

Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Bill Johnston; Dr Tony Buti; Dr David Honey; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Zak Kirkup; Mr Terry Healy

McGOWAN GOVERNMENT — ACCOUNTABILITY

Motion

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton — Leader of the Opposition) [4.12 pm]: I move —

That this house confirms that the McGowan government cannot be trusted because of its lack of accountability, broken promises, new taxes and failure to deliver on gold-standard transparency.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be agreed. All those in favour —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: If the Leader of the Opposition is not intending to speak—I see that he has already moved his motion and sat down —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I assume you are about to stand.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes, I sat down when you were speaking, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I assumed that the member had finished speaking.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: You assumed wrong.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Deputy Speaker, I thought you called me.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I quite understand, member. Thank you for your concern. I think the Leader of the Opposition is on his feet now and he is going to speak.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: But he was not. I got up and took the call.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry; I thought you were moving a point of order.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Sorry; I sought the call because he had sat down.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am terribly sorry, member. I did not realise that. My mistake. Leader of the Opposition, go ahead.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Your wisdom is much appreciated.

I would like to go through some of the issues about transparency. It follows from the debate we had on the Parliamentary Budget Office around question time today. This issue has been around for a long time. It is essential to democracy and good government. In opposition, of course, Labor supported its establishment over many years. Indeed, in the run-up to the last election, as I just indicated in the second reading speech on the Parliamentary Budget Officer Bill 2018, the Labor opposition supported it—or at least the then shadow Treasurer did. He did so for the right reasons. He has articulated them clearly, correctly and repeatedly. It is just that when he got into power, he changed his mind. I can understand why.

Mr M. Hughes: When you lost power, why did you not change your mind? That is the question.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: When I committed to it, I was in Parliament and I was in power. The member should listen to the quote. Now we have the time. The reason that he has changed his mind is because he is in government and the Parliamentary Budget Office —

Several members interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Deputy Speaker, I seek your support. This is a serious issue and the noise from the background is irritating.

Ms J.M. Freeman: The noise from not standing up when you should have is probably worse.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, I think that we have cleared up that issue.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: In opposition, both in 2013 and 2017, and after the election, the Premier and then the Treasurer argued strongly and persistently for it. Over the years, the Auditor General and the Public Accounts Committee have been introduced successfully into our parliamentary system. The office is absolutely needed for opposition parties that do not have access to Treasury and other officials, because, as the Treasurer indicated, they report to the government of the day, and that is the way it is. We have access to Treasury periodically during the estimates committee process, but it is always through the minister. The upper house has greater access to Treasury, but it is only for a limited time and it is in response to questions about the government's policy, more than questions about Treasury.

Especially now that we have four-year terms, the tradition is that oppositions use their periods to develop alternative policies. The problem is that without access to expertise about the costings, the finances, the

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ramifications and the dimensions, developing a business case for a range of long-term assets is very difficult to do. It is almost impossible to be precise. We can see through history that this has been the case. I think that the issue that catalysed the then opposition's view was the Metronet policies in 2012–13 that it put together and took to the election campaign. The government of the day tore them apart. Being able to come up with a costing for a massive program such as that from opposition—knowing about access to land, cost of infrastructure, planning issues, timing issues and others—is almost impossible. That is what we are required to do and precision is required. Labor came in and Treasury, of course, tore them apart. Labor got it very wrong and it impacted the debate at the time.

Between 2013 and 2017, Labor kept with its Metronet policies and it suffered the same consequences—almost impossible. It came up with estimates for not only costing, timing and dimensions, but also how to fund the policies. It is almost an impossible task to get right. The downside of this is that if an opposition makes this sort of claim on the basis of limited inaccurate information and often politically driven motivations, it wins government and it is committed to it and it pursues it no matter what. In the history of this state, it has led to—I believe it is currently happening—infrastructure commitments that are simply inappropriate and unfundable. One of the ways to try to enumerate that is to set up a Parliamentary Budget Office that gives the opposition parties or MPs access to advice that is independent from government and reports to Parliament. It would provide the opposition expertise to make sure that its election commitments or ideas are sound, both financially and otherwise.

