. A lot of money that keeps us going is from bequests from families who realise the tremendous service it provides for the community. It is a disappointment. I am sure that if the Albany community can keep putting pressure on the government, something will happen in the short term because the hospital will be built pretty soon. I was at the site the other day. It looks great. It is only a blank area but it will be tremendous for the people of Albany and also people in Katanning, Mt Barker and Denmark, our regional hub.

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Let us look at the budget itself. It was a cruel and heartless budget.

Mr F.A. Alban: What about the \$1 million?

Mr P.B. WATSON: If the member for Swan Hills wants to talk, he can get up later and talk. I am talking about my community. The seniors who come to see me have lived in their houses for a long time. They are saying that they need to get out of their houses because they cannot afford to pay the land rates, the power rates or the water rates. Members might say that that is nothing but these people have been living in their houses for many years. They want to be independent; they do not want to go into a home. They do not want to be dependent on their families. They say that their land rates, their water rates and everything else have gone up but they are not seeing anything for it. When I used to go doorknocking in winter, I would have a cup of tea with some of these people. I went into their nice warm houses. When I go doorknocking now, there are no heaters or lights on. People have the blinds pulled right up. They are really hurting. Members opposite have little smiles on their faces. The people in their areas might be all right but we are struggling in Albany.

The farmers in our hinterland have had a very bad season. We have had two droughts in a row. People in Albany are really struggling. When I spoke to one of the top businessmen in Albany the other day, he said that he is struggling. He is the most successful businessman in Albany. So many businesses in Albany are very close to being closed down. We are a major regional centre. Albany has always overcome these obstacles. They closed the woollen mills, the whaling station and the spinning mills and people said Albany would not survive but it has. Some of the old-timers said to me when I was doorknocking that they have never seen it as bad as this. To be hit with all these other rates on top of what they are struggling with at the moment is bringing Albany to its knees.

The member for Armadale talked about sporting clubs. The Albany Leisure and Aquatic Centre is a major centre. I had a meeting with the City of Albany the other day. Because the power rates and all the different rates have been increased at our leisure centre, the pool is now closed one day a week, the gym is closed three days a week and the rates for all the sporting events at the leisure centre are being increased. I went to the city to represent the sporting groups, and the city says it is just economics. I think it said the city is paying \$8 000 a week to keep the lights on at the leisure centre. The hockey centre next door will have to cut down the number of days people play sport—maybe one or two days a week—because they cannot afford to turn the lights on and most of their sport is played at night. Junior soccer and senior soccer is played. The women play soccer on Friday nights. That will probably have to be cancelled because the centre cannot afford to turn the lights on. We are seeing this continuing effect. Businesses are turning off their lights in York Street at night. What can happen? There is more chance of people breaking and entering. Fewer lights are left on around Albany at night, so it is not so safe to walk the streets. Through a culmination of events, these things happen.

A lot of people want to sell their houses and get out but the housing market is too low. Even if they do sell their houses because they cannot afford to keep them, rents are very high. It has an effect right throughout the community, from the seniors down to the young kids playing sport.

Dr K.D. Hames: I don't suppose you would volunteer the fact that it is you guys who are responsible for the price of electricity going up so much.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I remember that when Labor was in government, the minister sat on this side of the house and said, "You're in government now; you make the decisions and you have the end results". I say to the Minister for Health, "You're in government now. Put up or shut up."

The gas pipeline was such a huge issue at the last election. Members opposite went around saying that we would have a gas pipeline. Where is it? Down there in Albany we call that Barnett's south west waterway because it will be the same as the Kimberley pipeline. The government talks about it —

Dr K.D. Hames: You make it up as you go along.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Make it up?

Dr K.D. Hames: You just made up "Barnett's south west waterway" then while you were talking.

Mr P.B. WATSON: The Premier makes another decision. He comes out talking about the big picture thing, saying that the government would get private enterprise involved, that it was going to do this and going to do that. He got people's hopes up. The gas pipeline is a great idea and I wanted to support it, but it will not make gas cheaper for people in Albany because it will not be reticulated. It will be good only for the big businesses, and, of the big businesses we have down there, Grange Resources will generate its own water at Wellstead. The delivery of the gas pipeline was a huge promise to the people of Albany, but it has not been delivered.

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I move to the issue of drug labs. It is a shame that the Minister for Police is not here because we have heard so much talk from him about fighting crime. When Labor was in government, there were no drug labs in Albany. I spoke to the police the other day and they told me that drug labs had come about only in the last three or four years. In Albany, four drug labs have been found in the last month. Under a government that has said that it is tough on crime, more drug labs are being found and more violence is occurring in town. I compliment the police because they are doing a tremendous job, but the issue is that drugs are a huge problem. Labor was told that our two-plant policy would lead to more people on drugs. When that policy came through there was less cannabis—cannabis use dropped when that policy was in place. The government dropped that policy and now people go for the harder drugs. There are drug labs all over town, people at the nightclub are fighting and feuds are going on in town. There are real issues in Albany. I do not know if it is because of the current economic climate or because things are tough, but there is much more violence on the streets than there has ever been.

At the start of my speech I said that this government was cruel and heartless, but when we consider the government, we look at the Premier. Wherever I go in my electorate, supporters of both parties tell me that the Premier is arrogant, does not care about people and is more worried about his \$25 million palace and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. CHOGM might be great. The Premier said today that we should be proud of CHOGM, but CHOGM will not put food on the tables of my constituents in Albany. It will not keep them warm this winter. It is great to have these major projects, to say we should be proud of them and that we will be noticed all over the world, as long as people in my community are provided with the basics, which they are not getting. Their water bills have gone up, their gas bills have gone up, their power bills have gone up and their rent has gone up.

My constituents who live in Homeswest housing received an increase in their pensions from the federal government. What did the state government do? It whacked their rent up. People in my electorate do not want a pension increase from the federal government, because every time they get one, the state government whacks their rent up more than the increase in their pension. One man in Albany is circulating a petition saying “Don’t let the federal government give us a pay rise now because we will lose it all to Homeswest”.

I have children and grandchildren and one thing scares me. In June 2008, state debt was \$3.6 billion; now, it is \$14 billion. In the forward estimates it is projected to be \$22 billion. I might not be around to pay this debt, but my children will be and my grandchildren will be. That it is an absolute disgrace. It would not be as bad if we could see something happening, but we are slugging the people who can least afford it. We have Barnett’s palace on the hill that will cost \$25 million. The Ministers for Health and Sport and Recreation might think it is funny and members on the other side are very cocky, but no-one thought that Labor would lose the last election, and the way the government is going, when it comes to the crunch at the next election and people have been struggling for two or three years, the government will be heading down the same path.

MR T.G. STEPHENS (Pilbara) [8.25 pm]: Underpinning the budget papers we note here today is the opportunity for the government, across all its portfolios, to spend the funds that are generated in large measure because of resource wealth of the regional areas of Western Australia, and in particular, the regional areas of the North West, the Pilbara and, to some extent, the Kimberley. Missing from the budget papers is a display from this government of a real focus on the needs of those regions that underpin the benefits flowing to other parts of the state. One specific example comes to mind. It is the simple question of a road network. In a region such as the Pilbara, it is of absolutely critical importance to the flow of resource wealth through the communities to the ports to produce the return to the Western Australian community that comes from that mineral wealth. The road network in the town of Port Hedland, for instance, is under enormous pressure; pressure that will be addressed in part when the state government starts to spend the money allocated by the federal government to improve access routes to not only Port Hedland port, but also Dampier port. In the meantime, the rapid increase of traffic through the community of Port Hedland and the pressure on the road system in towns such as Port Hedland, and in Karratha with the access to the Dampier port, produces circumstances of great danger to local people, visitors and those in the resource sector. I watch in horror the traffic at access points to the port of Port Hedland. The road network is no longer lit adequately enough to allow residents or visitors to even see the increased traffic flowing onto roads that were quiet not so long ago. They were not dominated by the heavy traffic of vehicles connected to this booming resource sector. Lighting at intersections is utterly atrocious; it is not enough. It does not produce enough light penetration. The horizon lights from the town interfere with the visibility, so that it is extremely difficult not only for ordinary motorists, but also for those involved in the heavy transport industry bringing into the port the iron ore that comes increasingly from some of the smaller operators or the other mineral deposits from the Marble Bar road. We now see an increasing number of road trains turning up at intersections such as the Marble Bar turn-off, going straight over the highway, out onto the soft ground on the other side of the highway and running the risk of causing enormous damage not only to the infrastructure, but

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also to other motorists and, of course, the road train operators themselves. In recent weeks, the accident rate has increased dramatically, but regrettably the official figures do not reflect the reality. Haulage companies quickly move into gear to clean up the mess, and effectively these catastrophes are not included in the statistics. The tonnages through these ports are dramatically increasing and the four-car road trains have become the norm into places such as Port Hedland. A four-car road train carrying huge tonnages of ore is a lethal, often fast-moving weapon of destruction. Lighting is imperative to ensure that motorists, residents and visitors can stay safe on a road system that does not allow for the separation of the vehicular traffic that is involved in competing uses of the infrastructure in this part of world. An example is the FMG Resources' crossing south of Port Hedland, where road trains are entering the highway with no lighting at all; the road is in complete darkness. This is the major highway around Australia that is the only avenue for road transport for people heading to the north west and the Kimberley. They are competing in darkness and at huge risk to not only passengers of ordinary vehicles, buses and people towing caravans, but also these huge road trains. This is the industry that is producing for the state government the core funding that is spent in every corner of its budget, yet the places from which these funds come are not receiving the focus or the attention of government that is necessary to secure the safety of local people. It does not surprise me at all that in a region such as the Kimberley, residents who travel regularly through the Pilbara on their way to or from home look at what has happened to the Pilbara, and when they face the question of whether they will support resource development in their own backyard, they come to the conclusion: why would we want to support it? Is there any wonder that the protest camp at James Price Point grows by the day with an increasing number of local people prepared to dig in and prevent at all costs a resource development project developing there? They see what has happened to the adjacent region of the Pilbara, where after something like 50 years of resource extraction, the cost to local people has been to place their lives and their limbs at risk because state governments, especially this one with the vast quantities of wealth at its disposal, cannot stay focused for long enough to do the basic planning around road infrastructure. The previous infrastructure minister, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, had the good sense to put in place the Sustainable Transport Committee, which was one vehicle for ensuring that state governments were alert to the challenges of regions such as the Pilbara. I am told that that committee has not even met since this government has been in place. As a result, the road infrastructure in a region such as the Pilbara is a catastrophe in the making and the lives of local people, visitors and participants in the resource sector are increasingly at risk. There have already been deaths and there are likely to be more deaths and injuries, and these land at the feet of the government, which is the beneficiary of the flow of the funds from the region where safety factors are not in place. These are simple things, like the interval between the painting of lines on roads being too long. In this area, as a result of so many heavy vehicles using roads, the bleeding of the bitumen obliterates the lines quickly, and the roads between Port Hedland and South Hedland are no longer safe because they are not safely delineated. The area between the airport and the camps, which house increased numbers of fly in, fly out workers, is no longer serviced by safe roads, adjacent footpaths or cycle paths to allow for vehicular separation. Pedestrians, cyclists, local traffic and heavy ore-carrying traffic are all together on a two-lane road—one going north and one going south, or in that particular case, one going east and one going west. The lighting is poor. Everything about the infrastructure is simply a recipe for disaster.