It is not perfect but I tell you what—it helps. The problem with the government is that it is no longer in opposition. Initially, the parliamentary budget office helps the opposition because it is designed explicitly to help the opposition get its costing, whether it is individual parties or members. The government has now apparently changed its mind. When in opposition it wanted it badly; now in government it does not. I ask the Premier to think widely of the government's current interests and the state's interests.

I would also like to go back to the promise; it was unambiguous and committed to. It was not just the Treasurer, the Premier or myriad people interstate who argued for this. The government had the Langoullant inquiry, the recommendations of which it has committed to implement in full. The Langoullant inquiry is the blueprint for its gold standard accountability. That is what the government said. It had Langoullant assess the previous government's performance against this gold-plated standard and was very critical of it, and the government adopted it as its own.

The second point is the introduction of a parliamentary budget office to cost election commitments and review major projects. That is the second one. The first was to establish Infrastructure WA. If it does not establish a parliamentary budget office, the government will be rejecting its own standards of accountability. It will be rejecting one of the major tenets and recommendations of the Langoullant inquiry and breaking a major promise made to the public of Western Australia and the Parliament of Western Australia in the election campaign. We will debate that later.

Another major recommendation of the Langoullant inquiry was to introduce Infrastructure WA to enhance planning and development. The government has committed to and is in the process of developing Infrastructure WA, but it is different from what people expect if compared with similar infrastructure bodies at the commonwealth and other state levels. First of all, as we understand it, it exempts preview of Infrastructure WA current programs of expenditure even if they are at the development phase or the business case phase. For instance, the opposition understands that—maybe ministers opposite can correct us—most, if not all, Metronet infrastructure is exempt from examination by Infrastructure WA. That is odd indeed, because Infrastructure Australia requires business plans for its assessment and approval of commonwealth spending. Almost all Metronet projects are jointly funded by the commonwealth. In order to get commonwealth money, the government has to make submissions to Infrastructure Australia, and that includes business plans. The point is that I do not think a business plan was done before committing to any of the Metronet expansion. Nonetheless, to get commonwealth money, a business plan must be submitted to the commonwealth for its assessment and ranking, but if it is an existing commitment, it does not have to be done for Infrastructure WA. It is bizarre.

I do not know how this works. Infrastructure WA has a long-term integrated infrastructure strategy for the state across all departments. Eventually, as time goes by, governments will have to look at the ideas for that plan and say, “Now we will do A, B and C.” Once it commits to A, B and C, it is exempt from the strategy. What kind of strategy is that? What is the utility of it? It is a pipedream of work, but it does not provide the necessary function. The main purpose of Infrastructure WA is to subject government infrastructure decisions to scrutiny as we step along the development of those infrastructure plans. That is the whole objective. It is also meant to depoliticise some of the decisions and to make sure top priorities are chosen and development and infrastructure is done according to returns to the state rather than returns to politics. Infrastructure and rail is to be built because of the returns they provide to the community rather than connecting a marginal seat. That is the whole objective.

Mr W.R. Marmion: Then Roe 8 would get up.

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Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes, Roe 8 would get up, but the government has gutted it.

The opposition asked a question on this. We understand Infrastructure WA is now in the submission phase. The government has widely sought submissions from people. It set a deadline. The policy was that the closing date was 20 March 2018. That is good. A range of submissions were received. The government said that it would not accept submissions beyond that date, but it did. That is all right. The government needs to hear from some of the agencies that did not get submissions done in time. The key issue is how many submissions were given to the government before the closing date? There were 64. Were those submissions made publicly available? No. Nineteen submissions were collected after the closing date. That is fair enough. We have asked how many are publicly available. I will give members some examples. The Department of Education submitted a proposal on the formation of Infrastructure WA—late but that is all right. I cannot imagine an infrastructure program for a state without the Department of Education's input, given schools' take-up. We asked: is it available? No. Horizon Power is another one. The government monopoly provider of electricity to the non-contestable market outside the south west interconnected system, a major investor of infrastructure, made a submission. We asked to see the submission but our request was denied. The WA Police Force, another major department, particularly when it comes to infrastructure, made a late submission. We asked to see it and were denied access. The Department of Health—I kid you not—which is the largest department by expenditure and probably the most contentious in terms of infrastructure because of locations and huge demand for additional infrastructure going forward, made a submission and we, the Parliament and the public of Western Australia are not allowed to see it.

Mr W.R. Marmion: Open, transparent government.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Open, transparent government! The Department of Finance is very important because Strategic Projects is located in it, as is Building Management and Works. It is the builder for the state; it has a central role in infrastructure. It carries out the tender processes and oversees construction and it has a great deal of input into costings, the need for infrastructure and its priority. It is at the heart of infrastructure processes in government. The Department of Finance made a submission but we are not allowed to see it. There are some others here. There is the Committee for Perth, which said, "No problem", and gave it to us. Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, a really good ginger group, is trying to develop infrastructure organisations such as Infrastructure WA and encourage long-term planning and the use of cost-benefit analysis and transparency. Its submission was precluded. I am sure that when we ask for it, Infrastructure Partnerships Australia will give it to us. There are a range of others. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia, an ardent supporter of an expanded, comprehensive Infrastructure WA, just as we are, also made a submission. When I asked the government for the submission, even though I think it is on the CCI's website, it said no. It is secretive and lacks accountability. Here is the situation: the government is developing Infrastructure WA to enhance transparency. Its transparency guru said that that is the top priority for implementing the gold-standard accountability promised by the Premier. The government is in the process of asking people for ideas and advice. The ideas and advice will be implemented or used by the government to develop it and that advice will be kept from Parliament and the public. That is completely and utterly bizarre. Just like its reactions to a proposed parliamentary budget office, it shows that it has no commitment to it whatsoever.

The third major recommendation is to provide information about major projects in an accessible and transparent way to the public. This is a real doozy. We just got a couple of the project development statements, including one on the Yanchep line. Nothing is in it. There are no numbers, no patronage, no cost-benefit analysis, no costings, no operating subsidies and no business plan—nothing. Indeed, when we ask for information from this government on any project, most of the time it says that a business case is being prepared. When it has it, it is with Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, but it will not give it to us. It has dumbed down and undermined all the received processes of transparency on projects it inherited from us and the ones that it has. The government is the most non-transparent government imaginable.

It started with the Roe 8 project, the Perth Freight Link. The government went to the election saying that it was going to rip up the contracts. It did. It took the money and convinced the commonwealth with some negotiation to allow it to redirect it to other projects. That money was redirected often without business plans, without going to tender and without any declaration to the public in any form about how much was spent, what the alternative cost is, the business plans for them or any information. We do not know and we asked the government, "How did you come up with the Murdoch link? How did you come up with \$100 million-plus for that Murdoch Link? How did you come up with that?" The government responded that it was the Perth Freight Link and when we said, "No, it's a different route with a different costing, it stops before it and it's fundamentally different. How did you come up with the costing?" The government would not answer the question. One of the classics from the Minister for Corrective Services was that he redirected infrastructure money from one form of the prison system to another and said that it was an election commitment: "I just did it. I didn't have a business case; I don't need a business case. If it's an election commitment, no business case is needed." That is Local Projects, Local Jobs—the slush fund of

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\$39 million. There was no transparency and \$39 million in a very constrained budget was slopped everywhere with no project statement. It was given to local members to spend wherever they went. There are examples of people getting money they did not even ask for.

The government has a very large capital works program, which is targeted mainly on Metronet, but there are other things. It has been the least transparent of any government imaginable. The only time we get a business case is if Infrastructure Australia forces it out of it, and then the government just says that it is committed to it no matter what. Let us go one more step into the John Langoulant recommendations: Infrastructure WA is a joke; a parliamentary budget office has been dropped; providing information about major projects in an accessible and transparent way is a joke; and centralising the leadership of major projects and public works is debatable. We had Strategic Projects and Building Management and Works, and of course Main Roads and hospitals do their own. The next recommendation is to simplify and strengthen procurement processes. An example is the bus for the Swan Valley that was announced today. I think it is very popular in the Swan Valley. The Swan Valley is a really important tourism spot. It is a pretty good idea to enhance the bus traffic from one establishment to the next. This was announced with big fanfare. We understand this only because the three ministers involved announced it to the media, not to Parliament. The government is spending \$50 000 on that program. There was no tender. How did the successful recipient of the contract get that contract? We are hearing from a whole range of people; why were others not informed and could therefore not tender? They might have been in a better situation to provide it at a lower cost. How was that provided? We do not know and really do not care. More recommendations include to subject government trading enterprises in larger public sector organisations to more rigorous performance reviews, and there has been no action on that; tighten the governance and decision-making around royalties for regions, and it has done that; and implement former evaluation agencies' performance on major projects. At least to our knowledge there is no assessment in a transparent manner. The government might be doing it behind closed doors, but we would not have any idea. There is no formal evaluation of agency performance on major projects that we can see—none whatsoever. Another recommendation is to introduce training opportunities for members of Parliament and public servants in key areas of governance, business case analysis, risk management, procurement, project and contract management negotiation, and commercial and financial management. I can say that ministers show no sign of comprehending these, and, in fact, if training was introduced, it should be at the ministerial level.