Another simple example that is adjacent to Hedland is the road train assembly area at the Shell Roadhouse, appropriately near Port Hedland cemetery. The maintenance of the loading ramp has been ignored by government. There has been a squabble between the spheres of government and industry, and, as a result, the state government has not secured the operation of a ramp. That has now been demolished and the assembly area that services the trucks is in such a poor state that trucks with huge tonnages are now at great risk.

This state budget, which is underpinned by a region such as the Pilbara, has within it funds that are available only because of this laying of the golden egg that comes from the regional areas of Western Australia. It might only be a small population—in the case of the Pilbara these days it is only about 20 000 electors—but as previous contributors to this debate on the budget have said, it is a region in which large numbers of other Western Australians are working, but not working safely. The infrastructure does not meet the needs of either temporary residents of the town as fly in, fly out workers or local participants in that industry. This is just one of an enormous number of issues which the region faces. There is not on display within these budget papers from this government adequate focus on the needs of that region.

I cannot help but think about the most recent redistribution that has been delivered—in draft form at this stage—by the boundaries commissioners. What has become clear in that process is that the Pilbara will be an area of great interest to the political contest that emerges over the next couple of years. However, in the lead-up to that contest, the people of that region face a government that cannot focus on the needs of that region. What becomes clear to me and what is missing from the budget strategies and from the government's program is something that would deliver to that region funds not only to tackle the road infrastructure issues, but the entire panoply of

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issues that the region faces. The government is not equipped with the architecture for governing regions such as the Pilbara. The government has not accepted the fact that the regional governance of Western Australia has failed and is delivering something that is the equivalent of a failed nation state. The government has not delivered architecture for regional governance that underpins the flow of sufficient funds and sufficient input from local people to shape the priorities, to construct the programs, to deliver the policy and to implement the programs by which local people can tackle their needs, or an infrastructure network that could meet the needs of the state and of the nation. That is because the distracted figureheads of government, in delivering a set of budget papers such as those in front of us, have as much priority on the basket weavers of Kalamunda as they have on the wealth producers of regional Western Australia that make these budgets possible. Nevertheless, the needs of a region such as the Pilbara and the people of the Pilbara seem to be neglected by a government distracted from what should be its core responsibilities; that is, the core services in a simple issue like infrastructure and so many other issues that that region misses out on because such services are not on offer in these budget papers. If I were on the other side of the house, I would be ashamed.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [8.39 pm]: I want to comment on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2011–12 Bill 2011 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2011–12 Bill 2011. Page 775 of the *Budget Statements*, under division 64, Department of Agriculture and Food, states —

The Department, in partnership with industry and others, is committed to promoting a positive profile of our agriculture and food industries. This includes administering the *Animal Welfare Act 2002* to meet community expectations, which is being transferred with significantly increased resources to the Department. The State Government's strengthened commitment will include the appointment of six additional full-time inspectors and doubling of annual funding to the RSPCA to \$500,000.

That is a great decision. As a member of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, it is very interesting to see that the Department of Agriculture and Food will fund the organisation that is lobbying against the export of live animals from Western Australia. I draw the chamber's attention to an information piece that was posted on the RSPCA's website on 31 May 2011. The article deals with the regulation of the live export trade and makes the following point —

The RSPCA believes there are substantial problems with the livestock-export trade in general, and with ASEL ...

ASEL is the framework under the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock —

... in particular. Specific problems include:

- The majority of standards are effectively unenforceable under current legislation.
- Many are not measurable or able to be regulated.
- Exemptions from standards are permitted with no requirement for justification.
- There is an overall lack of transparency, reporting and feedback in the export process.
- Loopholes in ASEL mean that not all animals are covered.

Quite frankly, I understand why the export industry in the North West has been there for such a long time and I imagine that it will continue in the future. We have been exporting live cattle from the North West of Western Australia to Indonesia since the 1930s. I mark the courageous decision of this government—which is not usually very courageous—to have the Department of Agriculture and Food fund the organisation that is campaigning against live exports. The Minister for Agriculture and Food should be complimented for going ahead and funding the organisation that is campaigning against live exports. I was interested to see the media releases that the minister put out recently regarding the commonwealth government's decision on live exports. He has been very courageous in his stand; despite what he says in his media releases, he is prepared to fund the RSPCA. I am happily a member of the RSPCA and I think his decision to fund the organisation that is campaigning against live animal exports is a very courageous decision. It would be interesting to know whether the farmers and pastoralists in the North West are aware that the minister decided to fund the organisation that has been campaigning against live animal exports. It will be interesting to see whether the minister wants to explain his position to farmers in the North West of the state. When the minister goes out and tells the farmers that he is opposed to Minister Ludwig's decision, it will be interesting to see whether he admits that at the same time he is also funding the RSPCA, which is funding action against life animal exports. I am sure he can reconcile those decisions and I look forward to him doing so.

Today I noted a media statement from the Minister for Local Government, which was obviously released in response to the opposition's matter of public interest motion, in which the minister says —

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When local government budgets were released for 2010–11, an analysis of the figures showed that for a sample of three metropolitan city councils and one regional city, utility increases, expressed as a percentage of total expenditure, increased on average by less than four per cent for each of those years,

...

That is very clever wording, because the minister does not identify that page 286 of the budget papers outlines a 30 per cent increase in the cost of electricity provided to councils by the state government for street lighting. That is the reality of what is happening with local government costs; the state government is loading up local governments as another cash cow. Some \$500 million will be returned from utilities because of the five per cent efficiency dividend. That money will not be returned to the users of the service; \$500 million will be returned to the state government's coffers. The state government describes a \$1.1 billion subsidy to electricity users and householders in this state to keep electricity prices down, but more than that is being returned to the budget in higher revenues, dividend payments and this \$500 million rip-off to the households of this state. Let us understand that the \$500 million that the government is trumpeting is being taken out of the pockets of every working person in this state when they pay their electricity bills.

I move to the topic of the NGO funding increase, which the government has made great play about recently

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): Members, please keep the background chat down. I am very interested in the member for Cannington's presentation.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: This additional payment is being made in two tranches: category 1, which is for payment now, and category 2, which is a payment at a later date. Not everybody will get that category 2 payment.

Ms J.M. Freeman: Not everyone will get the category 1 payment.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Indeed, member for Nollamara, not all will get category 1. The government commented on this issue. One of the advisers to the Premier explained —

The organisations that will be eligible for the second payment of an average of 10 per cent will be determined over the next two years in partnership between line agencies and community sector organisations. They will work jointly both to ascertain need and to progress those reforms. The first tranche in the payment recognises an up-front need for many organisations; it is a flat rate. The second payment will be targeted to those organisations that have a greater need through both the price of the services that they deliver and the structure of the services that they deliver.

Therefore, the NGO sector will be held to ransom over the next two years and be covered into not criticising the government, because if it does start criticising the government, it will not receive its second payment. I am shocked that Sue Ash has headed up the NGO consultations for the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting people's conference, because that conference is getting \$450 000—I think that is the right number—from Lotterywest. That is a disgrace. That is a government project. Therefore, the government, not Lotterywest, should fund the NGO forum for CHOGM. Lotterywest money should be used in the way that it should be used; that is, to support organisations delivering services to people in this state. That \$450 000 is being diverted from the proper use of Lotterywest money. It would be interesting to see the board minutes that allowed that decision to take place. Who voted in favour of taking \$450 000 out of the community organisations in this state and putting it into a government activity such as the NGO forum? It is wrong.

The Premier likes to make a big play about CHOGM. It will be interesting to see the final communiqué from the people's conference and the youth conference, because I would bet that members on the other side of the chamber would turn up their noses at those final communiqués. I have read through the documentation for the people's conference and I am impressed. One of the things that the people's conference for CHOGM will discuss is the state apparatus being used to commit violence on citizens. The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (Special Powers) Bill 2011 allows that to happen. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether the CHOGM bill is one of the issues raised at the NGO forum during CHOGM, because no-one will support a bill that is so badly drafted that not even the government supports it anymore. Not even the government supports its own legislation.

I do not have much time in this debate, so I will move on to the issue of Roe Highway. The Roe Highway extension was announced as one of the key election commitments in the southern suburbs. It was a \$550 million commitment by the government—\$27 million to plan it and \$550 million to do it. The government has cancelled the expenditure. Last year the government cancelled the program to build the road. This year it has deleted the

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road entirely. The government is still spending \$3.5 million on a public relations stunt in the southern suburbs about a road that it will not build.

The \$550 million cost is quite interesting. I put to the minister in last week's estimates committee that the current cost is probably about \$750 million. The Minister for Transport said —

I believe that there is a probability that some of the conditions that may be imposed on the project as a result of the environmental approvals process will impact on the cost.

The minister will not deny that there is a \$750 million cost, but he will not tell us how much it is. When I put it to him that he had spent \$16 million and that surely he knows how much the works will cost, he said —

I did not say that I had no idea what it may cost. I said that I am not going to speculate on those things.

The minister has an engineering report telling him how much the works are going to cost, and he has a fear that they might be even higher than his current estimate, but he will not share any of that with the people of this state.

I make the point to every backbencher on the other side: let us understand what that \$750 million means. It is more than is planned by the current government to be spent on schools in this state in the three out years. Just understand that, members. If this road is built, it will be more expenditure than the expenditure on the asset investment program for schools in the three out years put together, beginning 2012–13. So, let us understand that if the government is stupid enough to build the Roe Highway extension, it will mean no school in the seat of Wanneroo, in the seat of Southern River or in any seat in that area because the government will not have the space to fit in the expenditure of \$750 million on that road and an increase in the education budget. It cannot happen.

I have only four minutes to go and will move on to the next issue—that is, Orrong Road and Riverside Drive. These two roads are connected in the seat of Cannington, in the seat of Victoria Park and probably in the seat of Forrestfield. If the government goes ahead with its harebrained scheme to cut Riverside Drive and spend \$400 million on a skate park on the waterfront, rather than a real waterfront project with a museum and all the other things that might bring tourists there and bring some benefit to the community, the traffic will be pushed onto Orrong Road. Let me read some comments between me and the Minister for Transport. I said to the Minister for Transport, when we were discussing Orrong Road, “Orrong Road does not work.” The minister said, “No, it is hopeless.” He is right, yet that is the government's plan for traffic management. The government's plan for traffic management is to put the traffic from Riverside Drive through the tunnel. As I continually point out to members and people who live in the western suburbs, the tunnel is connected to Orrong Road. People do not go on the freeway to get to the tunnel; they go on Orrong Road.

Mr T.R. Buswell: We have got a plan for Orrong Road.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The government's plan is not even budgeted for.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Don't you worry about that!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: In October this year the government will cut Riverside Drive, but it does not even have a plan for what it will do with Orrong Road. The government has not even had any consultation. Bigger the \$20 million in the budget papers for the Roe Highway extension that the government cannot build —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Do you support Roe 8?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No; of course not. Roe 8 is a joke.

Mr T.R. Buswell: None of it?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Roe 8 is a joke. I do not have a problem with —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Okay; so that's the member for Cannington saying Roe 8 is a joke.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Clearly, there needs to be an upgrade for the access to Fiona Stanley Hospital, but the government does not need to do Roe 8 to upgrade the access to Fiona Stanley Hospital.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Is that right?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No question at all, minister. Roe 8 is a dog of a road.

Mr T.R. Buswell: A dog!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I know that to be true because the government is not going to build it. The government has removed the construction budget for the Roe Highway extension from the budget papers. It was in the budget papers when the government was first elected, it was in the budget papers in its second year, and now it has gone completely.

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Mr J.E. McGrath: Do Orrong Road first!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, do Orrong Road first; fine! The member for South Perth must watch himself because the moment the government cuts Riverside Drive, the quickest way for people who live in the suburbs of Victoria Park and Kensington to get to West Perth will be along Mill Point Road.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Have you been up there lately?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Absolutely!

Mr T.R. Buswell: A dog!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I know; it is hopeless already, and the minister's plan is to put traffic onto that road.

Mr T.R. Buswell: No; Orrong Road.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Show me the budget paper where it says the minister is doing one cent's worth of work on Orrong Road. It is not there.

Mr T.R. Buswell: We have a vision, though!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Ha, ha! This is great; we have visions but no plans.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I'll share it with you one day!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I will just finish with the Oakajee project. I have said on a number of occasions in this place that the Oakajee project will never happen in the way it is represented in the budget papers. The Premier says it cannot be developed as a private port because it will not export only iron ore. Then the Premier says that the initial development is for an iron ore port. That is what it is: an iron ore port. Let the private sector develop it, as it does with all the other iron ore ports in this state.

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park) [8.54 pm]: I rise to make some brief comments on the budget as a consequence of a considerable estimates process and particularly on what we saw from the Minister for Education. It is simply time that the Minister for Education realised that she is no longer a political commentator. She no longer sits on the back bench as an Independent member, free from any party affiliation, commentating on the government of the day. She is a minister and a member of the executive government. It is time for the Minister for Education to take responsibility for her department and her decisions, or lack thereof, and to come into this place and act like a minister. Her performance in the past three years has been nothing short of substandard. I have no doubt that the Premier would be disappointed in the performance of the Minister for Education during the three years that she has been in the role, as she certainly seems to me to be incapable of learning on the go.

One issue I would like to quickly address is Carson Street School. Carson Street School was the subject of my question without notice today. There was some media interest on this issue today, and the minister's performance in answering that question was a disgrace—an absolute disgrace! On one hand the department wrote to the school and said that the school would have no more funding after 2012 for conductive education. I put that as a question to the minister. She got up and said that she had not seen the letter, that she knew nothing about it, that she had not signed anything, that it was not an operational decision anyway and that she did not have any role to play in the decision. What complete and utter claptrap! The minister is not somebody who has suddenly become aware of conductive education at Carson Street School. Alistair Jobling, the past president of the Conductive Education Centre of Western Australia—that is, the parents of the students—wrote to the minister in September 2008 just after she became the Minister for Education. He made the point that the centre's funding would run out at the end of 2009 and that the centre wanted to meet with the minister and work with the minister to ensure that the government support continued beyond the pilot period entered into by the former Labor government. That support was \$200 000 a year indexed over four years. The minister was written to by Mr Jobling in September 2008 and her response in November 2008 made the point that she understood that the previous government committed to support the continuation of the conductive education program and that she did not envisage change to this assurance. The minister is not somebody who just became aware of this issue yesterday, as she said today in the chamber. There has been ongoing communication with the Minister for Education about conductive education for two years. She and her department have known that the funding had a finite period and that it was due to run out.

As I said in the estimates hearing, when dealing with our state's most vulnerable children with severe and multiple physical disabilities, they need time to prepare and they need early intervention. That is exactly what conductive education does. The minister comes into this place and says that she knew about this issue only yesterday, that she knows nothing, that she has no power and that she has signed off on nothing. That is nothing but disrespectful to the parents, to the staff and to the students at Carson Street School. I expect better from a

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minister who sat up there on the back bench for 17 years pontificating about the performance of various ministers. She is no longer a political commentator; she is a minister who is required to come into this place and answer these questions. This is a question that was put to the minister during the estimates hearing; it is not something new.

Another issue that arose during the estimates process—I refer to page E188 of the daily *Hansard* for Estimates Committee B on Thursday—was the issue of parenting hubs. The Premier made great political hay of this in December last year, and an article written by Ben Harvey on the front page of *The West Australian* stated —

Schools will get big increases in resources to add nurses and dental clinicians, daycare and kindergarten classes for children as young as three to their services.

The Premier is quoted as saying that there will be huge capital works in the upcoming budget to construct parenting hubs. Imagine my surprise when the budget is presented and I cannot find any reference to parenting hubs. Surely, if the Premier gets on the front page, there would be some money in the budget. I put that question to the minister during the estimates hearings. I said to her—I am quoting myself —

I am quoting the Premier when he said the 2011–12 budget would include “money for capital works to turn schools into parenting hubs”. How much money has been allocated for that capital works? Someone must know.

The response from the minister was —

No specific amount of money —

If the Premier is going have these thought-bubble policy ideas—the idea of which is good—and if he is going to quote Challis Parenting and Early Learning Centre as a wonderful example of public education, and if he is going to make suggestions to people who want, demand and are excited by the fact that the government is making alleged commitments to parenting hubs in the upcoming budget, then put funding for them in the budget!

Mr C.J. Barnett: Where did you get that quote about parenting hubs from?

Mr B.S. WYATT: It is the Premier’s quote! It is in his front-page article. It is not something I am making up. It is the Premier’s front-page story of 15 December 2010. For heaven’s sake, do not split hairs, Premier! When he sat here on this side of the house, he, like his friend the member for Churchlands, pontificated about government performance. However, when he gets a front-page article, what does the Minister for Education say? She outlines, “No specific money is allocated”. For heaven’s sake, Premier —

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: No. The Premier needs to tell the Minister for Education where that money is. She has no idea at all. It sits out there like the other non-core promises, such as Royal Perth Hospital and the Ellenbrook rail line, of the member for Cottesloe, whose performance as Premier has left a lot to be desired, rather like the Minister for Education.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Do you mean to say that the Premier told a lie on public television?

Mr B.S. WYATT: Who would have think that, member for Cannington? Not I.

Another question that was put to the Minister for Education during the estimates hearings was on outstanding maintenance at schools. This is why I again make the point that the Minister for Education is no longer a political commentator; she is a member of the executive government. Not long after she became a minister, in March 2009, she came into this place with a maintenance backlog and made great political hay out of the backlog as it was then. To quote the minister’s statement —

This is the legacy that the previous state government ... has left the children of Western Australia.

If the minister is going to come in here, in her glorious independence, and start attacking the former government, one might think she might, because she is no longer a political commentator, start changing the way the government goes about managing the maintenance backlog. She might start changing the way it is dealt with. Imagine my surprise when I read in the *Victoria Park Examiner* of 25 May questions that were put to the Minister for Education about the maintenance backlog. To quote the minister —

“There has been no blowout in school maintenance, the Education Department has used the same program to deliver maintenance over the past 10 years, including the time Labor was in power,” she said.

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“Priority maintenance is undertaken by the department in a timely fashion. Ensuring students and teachers have comfortable and safe schools in which to learn continues to be a priority for this Government.

She makes the point that nothing has changed. The same process has been in place over the last 10 years. It is the same process that was in place on 19 March 2009 of which she was so critical. The minister needs to wake up to the fact that she is no longer a political commentator; she is a member of the executive government and actually capable of changing things. That is the beauty of being in government; she can change things. It is perhaps time that the minister woke up to that fact.

Mr T.G. Stephens: Even operational things!

Mr B.S. WYATT: Even operational things, member for Pilbara. I dare say that that operational decision to cut funding for conductive education will shortly be reversed.

Finally, Challis Parenting and Early Learning Centre has been referred to by the Minister for Education and the Premier as a wonderful example of what a committed principal can do in creating what is effectively a parenting hub in Armadale. In light of the fact that no money was allocated for the Premier’s parenting hubs, in light of the fact that his front-page article led to nothing, and in light of the fact that BGC has offered to build a new learning centre and will discount the price, what has BGC had in six months? It has had nothing. The last time BGC had contact with the minister’s office was in late March and early April when a contact was made to Mr Lee, who I understand is the minister’s chief of staff. No return call was made.

We have a situation in which the government makes commitments in the media and does not follow them through in the budget. The private sector is willing to fill the hole created by an absence of government commitment, and the government is not even returning calls from a private company willing to build a new learning centre at a price that would be good value for the taxpayer. At the very least, the minister could perhaps engage BGC. Let us work out whether it is true. What are the terms? Let us get that done sooner rather than later, so that we do not have, maybe in December this year, another front-page article featuring the Premier, to be followed up by nothing in the budget.

I would like to make some final comments about the minister’s refusal to answer questions and her inadequacy in answering questions. I come back to the point I made previously. The minister is no longer a political commentator; she is a member of the executive government. I put a number of questions on notice to the minister, replicating a number of questions she asked former governments. One of those questions, which was a fair question, was —

For each year 2008, 2009, and 2010, how many:

- (a) Aboriginal students completed Year 12;
- ...
- (c) Aboriginal students completed Year 11 ...

The answer I got from the minister was —

- (a)–(d) The Member will need to clarify what he means by ‘completed’ ...

That is the answer I got from this minister—the once great model of independence, as she sat up here on this side of the house. I look back at the answers that the former government gave the minister when she asked exactly the same question. Surprise, surprise! On 7 May 2002, Hon Alan Carpenter gave the answer to the question of how many Aboriginal students completed years 10, 11 and 12. He did not quibble over the meaning of “completed”, for heaven’s sake!

I asked another question of the minister —

I refer to the schools in the Aboriginal Literacy Strategy, and ask, for each school:

And I asked for a number of statistics about each school. The minister said that it is available on the website—“go and find it on the website”. Be that as it may, when we were in power, and she was asking those exact same questions, we provided answers. It was available on the website.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Then?

Mr B.S. WYATT: Yes, it was available on the website. That is the whole point. She sits there now in all her glorious hypocrisy, and now quibbles when the opposition asks reasonable questions about the completion of

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years 10, 11 and 12 by Aboriginal students. Her answer is, “What do you mean by ‘completed’?” For heaven’s sake! It is simply not acceptable.

I conclude on something very unrelated. When I was in year 12 at Aquinas College, there was a student at Trinity College by the name of Terry Oxenham. I did not know Terry very well. He was a year ahead of me at Trinity. I recall him from when I sat in the stands at Perry Lakes, because he was quite a spectacular athlete. Terry was without question the fastest runner I have ever seen. My apologies to the member for Albany, but I never saw him run. When I was reading the latest issue of *Trinity News*, it came to my attention, I am terribly sad to say, that Terry Oxenham had passed away. I want to read the short piece that was written in *Trinity News* about Terry Oxenham —

Recorded in the 1990 Trinity College Annual are the following words:

Every now and then a star rises above the sporting firmament and blazes gloriously upon the rank and file below. These words refer to Terry Oxenham and his remarkable achievements on the sporting field during his years as a TC student. In the 1990 Athletics Inters, Terry gained almost 10% of the 1,300 points TC scored to win the championships, winning the 100m, 200m, high jump, long jump and triple jump and picking up third place in the 100m hurdles and 400m. His 10.8 second 100m win, a PSA record that stands to this day, was a mere 0.8 seconds outside the fastest time ever run by an Australian at the time. Terry was also Captain of the 1st V Basketball team and gained selection in the State Schoolboys’ Rugby Union team—an opportunity he passed up to compete for TC in athletics.

Terry’s classmates remember him with great fondness, not only for his athletic ability but also as a good-natured and fun-loving mate whose sporting achievements are still talked about whenever the Class of 1990 gather together.

The Pallotine Mission in Rossmoyne was home to Terry during his years at TC and he was living in Carnarvon when he passed away on 17 April 2011. Terry is survived by his daughter Nakita.