The government, when in opposition, pilloried the former government as secretive, lacking transparency and lacking detailed business cases. It came to government and promised gold-standard accountability. It put in place a strategy by John Langoulant to evaluate and take lessons from the previous government. He handed in the report over a year ago, and the government has walked away from virtually all the recommendations. The government might think that is politically smart and adroit, but when the wheels start wobbling, the hub caps will fall off and then the wheels will fall off its grand plans in a secretive manner. The government does not disclose the true risks, costs and timing of projects, and the public will catch on and be furious with it; we can already see it happening. We must wait and see and we, on our side, will hold the government to account on this issue.

The most fundamental tasks of government are to be transparent, to use public money wisely, to make sure there are systems inside and outside government through which ideas can be contested and, importantly, to ensure that we get value for money. We on this side can see no sign of the government putting those systems in place. That is going to be a tragedy for Western Australians and for this government.

MR A. KRSTICEVIC (Carine) [4.39 pm]: I, too, would like to contribute to this motion, which states —

That this house confirms that the McGowan government cannot be trusted because of its lack of accountability, broken promises, new taxes and failure to deliver on gold-standard transparency.

A smorgasbord of issues have been presented here today. Unfortunately, there is little time for the opposition to bring that list of issues forward for debate on this motion. This is disappointing, considering that we are not even two years into the term of this government. As we all know, prior to the election there was a lot of rhetoric, a lot of chest-beating and a lot of promises made to the people of Western Australia. As we have seen, once the then Leader of the Opposition became Premier, all those promises started to fall off, one by one. The truth is that the promises were never genuine, there was never a plan for gold-standard transparency, and there was never a plan for accountability. There was well and truly a plan for broken promises. During the election campaign the then shadow Treasurer often contradicted the now Premier in some of his statements, saying, "I don't realistically think we can live up to that." Even the Premier's own side did not believe the campaign he was running and what he was saying to the public. Unfortunately, the public was tricked into believing it was electing someone who had values and character and who could be trusted. That unfortunately has not come to fruition in the course of the nearly two years of the McGowan Labor government. Interestingly, as we draw closer to the two-year mark in March next year, we find that the government is still fixated on the previous government; the government's

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incompetence and inability to do its job effectively are all blamed on the previous government, rather than those opposite understanding that they are now in government. They have the Treasury bench and they have the opportunity to make significant changes to the direction of this state, but they prefer to move in the shadows with a lot of smoke and mirrors and without making a genuine attempt to try to help the people of Western Australia get through these difficult times.

The opposition has said on many occasions that it is here to help the government achieve its outcomes and objectives. I have frequently had conversations with the Minister for Local Government about the fact that I am keen to work with him to try to ensure that we get good outcomes in the portfolios for which we have responsibility. I have told him that I am more than happy to do anything I can do, in Parliament or outside, to assist him in moving in that direction. Hopefully, I have displayed over the last year and a half or so a commitment to try to help the minister in the right direction with the issues he has to grapple with in the spheres of local government, culture, heritage and the arts.

I want to touch on a couple of areas, and firstly on accountability and transparency. We know it is currently a very difficult environment for businesses out there. The other day I was walking through Northbridge and I was shocked to see the number of businesses and restaurants that had closed down. Local businesspeople told me how difficult it was in the current environment to succeed and keep their heads above water and pay the bills. I am sure other members hear that all the time in their electorates. I am surprised that that message is not echoing to the government and to its backbenchers as strongly as it is to opposition members. People out there are hurting and they are paying attention to what people in this place are doing and saying, and whether we are genuine in acknowledging the difficulties that people are facing and trying to help them through this transition process.