Rest in peace, Terry.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [9.12 pm]: I want to commence my comments on the budget and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2011–12 Bill 2011 by acknowledging the contribution of the member for Victoria Park, and in particular his comments about Terry Oxenham, who died very recently and very tragically. My sympathies go to the Oxenham family, and in particular to my good friend Donna Oxenham, who is a cousin of Terry’s.

Tonight I want to discuss primarily the Health and Sport and Recreation portfolios and how they were dealt with in the estimates committee process. I also want to say that, like many other members, I am shocked by what is included in this budget in the form of increased fees and charges for the people in my electorate of Kwinana. I am also disturbed by what is not provided in this budget. What is not provided in this budget is a clear indication from the government that it will stick by its commitment to redevelop Royal Perth Hospital. That is a clear breach of faith with the people of Western Australia. The government gave a clear indication that it would redevelop Royal Perth Hospital in its first term in government. I acknowledge that the government has kept its promise to introduce legislation to deal with this matter; namely, the Royal Perth Hospital Protection Bill. But it is also true to say that there is not one person in the electorate of Mount Lawley, or in the electorates in the catchment area of Royal Perth Hospital, that was not under the impression that this government would redevelop Royal Perth Hospital.

The early budget documents give a clear account of the emerging costs associated with the redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital. As a result of that, Royal Perth Hospital was detailed as one of the risks associated with the budget. Indeed, the Under Treasurer saw fit to make commentary on the risk to the budget that the redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital represented. We asked the Minister for Health why there was no funding in the forward estimates for the redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital. He said in response that all the government is doing at the moment is having a chat about it, and using some of the money that has been set aside for planning, and it really does not have any plans at this stage. We then asked the Minister for Health whether that is the reason that the Under Treasurer no longer believes that the redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital is a risk to the budget. The minister’s response to that was to say of course not; what the Under Treasurer is really concerned about is the recurrent funding—the operating costs—associated with Royal Perth Hospital. He said also that because the government has, subsequent to being elected, brought out the “WA Health Clinical Services Framework 2010–2020”, the redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital is no longer a risk that the Under Treasurer would put in the budget documents. That would be a fair assessment and a fair defence of the budget if not for the fact that that is not true; it is not the case. The minister should have referred to the evidence the Under

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Treasurer gave to a committee in the other place on 30 May. He was asked directly why Royal Perth Hospital was no longer detailed as a risk; that is, why the capital cost associated with the redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital is no longer a risk. The Under Treasurer pointed out that it is no longer detailed as a risk because it is still in the planning process. It is a decision for a future government; it is not something that the Under Treasurer needs to concern himself about because he, like the vast majority of electors in the electorate of Mount Lawley, understands that this government has no concrete commitment or plans for the redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital at all. It was simply a line that members of the government used to get themselves elected. Quite frankly, nothing in this budget and nothing that the minister presented before the consideration in detail stage indicated that the government is any closer to or more likely to move forward with that redevelopment. It is a clear breach of faith with the people of Western Australia. It is very disappointing that the government really had no answer to the question of when it will get on with the redevelopment. The government provided no evidence to the committee and it would not share with us the secret report, which rests with the government now, about the plans that have gone into the redevelopment at this stage. The people of Western Australia have a right to ask whether this government is really dinkum about keeping this election promise. On the evidence presented to date, we have to conclude that there are no concrete plans and no firm commitment for the redevelopment of Royal Perth Hospital.

I also commented on the commonwealth funding for health that is very apparent in this budget. It is very pleasing that the commonwealth government has come to the fore to make a great contribution, particularly in the areas of elective surgery and emergency departments and in the redevelopment of mental health facilities across this state. Indeed, health in this state is starting to move into what is potentially a golden age as the full effects of the federal government's national health reform agenda start to take effect. This government, as do other state governments in the country, continues to benefit from the large contribution that the commonwealth government is making in not only funding but also policy development.

The estimates committee also heard evidence from the Minister for Sport and Recreation. Obviously, uppermost in people's minds is the government's plans for the development of a major stadium. We came out of the process with more questions than answers. Before the Premier scampered off overseas, we were left with even less clarity about this government's plans. It is the worst kept secret in this state that the government plans to develop the major stadium at Burswood. Plenty of evidence suggests that Burswood is not the optimal site for the development of the major stadium. A range of outstanding issues with that site are yet to be resolved. This government is literally weeks—a fortnight, maybe three weeks—from publicly announcing its preferred site for the major stadium, yet there are still significant question marks over the Burswood site. We do not know how the government intends to mitigate the asbestos tailings from the old dump in that area and how much that would cost. We do not know the implications of developing a major piece of physical infrastructure on a site that we know has significant geotechnical challenges, and we do not know the costs associated with that. Indeed, the Minister for Sport and Recreation provided information to the estimates committee suggesting that no geotechnical studies of that site have been done.

Mr T.K. Waldron: That's not right. We have not done any drilling.

Mr R.H. COOK: The department has not carried out detailed studies associated with drilling and other things that we would expect anyone to undertake when they were about to make a significant decision—a decision that the Major Stadia Taskforce estimated would increase the cost of developing a stadium of that size by about \$300 million. Its studies were not exhaustive. It simply looked at a probable \$100 million for the pylons, \$100 million for the mitigation and \$100 million for the transport infrastructure. "My goodness, it is starting to cost so much; we will not go on much further!" That is a significantly more expensive proposition. It is this government's right to develop the stadium in that area if it thinks that is the right place to do so and if it has the evidence before it to suggest that it is the optimum site. As was reported in PerthNow this week, one prominent business owner told *The Sunday Times* reporter, "It looks like the stadium is going to Burswood. We just can't understand why." I think "why" is the question on everyone's lips.

Mr C.J. Barnett: So the Labor Party supports Subiaco still; is that your position?

Mr R.H. COOK: Once again, I invite the Premier to wait until I have concluded my speech to understand what we are saying.

Mr C.J. Barnett: What are you saying—Subiaco or not?

Mr R.H. COOK: We are saying that we have evidence before us that tells us that the two optimum sites are Kitchener Park and the East Perth power station. We do not have the evidence before us that would suggest that Burswood is an optimum site. We know that there are some significant geotechnical challenges, social

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infrastructure challenges and public transport challenges not just in rail infrastructure, but in road infrastructure. If we are to believe other reports, there are also significant costs associated with other walkways that might extend across the river from East Perth to further increase the amenity of that area. We know that there is not a cafe, a restaurant or a family-friendly venue within cooe of that site. There is a golf course and a casino. I am not sure that that is the best area in which to develop this sort of stadium.

There have been over \$3.4 million worth of studies into this project and we are no closer to making a decision. The government will make a decision in the next few weeks. I respect the fact that it is the government's right to make that decision and to make the decision that the stadium should be built at Burswood. We want to know the costs, the challenges and the funding model associated with that; and, most important of all, what is the opportunity cost of spending extra money for the stadium to go there rather than spending taxpayers' money for it to go elsewhere?

I want to finish by making a comment about one other program that we are particularly disappointed to see was not in this budget. I am sure the member for Darling Range is equally saddened that there is no funding for implementation of the trail bike strategy. The trail bike strategy is a great set of ideas not just owned by us, but also owned by the government, and it has been taking place over a period. We had a debate in this place some time ago that indicated we were about to make some significant progress in this area, yet we see nothing in this budget that suggests that is the case. This issue is particularly important in my electorate as it includes a significant number of people who enjoy trail bike riding. We have one of the very few off-road vehicle recreation reserves left in the metropolitan area. It is significantly run down. My electorate is also one area that enjoys perhaps one of the highest concentrations of what might be called recalcitrant trail bike users—that is, people who use parks, median strips, footpaths, nature reserves and pretty much any flat or, indeed, hilly surface to exercise their passion for trail bikes. Such trail bike riders are a nuisance; they are dangerous and they destroy the amenity of the suburbs in which we live. Those people should be given proper reserves in which they can undertake their pastime, and the police should have some mechanism by which they can track down those who do not respect the suburbs where they should not be riding their trail bikes. That is what the strategy would address. It would create resources, it would allow for law enforcement, and it would provide a win-win situation for everyone. It is a great pity that there is nothing in this budget to indicate that progress will be made on that strategy.

In relation to Kwinana, I am also disappointed that there has been no progress on the development of a primary school at Wellard. I am particularly disappointed that there is no provision in the development plans for the new Baldivis senior high school for it to cater for year 7 students. Gilmore College in my area, which has both a middle school and a high school, already caters for year 7 students. I want the government to make a decision—either it will move the year 7 cohort into high schools or it will not. Please, stop leaving schools such as Gilmore College in the lurch and stop leaving students in the Kwinana electorate in the lurch.

MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham) [9.26 pm]: I will refer in my contribution to the third reading on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2011–12 Bill 2011 to the discussion that took place in the estimates hearing on royalties for regions spending. I questioned the Minister for Regional Development at length about the fact that the government will no longer provide 25 per cent of royalties for the royalties for regions fund. He confirmed that that was essentially the case and gave a range of reasons for it. I pointed out to him on a number of occasions what the election commitment was and what the commitment was upon forming government with the Liberal Party. Although he would not admit that it was a breach of that commitment, it is pretty obvious to anyone who looks at the promise and at the delivery that it is a breach of that commitment.

I also want to talk a little about the Laverton issue. I have read the report from the Goldfields–Esperance Development Commission about Aboriginal children who had come south from the communities in the lands out near the Northern Territory border and who, according to the report, had been left in Laverton while their parents went further south. I do not know how many other people read the report. We asked our first question of the Minister for Regional Development about that issue. I have read the report. I suggest to everyone in this house that they read that report. I do not know how many people have read it. It is easy to read; it was fairly well written. It contained, I thought, some very disturbing information. Although *The Weekend West* put the article on the front page of the newspaper, I do not think it has had anywhere near the attention that it deserves. I know *The West Australian* sent a reporter to Laverton and he has written some articles about the level of government service in Laverton, which I have read. Subsequent to that, the relevant minister flew to Laverton and she announced that there would be some new services and so forth in Laverton as a consequence of the report and the media coverage of the issue. That is good. I am glad that some additional services have been provided.

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I want to raise two issues of grave concern to me. Both issues came to light during question time today. First, the question that was asked of the Minister for Regional Development was how long he had had the report. It transpires that he had had the report for about five months without it coming to his attention. He had it for five months without doing anything about it. That was that particular report. I do not know whether there are other reports, but that particular report was in the minister's possession for five months without him taking any action. That report had a line in it indicating that there could have been dead children lying in the bush near the tip at Laverton. That line struck me as pretty dramatic. I do not think it has been proven that that is the case, but, in any event, the minister owes the house, and the public, a proper explanation about why a report indicating the possibility or prospect that children might have been living at the tip in Laverton, starving to death and lying in the bush near Laverton, did not come to the minister's attention for five months. Why is it that there was a report of that scale of horror in the minister's office and nothing transpired as a consequence of it until the report came to public notice by some other means? The minister owes everyone an explanation about how that took place, not just a statement that he is sorry that it happened. Quite frankly, it is an appalling revelation that the report was in the minister's possession for five months before anything was done.

The second thing that the minister said today was quite disturbing. The minister said that he went to Laverton and that some resources have naturally been put into addressing the situation there. But the minister then said words to the effect that there could be any one of a number of communities out there in which exactly the same thing is going on. I have also been to lots of the communities in those areas. I do not have his exact line, but the minister said words to that effect. The minister shrugged his shoulders and said, "If anyone else knows the answer, please tell me." They are the words that he used in the press a week or so ago.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.M. Francis): Member for Rockingham, I will interrupt you there, and I am reluctant to do this, but can I bring you back to matters in the budget, please?

Mr M. McGOWAN: Yes. I am going to royalties for regions spending.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I am sure the member is coming to it.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will go to royalties for regions spending after I say this. In question time today the minister said that similar things to those happening in Laverton could be occurring in any number of communities in Western Australia. Laverton has come to the public's attention; therefore, some resources have been put into the addressing the situation at Laverton. First, as I said, I find it appalling that this report sat in the minister's office, without attention, for a long time. Secondly, I find the government's sense of priority interesting. If the minister knows for a fact that other communities out there face issues of this type —

Mr B.J. Grylls: Chronic neglect of Aboriginal children.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Yes. Does the minister want to name some communities?

Mr B.J. Grylls: There is neglect of Aboriginal children right across remote Western Australia, and you know that.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Yes.

Mr B.J. Grylls: So you don't have to make light of it; we are fully aware of it.

Mr M. McGOWAN: That is a ridiculous thing to say; I am not making light of it. That is a preposterous thing to say.

Mr B.J. Grylls: You are suggesting we are ignoring it.

Mr M. McGOWAN: No; I will go on to what I am suggesting.

It is interesting. Laverton comes to attention because *The West Australian* newspaper puts it on the front page. A minister flies out there and some resources are put into Laverton. Then the minister says in question time today that there are lots of communities out there like that. What resources is the minister putting into those communities? What came to light from *The West Australian's* report is that there were very poor resources from the government to assist those children in those circumstances. I am not saying that the government can become the parents; parents have to be parents. But if parents fall down in their responsibility or if there is some breakdown in responsibility, the government has to provide resources to assist those children so that they are not left in a situation in which they can come to harm or turn to prostitution, as the minister said today.

Mr B.J. Grylls: How would you do that?

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am about to get there.

Mr Christian Porter; Mr Eric Ripper; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Paul Papalia; Dr Tony Buti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Acting Speaker; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Tom Stephens; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr John Kobelke; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Chris Tallentire

The minister said today that some of the children might be involved in prostitution with truck drivers, or that they might be subject to neglect or death in the bush. There has to be some resource, some assistance, given. It should not be given just because there is a story on the front page of the paper and because the minister neglected to look at this report for five months while it sat in his office. Quite frankly, I am amazed that it is not a national or an international issue that this has happened and that the minister knew about it for that length of time before anything was done. The minister said today that there are a lot of communities with this problem. The minister has the Department for Child Protection, but he also has a very significant funding source, which is his program, royalties for regions. As I said earlier, it will not be 25 per cent in the future, but it is a significant amount of money. I got the figures on royalties for regions spending in 2008–09. Did the minister know that in 2008–09, he spent from royalties for regions funding \$5.68 million on footpaths—predominantly in his and the member for Wagin’s electorates? Footpaths are worthwhile; I have one outside the front of my house and I walk on it. I am saying that if the minister knows, as he acknowledged today, that there are communities out there that do not have adequate resources to assist children who are in danger of sexual abuse, why are footpaths his priority? Why is he not reorienting this money, which is broadly his empire and within his control, to deal with the sexual abuse and potential death of little kids? He said today that he provided funding because he found out about Laverton. The minister has all sorts of money. In one year alone—2008–09, which might not even have been a full year—he spent \$5.68 million on footpaths, \$1 million on public toilets, and \$11.3 million on houses, predominantly for senior council staff. There we have approximately \$17 million on those three issues. They are all worthwhile; providing people with footpaths is particularly worthwhile, and public toilets are worthwhile, but it is a question of priorities. As the minister knows, the government does not have endless resources and it has to decide what its priorities are. However, that is the amount of money the minister spent in one year on those three things, and I could go through numerous other things—lifts in council buildings, kitchen refurbishments in council offices and so forth.

My suggestion to the minister is that he needs to work out his priorities. Today he admitted that he knows that these issues exist out there, and that there is a dearth of resources to deal with them. If there is a dearth of resources to deal with them, he should reallocate his priorities to deal with them. That is what the government should do, instantly and urgently. If these are not his priorities, he needs to change his priorities to deal with these more important issues. I am sure that a press release will now go out saying that I am opposed to footpaths or apple pie or whatever. However, I suggest to the minister that he needs to ensure that children subject to potential loss of life should be one of the priorities he should deal with through his enormous royalties for regions empire.

He also needs to ensure that the money that is allocated to these towns is spent. In 2008–09, he allocated \$757 000 to a revitalisation and enhancement project for the town of Laverton. Do members know how much of that money from the country and local government fund has been spent? Zero.

Mr B.J. Grylls interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Then the minister needs to work with local governments to ensure that it happens; it is his fund. What is more, there is \$334 million sitting unspent in the royalties for regions account, yet we have issues out there that, as the minister acknowledged today, are of such magnitude that they need to be dealt with. I am not one of those who says that government should become everyone’s parent, but if there is a failure, we need to put resources in. I recall the case in the early 2000s of Susan Taylor, the young girl who was abused and tragically committed suicide. As a consequence of the subsequent Gordon Inquiry, resources were allocated to the multipurpose police stations that now dot the regions. However, according to the minister’s commentary today, that is not enough. He needs to go through and look at what needs to be done, using the resources he has at his command, which are, as he has acknowledged, significant. He needs to reprioritise and ensure that money is spent, such as the unspent \$757 000 for Laverton. I would have thought that that matter would have come to his attention in recent days, in light of what has taken place in that community. I would have thought that the minister would have made it a priority to do something about that. I have seen throughout the budget moneys from royalties for regions allocated to social purposes. Various programs are funded by royalties for regions. The funding for football academies, for example, has been taken up by royalties for regions. The former government funded them directly from the budget of the Department of Education and Training. Some of those types of social programs are funded by royalties for regions. Royalties for regions funding could be used to deal with some of the types of issues that I have mentioned. The government could change its priorities from providing footpaths in the member for Wagin’s electorate to using those funds to save the lives of kids and prevent them from being sexually abused, which the minister said today could very well be occurring in those communities.

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee) [9.40 pm]: Since the start of this year, many members have started to label this government, for good reason, as a mean and nasty-spirited government. They have particularly focused on the

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government's attacks on the household budgets of Western Australians. However, there is more to the concept of this government being a mean-spirited and nasty government than just the numbers such as the double-digit increases in the cost of utilities and the second and third tier flow-on costs through the local government authorities that will also face increased utility costs. Those cost increases are impacting on all manner of options for families that once were considered to be an easy discretionary spend but have now fallen off the kitchen table when they consider their budget. More than that, the government is mean and nasty to itself. This government has failed in this budget to use its one driving opportunity to deliver on certain priorities. It has failed the people of Western Australia because it does not set out a vision or have a cogent plan for what is the very heart of Western Australia; that is, the people of Western Australia, not the things of Western Australia such as the Ord River project or the billions of dollars spent on port infrastructure. On all those things the Liberal Party will get no argument from the Labor Party that they need to be done. However, what we do not have is a link between the benefits of those things and the people of Western Australia. As demonstrated in the budget in the alignment of the government's priorities, the government does not have a cogent strategy that links the benefits of the boom to the potential options and opportunities. We have seen the cost of living increase under this mean and nasty government and a direct attack on families' bills.

Mr C.J. Barnett: What about the \$600 million for community groups?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: The increases in utility charges and a range of other areas have caused community groups to tighten their services. They are the same community groups that the Premier just identified as those that the government is spending money on. In the electorate of Willagee, the 21-square kilometre patch of Western Australia that I represent, I see the full impact of the lack of strategy, narrative and vision played out daily and weekly. I certainly see it on the weekends as I watch families struggle to even afford to fill their car with petrol for a weekend outing. Mums and dads have to budget to get to work by car or any other mode of transport.

We have seen a piecemeal approach to some of this. I refer to some of the recent estimates hearings I participated in, one of which was Sport and Recreation. I applaud the government for its Sport for All program with an allocation of \$20 million over four years for the support of sport. I have risen in this place several times to identify for the house the problems particularly for junior sport in my electorate. I am sure the situation is similar in every other electorate as parents struggle for the discretionary spend to send their kids to play organised sport. But in the estimates process we found that Sport for All lacked a bit of detail, particularly in the way it is implemented. I started to spread the word around my networks in Willagee that relief was coming. I put out the word about Sport for All to all my clubs and that some of the hardest hit families would be able to send their kids to the sports club. Some coaches rang me and said, "Thanks, how do we get it?" It was too light on in detail; however, we will pause and wait. We discovered in the estimates hearings that, in fact, there is a little more detail. Of the \$20 million over four years, which is \$5 million each year, just under \$2.5 million will be dedicated to assisting families directly to get their kids into sport. I have four kids—three boys and a girl, two of whom are older. Many members in this house will have had the same experience as me. Taking our kids to junior sport is an essential component of being a Western Australian and an Australian generally. It is essential to their health and wellbeing in many different ways. In this day and age, it costs in the order of \$120 just to register a kid, whether it be in footy, soccer, rugby or hockey, but it can vary slightly. Then there is the cost of the mouthguard, the boots and the shoes—all the bits and pieces that go with it, not to mention the cost of getting them to and from their competition around the city or the state. For a growing number of families that is now not possible. In the four-year budget estimates, \$2.5 million a year out of just under \$10 million will go directly to the Sport for All program. On the upper level, that equates to \$200 per person. Again, the detail is a bit loose on whether it is for senior sport or junior sport or organised versus recreational sport. We will watch that space intently as that relief is provided. The amount of \$2.5 million divided by \$200 equates to about 12 500 kids out of 130 000 kids aged 15 to 18 who play sport in this state. I am not sure that will be even a drop in the ocean near what they need. The potential impact of Sport for All is difficult to see immediately. It is slow; it is insidious; it leaches its way to the surface.

I was down at the Freo City Dockers to help Leon Flanagan and his committee switch on the lights they had worked so hard to get three-way funding for. Those kids want to use the ground every night, but, unfortunately, they are particularly concerned about the cost of running those lights, about whether all the Freo City Dockers junior teams will get the training they need in the evening and even about whether Auskick games, which are fantastic to watch, will be able to be run on Friday nights. That is the sort of pressure this government is putting on them.

The Hilton Park Bowling Club is next door. Dick Young and John Hannah and his committee have done really well to try to cobble together and keep safe a facility that, in parts, is some 50 or 60 years old. It does not have an adequate power supply or modern power support to the building. That club is trying desperately to meet the

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requirements of its membership. Most people think the average lawn bowls club is one of those sports in our community that is fading away. Postwar it was a very strong pastime; every suburb had a club, but they started to fade away. I can tell members that Hilton Park Bowling Club has more than 300 members and is growing. That is quite a significant number for a club of any kind. It is a vibrant club. It is also feeling the pressure. It has had to send its greenkeeper off, share its greenkeeper and shut its greens down because it cannot afford to keep a full-time greenkeeper working there. Similarly, at the next tract along—it is a big area—Fremantle Roosters Rugby League Football Club is also struggling. This is one of the other knock-on, second-order effects. The local government authorities all have to make very tough decisions about what to do. They are looking at different ways to raise revenue. The City of Fremantle is looking at clubs potentially paying commercially costed leases. The clubs will have to pay commercial rates for a great tract of land. Goodness knows what value the Valuer-General will put on them, but the clubs are absolutely terrified about the impact that will have. We are obviously lobbying hard with different councils. The City of Fremantle is not unique. The City of Cockburn and the City of Melville are having similar thoughts about how they will charge for the use of facilities that assist in the maintenance of the clubs. These budgetary constraints are having a significant impact. This is what I am talking about when I say that there is a lack of vision. The impacts of this government's budgetary constraints on the people of Western Australia are having the effect of ripping at the fibre of Western Australian society. If we deny people the opportunity to send their kids to sport, to engage in the social activity of congregating with their own peer groups and to be looked after by alternate male and female role models—which we all know 13-year-olds and upwards desperately need—what sort of message will we send and what sorts of adults will we start to grow? If I sound alarmist, it is because I want to. If I sound extreme, it is because I want to. The cost on the family budget is actually biting.

We heard from the member for Forrestfield about the hardship utility grant scheme. He talked about the increase in the take-up rate of HUGS. It was a very good example. There are people in my electorate who know about HUGS, but many do not and we are working very hard to get the word out about it. I talked to an older chap, Mr Ray Chapple, to whom I have referred in this house. He is a Redress WA victim. He is typical of some of the older, low-socioeconomic Western Australians in Homeswest homes who say to me, "I have never taken a cent in government dole"—they call it the dole—"and I don't intend to start now. I'll sleep cold, mate." That is what they say. It is not just one or two saying that; it is happening all along. As I have said many times, my electorate has the highest population in this state in public housing—33 per cent. It has a huge number of single-parent families, blended families and families in distress—families who are de-powered by the system and completely under-resourced. This government has not told them through this budget where the horizon is; it has not shown them where the future lies for them; and it has not delivered to them the possibilities of what is available to them. It is a government of only project announcements, and not a government of vision.

Mr C.J. Barnett: So, you don't think the \$600 million for community organisations will help your electorate?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I think it is a great initiative, Premier.

Mr C.J. Barnett: But you neglected to mention it.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: What I want to know is whether that \$600 million will be tied funding when it is spent.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, it is not. It is 25 per cent across the board.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: So, when the Western Australian Council of Social Service suddenly wakes up to itself and starts to sledge the Premier for what he is doing to the fabric of the society of this state, what will he do with its funding?

Mr C.J. Barnett: It is untied. It is across the board. It is 15 per cent on 1 July.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: We will see.

Mr C.J. Barnett: And an average of 10 per cent two years later.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: We will see.

Mr C.J. Barnett: That is what it is.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: When these organisations are required to raise the wages of their workers, will the Premier give them additional money? Is it a \$600 million net increase or is it a gross increase? When any wage increase is mandated for those organisations, will the Premier say, "Suck it up"?

Mr C.J. Barnett: You did nothing for eight years. They came to you in government and you ignored them!

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Here we hear it. He is directly asked what he would do and whether it is \$600 million net or \$600 million gross. Will the Premier fund the wage increase?

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Mr C.J. Barnett: It is up to them what wages they pay.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Will the Premier fund the wage increase? The Premier cannot answer the question.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I just did.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Will the Premier fund the wage increase?

Mr C.J. Barnett: It is across the board. It is an untied increase to their budget. Yes, if they face wage increases, they will pay it, but it will not be a 25 per cent wage increase.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Will the Premier top up their funding for the commensurate amount of their wages?

Mr C.J. Barnett: You did nothing in government. You did not give them a zack. You did not give them 10c! For the first time in the history of this state they received a 25 per cent funding increase. That is absolutely unprecedented in social welfare. You made the advocacy and your colleagues ignored you! That is what happened—you completely ignored the social welfare sector.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Premier, it is five to 10 on a Tuesday night; all the footy teams have finished training.

[Member's time expired.]

MR J.C. KOBELKE (Balcatta) [9.55 pm]: This budget and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2011–12 Bill 2011 illustrates that the government's recurrent expenditure has grown by 36.5 per cent in just three years. That is unbelievable. It is out of control. As a consequence, net state debt has grown from \$3.6 billion, inherited by this government, to \$22.4 billion across the forward estimates. Again, growth in debt is out of control. What I would like to do in the small time available to me is go through a few issues that were discussed during the estimates committee that really point out some of the problems this government has and why it has no control of its budget spending. I believe it really comes back to the fact that we have a one-man band in this Premier. He wants to play all the instruments himself. He cannot; so we get all these discordant sounds and things that do not work together. The Premier is certainly a capable man, but his ego is running away with him. He thinks he knows all the answers and does not look at evidence-based information or try to be clear on what the government is trying to achieve.

I will discuss some examples that support the conjecture I have just put before the house. During Estimates Committee A, the Premier said in relation to the Oakajee port project —

I think the final cost of the common-user infrastructure, as it was defined, will be higher than \$680 million or whatever the initial estimate was.

The Premier is clearly saying \$680 million was the original estimate, or something close, and he now expects it will be higher. Then he was quizzed on that and what it meant. He went on to say a bit later —

I am saying that the state is not contemplating increasing its contribution to this project. What is happening is probably a reorganisation within the project.

In late 2008, the government stepped in and said that it would fund the common-user infrastructure for Oakajee port, which was costed at \$680 million. That was new because, prior to that, private interests were going to build the port and hand it back to the government. The Premier stepped in and said no, his government would build that common-user infrastructure. Now the Premier says that the price has gone up but it will not put any more money into it. That certainly leaves people guessing what is happening. A little later in that estimates committee hearing, the Leader of the Opposition asked the following question —

What are the latest figures given to the Premier by the department, as he negotiates a state agreement, for the total cost of the port—not the rail?

The Premier responded —

I have not received updated or changed figures from the department.

I do not think I am putting words in the Premier's mouth when I say that he said this particular project is the "most important project currently facing the state that the government is directly involved in". Now he is saying that he does not actually know what the latest cost estimate is; he is not willing to answer the question. The Leader of the Opposition put the following point —

No, the question is: what is the latest advice the Premier has received? I am not asking for the advice he got yesterday. I am asking what the latest advice is.

The Premier responded —

I will go home. I will go home and have a nice cup of coffee ...

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That was the response from the Premier. Does the Premier not want to answer a question about \$700 million, or more, of public moneys? We know that changes have been made to this project. But the Premier said that he is not going to answer the question; he does not know; no-one has told him. The Premier then said, a little later —

I have not received changed estimates from the department, and I do not expect to.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.M. Francis): Sorry, member for Balcatta, but Minister for Regional Development, and member for Wanneroo, tone it down, or take it outside.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: This is a project that the Premier said is of top importance to this state. This is an important project, and I would like to see it go ahead. However, the Premier said that he has not received any information from the department about this project. This sits particularly strange, because a little earlier in estimates, when we were dealing with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, I quizzed the Premier about the extra resources that are going into that department. I pointed out that the employee benefits for the department have gone up 11 per cent from the 2010–11 estimates to the 2011–12 estimates. However, despite that 11 per cent increase in costs, the number of full-time equivalents has gone up by only just over one per cent. I then said to the Premier —

The department has more people paid at a higher level, which is obviously upping the costs.

The Premier responded to that by saying, “There is no denial of that”.

The Premier then said, a little later —

We are also working on some other major projects and are providing a lot of support to those agencies dealing with major investment projects relating to China. There is a lot happening, and a lot of extra skills and capacity are being brought into the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to support line agencies.

On the one hand, the Premier is providing a lot of extra money for the employment of highly paid staff in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to help him with major projects. However, on the project that the Premier has said is of top importance to the state—Oakajee port and rail—he says the department is not telling him anything. Is this the way to run a state? Does it make any sense that the Premier does not know anything about his major project and the cost blow-outs and how he is going to handle that, when he is paying his staff more money so that he can get competent people to help him? Clearly, the Premier is out of his depth. He is not coping. He is trying to play too many instruments at once, and all we are getting is discordant sounds. We are not getting a clear vision. We are not getting real leadership. We are simply getting a lot of money being thrown out there and we are not sure what value we are getting for that money.

I want to go back now to the Premier’s justification for why he needed this \$680 million in the first place. We know that the former Labor government proposed that the port would be built by the private sector. We know also, from the Premier’s letter to then Prime Minister Rudd asking for financial support from the commonwealth—the commonwealth put in half of that initial amount—that the port would be built by private interests, but it would be owned by the state, and the common-user infrastructure would be handed over. However, what did the Premier say when we started to talk about this issue? I again quote from Estimates Committee A, and the division dealing with State Development. The Leader of the Opposition said the following —

If the state is not going to fully fund the common-user infrastructure, why is the state engaged at all in funding the common-user infrastructure? Why not revert to the previous model whereby the private sector was going to build it?

To which the Premier responded a little later —

We will not have, for example, a Chinese or Japanese-owned port in the southern part of Western Australia.

That was never going to be the case. Therefore, again, the Premier is making up paper tigers so that he can justify an expenditure of \$700 million to \$1 billion. The Premier does not have an argument for that expenditure. Therefore, he has to make it up. He has to say things that are false. It causes me great concern that the Premier has such an ego that he cannot deal with matters factually and cannot base his arguments on reason but has to say things that are false. Therefore, my real concern is that the wonderful possibilities at Oakajee will be stymied by this Premier. He was the Minister for Resources Development for eight years in the Court government when a lot of effort went into getting up the port at Oakajee and the Kingstream Steel project, but it fell over. I do not know whether the Premier has a guilt complex that he stuffed that up and was not able to do that, but given the way he is now getting about the Oakajee development, I think he will stuff it up again. He is interfering in a way that

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makes no sense. He cannot present valid factual arguments for what he is trying to do. The Premier is simply unable to answer questions and gives false information to try to back up his case. That sort of arrogant dictatorial approach is likely to sink what would be a great project in the Mid West. If it falls over—we certainly hope that it does not—it will clearly be on the head of this Premier for the dishonest and totally inadequate way that he has dealt with this project.

I move to another project that again causes concern because of this one-man band that simply cannot play a tune that would be pleasing to the ear—namely, the Perth City Link. Again, in that letter the Premier wrote in late 2008 or early 2009—I do not have the letter in front of me—to Prime Minister Rudd seeking support for the project, the Premier very clearly stated that the total cost of the Perth City Link would be \$263 million. The letter indicated that the potential for the busport to go underground was not included in that figure. It was not then on the agenda. The project was clearly to cross the railway line and to build that connection between Northbridge and the city at a cost of \$263 million. By about April 2010, that had grown to \$497 million—more than \$200 million higher. Perhaps that was to do with the fact that the busport was brought in, which was a change of scope, but clearly there was a major increase in the project's cost. In this year's budget, the all-up cost for the Perth City Link is estimated at \$768 million. Again, there have been cost blow-outs and costs have been updated, but there has also been a major change in scope in that an area that could have been developed by the private sector will now become a town square and the government will put money into developing that. Therefore, this single project, which started at a price of \$263 million, is costed in this budget at \$768 million. That is a blow-out of more than \$500 million. What does the project do? It is a vision. It improves the livability of Perth. It does nothing for public transport. There is no direct economic impact from spending \$768 million or more. All we will have is an improvement in the livability and the style of the city, yet people are being hit with huge increases in the price of electricity and water in every way they turn because this government gives priority to the Perth City Link. We really have to question how this government is going about it.

Finally, I go to the issue of road safety and some of the little things that the Premier is doing to cook the books. Page 661 of budget paper No 2, which deals with the Transport division, shows that income from speed and red-light camera fines will go from \$51.5 million in the estimated actual for 2010–11 to \$77 million next year to \$85 million, \$92.5 million and \$92.5 million in the forward estimates. Included in that increase in the budget estimate for next year and the three years following is the nearly \$350 million that will come in from the speed and red-light camera fines. On the very next page, for the Commissioner of Main Roads division, under "Major Spending Changes" we see that \$51 million funding for the road trauma trust fund is being cut from the Main Roads budget. Therefore, despite all this growth in money from the new red-light cameras, actual funding to Main Roads has been cut by \$51 million. Footnote (a) against the road trauma trust fund line item states —

Expenditure from the Road Trauma Trust Fund has been reduced due to revising down estimated speed and red light camera infringement revenue over the forward estimates.

This is what happens when we have a one-man band and when the government tries to fool people—the actual fibs show up in the budget papers. One page backs the other. One page shows very clearly that the revenue from red-light cameras is going to grow; it will be in the order of \$350 million over the next four years. The next page, relating to the Commissioner of Main Roads, says that over the forward estimates the money to the road trauma trust fund is going to be reduced. How could the government get it so wrong? It is because it is fiddling the books.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Who is?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: This government is. The one thing this government can pride itself on is that it has fiddled the books. The Minister for Road Safety in particular should be ashamed of himself, because he has taken all this money out of road safety to make the bottom line look better. He has put into the estimates the \$350 million of extra revenue from speed and red-light cameras and he has taken out the money to Main Roads it had allocated, coming from that very same source.

Mr R.F. Johnson interjected.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I just quoted it to the minister. It is on page 662 of the budget papers.

Mr R.F. Johnson: The member was given those answers in the budget estimates.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Mr Speaker, the government cannot answer the questions.

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MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [10.10 pm]: I have a few comments to make in this debate on the third reading of the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2011–12 Bill 2011 in relation to some aspects of the budget. I start by picking up what is a favourite topic of mine and my electorate's—that is, this government's continued failure to grasp the dreadful consequences of not funding trail bike strategies in this state. I would not normally raise issues around deaths of young people in relation to any issue in the house, but in this instance I am at the end of my tether. I am sure many members are as well, as they have debated this issue exhaustively in the house.

I went away for the long weekend last weekend and saw reports of the death of a 16-year-old girl, Allana Hancock, at Ledge Point. She was riding her two-wheel trail bike. She died after a head-on collision with a quad bike. I understand that she was riding her bike in the gazetted area, for which this government continues to not fund any upgrades. I am sure the Speaker would be particularly concerned about this issue, given that it was in his electorate that this latest awful and tragic event happened. I feel as if we have stood here for the three years since I was elected and numerous years before—indeed when Labor was in power as well—talking about the need to have proper facilities for recreational trail bike riding. Now, three years after a strategy was developed, still nothing has been put in this budget. It is absolutely appalling to me that the government continues to let this kind of tragedy happen and still does not understand the importance of funding a strategy to keep these children safe. I think it is an appalling indictment on this government.

I turn now to the mental health budget. I want to talk in particular about the Mental Health Commission's work. I refer to division 74 of the Mental Health Commission's budget, in particular to the fourth dot point of page 885 of budget paper No 2. It has been recorded on page E76 of the estimates committee papers. The government had to give back most of the \$13 million that it had trumpeted it was going to put aside for a suicide prevention strategy. It spent \$1.36 million, not \$13 million. I guess a quick calculation would suggest that it will take another 10 years to spend any of that money. There is no excuse for the mismanagement. This was a great commitment. It was an election commitment. I trust that it was entered into sincerely. Why are we sitting here three years later with no mental health strategy approved and published for this state after returning most of the money that the government put into suicide prevention? It is not good enough to tell the community of Western Australia that the suicide prevention strategy took a bit longer than we expected because the government had to work with the community to get it out there. The community is not stupid. It is very adept at getting grassroots programs up and running. This money should have been spent. The reason for the delay is bureaucratic bungling. It has nothing to do with the agencies commissioned to spend the money but with a duplication of levels of approval within the government's hierarchy. That is what is causing people to not have that money spent on the very necessary long-term preventive strategies that the government promised the people of this state. Resignations from the suicide prevention council are not helping things. I suspect that that probably means that people on the council are getting a bit fed up with the government as well because I certainly am. I had high hopes that this would make a difference. Three years on and nothing has happened. That is not good enough for the people of this state. It is certainly not good enough for the people of my electorate.

I wish to pick up an issue raised by another colleague earlier this evening relating to division 64 and the agriculture portfolio. My colleague was asking questions about moving the animal welfare inspectorate into the Department of Agriculture and Food, and why no resources are being spent on ensuring that animal welfare standards are being adhered to. I understand the national responsibility and where that lies but I also think that if we are moving into certain markets and promoting our products overseas, the government has an absolutely unequivocal responsibility to ensure that the markets that it is opening up are not repeating the horrors that we have seen. I do not for one minute think that anyone in this house—the minister said so himself—wants to see a repeat of what we saw on television.

Mr D.T. Redman: I take it that you therefore support us spending Western Australian taxpayers' money in other countries to ensure that they comply with animal welfare standards.

Ms L.L. BAKER: My personal opinion is that we should not be sending our animals to these destinations where they suffer these dreadful inhumane ends.

Mr D.T. Redman: But the tenet of your question suggests that that spend should go overseas.

Ms L.L. BAKER: Personally, I think that if we are sending anything offshore, whether it is uranium or iron ore, we have a responsibility to ensure that the product is properly managed and in this case, treated humanely.

Mr D.T. Redman: What's the position of your party, member, on the live export trade?

Ms L.L. BAKER: I think that will probably be discussed at our conference. The minister knows what the position is at the moment; that is, to ensure that animals that are exported are treated with the maximum level of

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humanity possible and arrive at their destination safely. I am paraphrasing but that is basically what our party platform says. It says that we should ensure the safety and wellbeing of animals. I am quite sure that that is not happening at the moment.

I am particularly interested in a response to a question I asked about the cases that were under investigation by the animal welfare inspectorate when it was transferred to the Department of Agriculture and Food. I assume that that is an ongoing process. There are probably some transitional arrangements in place. I would like to put on the public record a few of those cases, because the minister was not aware of the cases that I was interested in the last time I raised this issue. I will mention three of them in particular.

One case from December 2009 involved a complaint of unfit animals that had been rejected from live export at the port of Fremantle. Significant, extensive breaches of the Animal Welfare Act were substantiated by footage taken by investigators at the time. I want to make sure that that case is handed over to the Department of Agriculture and Food and that charges are laid, if indeed they should be laid, before the statute of limitations kicks in, which I think is only six months. There is a very small window of opportunity for charges to be laid, if they are going to be laid. One organisation involved in this investigation is Peel Petfood Pty Ltd. I think that will be a very big case and I want to make sure that the minister undertakes to continue the work that the animal welfare inspectorate started on the case. In December 2010, three more complaints were handed to the animal welfare inspectorate involving three sheep with serious conditions that were presented for shipment. The sheep ended up being shot because they were too damaged to survive. I would like to make sure that all three of those incidents are being assessed for prosecution by DAFWA. I am not sure who will follow that up if DAFWA considers there is a case to be answered. Will it be the State Solicitor's Office on behalf of DAFWA? I am not sure how the minister intends to progress that case, but I would be very keen to see that happen. I think the minister owes that to the population of Western Australia who are interested in these issues. There was also an incident involving a driver who, it is alleged, breached the Animal Welfare Act by repeatedly applying an electric shock prod to the face of several sheep. I understand that he was already in receipt of a warning stemming from previous complaints about the treatment of animals. I would like to know that that case is continuing to be pursued and monitored and that, if necessary, charges will be laid.

Many other issues arise from the transfer of the animal welfare inspectorate to the Department of Agriculture and Food. For instance, will prosecutions by government departments be handled by the State Solicitor's Office or will the RSPCA prosecute? Will the RSPCA have the same legal and financial advantages if it takes over the prosecutorial responsibilities? Most interesting is the issue of managing the conflict of interest that clearly exists for the government between the Department of Agriculture and Food's position on issues such as live export and mulesing and the RSPCA's complete commitment to stopping both practices. It will be a very interesting balancing act for the minister in how he works his way through that issue.

Finally, I welcome the contribution made in this budget by the Department of Environment and Conservation to try to manage some of the poisons and toxic chemicals that are leaching from the Bayswater main drain. It is a welcome amount of money. It is not going to be enough, but it is a start, as local government authorities struggle with this problem. The City of Bayswater has inherited it from the City of Stirling, and is struggling to fund the reparation work. This will be a great help.

The other issue of concern to me in this budget is the security and maintenance funding in the education budget—or lack of it. John Forrest Secondary College, for instance, is looking for a maintenance budget of \$1 million and not getting much joy from the Minister for Education on that front. The maintenance budget of the little Embleton Primary School has roughly doubled between 2008 and 2010; it has gone from \$86 000 to \$151 000. I do not think that that is being very responsive by the Minister for Education, and I would dearly love her to have a look at that budget and the school's requests to see whether there is a way to meet some of its outstanding maintenance requirements.

In closing, I do not think we will have the level of services required to meet the pressures that the increased cost of living is putting on members of our constituencies. There is a great need in my electorate.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [10.26 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to this third reading debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2011–12 Bill 2011. I note that there is very little promise for the constituents of the Gosnells electorate in the state budget. I have combed the budget papers and looked desperately for some major projects and some good news for the people in the Gosnells electorate; I have not been able to find any. That is a little unfair, as there is one bit of good news about the funding for the Nyoongar Patrol, which will enable us to have, I hope, a Nyoongar Patrol in the south eastern corridor, including Gosnells, so that we can tackle problems of antisocial behaviour in the Gosnells town centre. That is the only glimmer of hope in this budget for the people of Gosnells. The rest is bad news. I have mentioned on many occasions the

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increases in fees and charges, and I have tabled petitions from constituents complaining about the constant rise of electricity prices and of local government rates as a consequence of rising state government fees and charges. Those sorts of things are a grave disappointment for people in my electorate.

People in the Gosnells electorate want to embrace sustainable living, and they want to be helped to ensure that they consume the water and electricity efficiently. They need support to be able to make the necessary conversions in their lifestyles and in their homes; they need help. That is why I am particularly disappointed with the section in the budget papers relating to the Water Corporation. Massive amounts of funding are allocated to engineering solutions to water supply problems. We all know that the state of Western Australia, particularly the south west, faces very serious problems of water supply. Indeed, some \$860 million worth of projects relating to the Water Corporation are listed in the budget papers. However, engineering projects are only part of the solution to our water supply problems. What about the benefits that would flow if we invested strongly and aggressively in water efficiency initiatives? Unfortunately, the budget papers do not present any initiatives on water efficiency. Through the estimates committee hearings process, I was able to glean that part of the problem is the perverse incentive for engineering projects because our asset investment programs, our accounting definition of what an asset is, only allows the Water Corporation to present figures relating to these big engineering-type projects. It does not enable the corporation to present figures on water conservation initiatives, which acts as a disincentive; it prevents the Water Corporation from being able to aggressively say that it will put \$200 million towards the saving of water, towards water efficiency in homes or towards the conversion of gardens so they can be partially converted to native or waterwise plants. There is nothing of that in this budget. There is no incentive or compulsion on the Water Corporation to deliver projects of that magnitude, even though those projects would have just as strong an impact on our overall water supply in the state of Western Australia. This budget fails the test when it comes to sustainable living and helping Western Australians, including people in the electorate of Gosnells, to develop more sustainable lifestyles.

Another area in which the budget lets us down dramatically is in the somewhat veiled announcement relating to renewable energy. We learnt during the budget process, from announcements relating to the budget, that a cap would be placed on the amount of renewable photovoltaic electricity production—a cap on renewable energy! This comes at a time when we need to expand clean energy production, and when we desperately need to make sure that we are generating electricity from sources other than fossil fuels and expanding the range of energy generation mechanisms open to us so that we have greater diversity and can reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with fossil fuels in order that we can insulate ourselves from the cost increases attendant upon the fossil fuel form of energy production when carbon pricing comes in. There is nothing of that in this budget; in fact, there is the totally wrong message that there will be a cap of 150 megawatts on renewable energy production in the south west interconnected system.

It is very interesting to compare the 150 megawatt cap on the south west interconnected system with what Horizon Energy is trying to achieve in its various very small networks, which are technically much more vulnerable to the so-called instabilities that can supposedly arise from higher amounts of renewable energy. In fact, Horizon Energy is doing considerably better than the south west interconnected system. To put some figures on this, Horizon has put a cap of 20 per cent photovoltaic renewable energy production on the mini-grid it operates in Carnarvon. The cap of 150 megawatts that is being imposed upon the south west interconnected system—a system that turns over between 1 500 and 3 700 megawatts on a day of high demand—averages out at a cap of 7.5 per cent renewable energy production. Horizon is able to achieve 20 per cent on a tiny little grid, compared with the cap of 7.5 per cent on the south west interconnected system. That is a disgrace; we should be doing everything possible to make sure that the south west interconnected system is encouraging householders to install and develop photovoltaic systems on their roofs to expand that system.

Furthermore, this cap is being brought in at an earlier stage by the feed-in tariff that people are currently entitled to. At the moment, people on the south west interconnected system who put photovoltaic panels on their roofs are entitled to a 40c feed-in tariff, plus a 7c renewable energy rate paid to them by Synergy, which comes to 47c in total. As of 1 July this year, that will drop to 20c. What a disgrace; what a wrong message to send. There is no excuse for this at all. It indicates that this government is not at all interested in renewable energy and is interested only in increasing prices and, at the same time, increasing our dependence on burning fossil fuels. It is absolutely amazing that we should find ourselves, in 2011, in a situation in which the government is actually pushing us towards the burning of fossil fuel for electricity generation, while actively discouraging renewable energy generation. That is an absolute disgrace.

Another issue of real concern that struck me during the estimates process was the management of our ports. The Minister for Transport was very proud to inform us that on a tonnage basis the port of Port Hedland is the biggest in the world, and I can believe that. The amount of iron ore going out of Port Hedland is absolutely amazing, and

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its tonnages are set to grow at an incredible rate. However, in the last financial year the port of Port Hedland actually made a loss. The port is owned by the Western Australian taxpayer and is making a loss at a time when it is handling incredible volumes of wealth that leaves our shores for other countries. The port is incapable of charging an appropriate handling fee to make sure that its operations do not just break even but actually make a reasonable profit for Western Australians. What would be wrong with that? Our mining companies are perfectly capable of paying a reasonable handling rate. The best we could get from the representatives of the Port Hedland Port Authority was that the payment for a tonne of iron ore to be handled through the port is between 11c and 20c a tonne. I believe that the likes of BHP Billiton Ltd, Gina Rinehart and Hancock Prospecting Pty Ltd and Andrew Forrest and the Fortescue Metals Group are perfectly capable of paying the port handling charges. It is an absolute disgrace that those people are getting away with paying just a tiny percentage of the handling cost that they should be paying to send a tonne of iron ore through the port of Port Hedland. It is yet another example of the type of subsidy we are giving to some of the richest people and organisations in this state. That is an absolute disgrace.

I have before me some information relating to discussions members had with the Minister for Agriculture and Food about the Forest Products Commission and its profitability during the estimates committee. We had wanted to get to the bottom of and find information on the profitability of the Forest Products Commission. However, all we were presented with in the budget papers was the most cursory summary of some of that organisation's expenditure on IT. They were very small amounts and gave no indication at all of the business activity or financial viability of the organisation or the sustainability of the forests that the FPC is involved in logging. We need to do something about the ability of government trading enterprises to present obscure and brief summaries of their activities and direct members to the annual reports and say that that is where the real information is. The estimates committee is a state government budget process. Surely members should be given access to the detailed reports during the budget hearings.

Finally, I must touch on the Minister for Agriculture and Food's responses to questions raised about the Department of Agriculture and Food wanting to create new overseas markets for our livestock. The minister said that he took a Pontius Pilate approach; that is, once we have sold them and they have been sent overseas, we wash our hands of them and no longer care about them. Also, when developing overseas markets we do not bother to ask too many questions because we do not want to know. That is unacceptable. Thankfully, because of the momentum behind a campaign that is being waged at the moment, the Australian and Western Australian community is making its views on the matter known to government and hopefully we will see some positive changes on that issue. Many other issues need tackling, of course, but this issue has captured the public's imagination and we need to act on it. Other campaigns will need to be waged. This is the opportunity now to make sure we solve the problems of animal cruelty that we are responsible for in some way. I think the responses from the Minister for Agriculture and Food were embarrassing. No care was taken when it came to the end destination for products. We invest many millions of dollars in developing markets but we do not care what those markets look like.

In conclusion, I will say that there are many disappointments in this budget, although I am pleased to acknowledge that there was one bit of good news for the Nyoongar Patrol in the Gosnells electorate. Otherwise I see no other good news in this budget.

MR C.C. PORTER (Bateman — Treasurer) [10.40 pm] — in reply: My comments will be very brief. I commence by saying that, having listened to all the second and now third reading debate, I am left with the distinct impression that the people of Western Australia and, indeed, you, yourself, Mr Speaker, are being somewhat short-changed. Perhaps it was not that long ago that I formed that ultimate conclusion. I listened to the member for Forrestfield whose central point in his analysis of the budget was that the government was neglecting the metro areas, especially the eastern suburbs, in order to prop up the royalties for regions deal and pump funding into rural and regional Western Australia. Within 10 minutes of that contribution, the analysis of another member from the opposition, the member for Pilbara, was that there was no infrastructure or money for regional areas such as the Pilbara and we were pumping all the money into metropolitan Perth. It smacks a little bit of hypocrisy and reflects the banal level of contribution and debate we get over the course of near on 50-odd speeches. Are there, Leader of the House, 57 members of this Assembly?

Mr R.F. Johnson: There are 59. All the good ones are over on this side!

Mr C.C. PORTER: Indeed. The rules are, in essence, that at the second reading stage all but ministers can speak freely for 30 minutes and in the third reading debate they can speak on the bill for 15 minutes. Mr Speaker, your equivalent position in the House of Commons, where there are in excess of 600 members, has a very important and appropriate role to play, in my view, at the second and third reading stages. It is your position, Mr

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Speaker, in the House of Commons that determines who speaks from both the opposition and the government at the third and second reading stages. That is not an unlimited number of speakers. Obviously, in a Parliament of more than 600 members it would be impractical for all 600 to speak on any given bill. But even on the most important bills that pass through the House of Commons a limited handful of members speak at the second and third reading stages, and they lobby the Speaker for that privilege. They show to the Speaker that they have conducted research and have acumen and interest in the area about which they want to speak. That we hear in this place speech after speech that are in large part poorly researched; not at all well thought through; and banal; and are contributions of the lowest and anecdotal type that contribute nothing to the social fabric of this state, I think, is a waste of taxpayers' money. I listened to each and every one of those speeches. I gave the example of two speakers who, within 10 minutes of each other, complained about the budget on precisely opposite bases. It has not been a particularly edifying position. Maybe this place needs to speak and think about in a bipartisan way how we can make our own Parliament more efficient.

The only other comment I will make is about the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, who spent a little bit of time this evening talking about the issue on which this budget was framed and on which I commenced my words and analysis of the budget; namely, the diminishing returns of GST receipts. The Leader of the Opposition focused tonight on the idea of the state's growing revenue and that somehow, in framing this budget about the debate on GST receipts, this government was being disingenuous and that because overall revenue was rising somewhat, that should have been the focus and not the declining amount of GST receipts. I have often been taken by the Greek myth of Cassandra, who, depending on which version of the myth we prefer, was either given the gift of foresight by Apollo or, while spending the night at Apollo's pad had a serpent lick out her ears, which gave her the gift of foresight. But when she refused to be Apollo's concubine she was left with the gift of foresight but was forever doomed to have no-one believe her. She was an epic and tragic figure. I must say that from listening to the Leader of the Opposition tonight, he had a touch of the Cassandra about him.

Ms J.M. Freeman: He can see the future and you are not going to believe him.

Mr C.C. PORTER: The Leader of the Opposition could see the future.

Ms J.M. Freeman: And it's true and you are not going to believe him!

Mr C.C. PORTER: The Leader of the Opposition could see the future and no-one believed him. He could see the future and now not even he believes himself! When we look through *Hansard*, we can see far too numerous examples to mention in this place late at night.

Ms J.M. Freeman interjected.

Mr C.C. PORTER: On 27 February 2007, the Leader of the Opposition said —

The money will go to the states that are not as successful. The difference will be \$1.2 billion over four years. Imagine what infrastructure we could have built with that. Imagine if we were able to devote that or a portion of that, for example, to tax relief. Imagine if we were able to put some of that into services. Imagine what improvements we could get.

Ms J.M. Freeman interjected.

Mr C.C. PORTER: On 16 October 2007, the Leader of the Opposition said —

... the Western Australian government is allocating \$2 218 per capita in the same financial year. Why do we do this?

Ms J.M. Freeman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Nollamara!

Mr C.C. PORTER: He continues —

We do this to avoid export bottlenecks. We do not want the same sorts of bottlenecks that have occurred on the eastern seaboard. We want to ensure that our prosperity in this state is maximised. We have to do that because the commonwealth government is just missing in action. Not only has it turned its back on us, but it is also punishing us for our economic success. It is reducing our capacity to fund infrastructure in the future by cutting our share of goods and services tax revenue ...

On 17 October 2007, the Leader of the Opposition said —

With my staff, I have been looking at what would happen over eight years if current circumstances continue. The result is frightening. After eight years of this pattern we would see our share of GST drop

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to 5.9 per cent of GST for 10.3 per cent of the Australian population. The total loss to state finances over those eight years would be \$12.8 billion ...

The figure that we have used over the following five years is \$12.3 million. The Leader of the Opposition, therefore, got it right. It appears that no-one believed him, and in his speech tonight he chooses not to believe himself! That is bizarre. What a waste of this Parliament's time to have such a banal contribution. The fact is that the single overwhelming factor we now face as a state is that our absolute future is on the line. We can talk about the Nyoongar Patrol and we can talk about feed-in tariffs, but what we are really facing is the financial future and future existence of this state as a viable entity in the political scheme of Australian society, and we are not talking about that. The debate has not been about that to anywhere near the extent that it should have been. The Leader of the Opposition recognised it when he was Treasurer. It suits the political purposes of the side of politics of members opposite to now turn a blind eye to it, but that is the only game in town. If we do not deal with this problem and if we do not fix this problem, there will not be a Nyoongar Patrol, there will not be a feed-in tariff and there might not be electricity. That is the context in which this budget is framed. Indeed, members opposite made the point through their Leader of the Opposition when he was Treasurer, and I wholeheartedly agree with him. If we cannot focus on that issue, we all are doomed, like Cassandra, to not be believed and in fact to have no future whatsoever.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.