I want to touch in a little more detail on some of the discussions we have had over the last few days. People are obviously now very familiar with the debate and issues around Picabar, in the cultural centre in Northbridge. When we look at the way this story has unfolded and the lack of transparency and accountability involved, we see that it would make a perfect plotline for *Yes Minister*. The plot is a classic and I am sure that if we had a similar show in Western Australia, it could use the material from this story as a historically sad story of a minister who seems to be kept in the dark and who blindly signs a letter without knowing what the consequences will be and whether it was his department or others who did not alert him to what exactly was in front of him. I am not sure, but as the issue has unfolded it is pretty obvious that the minister has been running to catch up with it. We all know that tomorrow at 12 o'clock the minister will finally meet with the owners of Picabar, after previous attempts by them to meet with the minister to resolve this issue were thwarted by his acting chief of staff, who apparently said when they called to organise a meeting, "Go away; the minister's not interested. You're not going to get a meeting with the minister. Go and talk to someone else."

Obviously, Picabar is Brian and Melissa's livelihood. They have managed Picabar since 2012 and have three children under the age of five. Brian's brother Conor also works there and they employ 15 staff. People's lives are being affected by this. This is a business that has been built up over many years and a lot of goodwill has gone into it. Members can go online and see the online petition; I would say it has attracted well over 6 000 signatures in virtually 24 hours. They are also doing parliamentary petitions and a lot of people are signing those as well. There will be some petitions submitted to the Parliament in due course to show the huge level of support for Brian, Melissa, Conor and the 15 staff who have done an outstanding job since 2012.

Members will remember that prior to 2012 there were consistent media reports about how dangerous it was for people to walk through the cultural centre; it was not safe. The cultural centre of Perth was considered to be one of the most dangerous places for people to walk through and not a safe place. Brian and Melissa approached PICA with a view to getting the lease for this premises, which had been vacant for some 12 years. They finally got their opportunity at the beginning of 2012 to take on this business. As we know, it was really tough for the first few years to make a dollar. I believe Conor was not taking a wage and Brian and Melissa were struggling to pay the bills. The area was still not as safe as it is today and they put in a huge amount of work and effort to free up that area so that lots of people could benefit. If members go past Picabar now, on any particular night but especially on the weekend, they will find it is full of a diverse range of people. Anyone who participates in cultural and arts events will generally find themselves at Picabar at some point. I would be surprised if many members here have not been there for a drink when they have attended a cultural or arts event, or just walking through Northbridge, feeling the vibrancy and energy coming from that corner. It makes people feel safe walking through there and that there is something happening in Perth.

Of course, that is going to be taken away from them after all of the hard work that they have done during the tough economic times. They had finally turned it around and started to make a small profit. They are employing 15 staff and adding to the vibrancy of the area during what is arguably one of the most difficult times in Western Australian business, especially in Northbridge, to keep a business running, to keep its doors open and to keep staff employed. The owners are not asking for much. I have a copy of their lease agreement that they signed back on

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18 November 2011. That lease agreement was initially signed to take them up to 31 July 2012. It was a very short lease agreement, but that was because the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts had only a short lease. It said, “We’re here until 31 July 2012. We’re happy for you to come in, to be here for six months on this lease, and to set up a business, and then, when our lease gets renewed, we’ll give you the option of a five plus five.” When the PICA lease was up for renewal, they would give Picabar an option for a 10-year extension. As we know now, because of other circumstances that have not been made clear to this Parliament or to the opposition, that opportunity has been taken away from Picabar. According to the information that we have available, its owners will not be able to get this sublease that they have signed dealt with. That option has been taken away from them. According to the documentation provided by the minister, the goodwill has been taken away from them. In discussions I have had with them, they are not looking for some sort of special treatment or some sort of a deal that is better than anybody else would get. All they are saying is, “We’ve been here for six years and we’ve built up this business. We have signed this sublease agreement. If you think that the commercial rates are not appropriate and that we should be paying more or that we should have a different agreement, by all means, get someone out there to come and value the business and say how much we should be paying for a lease.” Hopefully, the minister will get that evaluation done. I know that the minister is keen to resolve this issue in a positive manner for all parties concerned.

Ms J.M. Freeman: Will the member congratulate him when he does?

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: I will congratulate him when he gains control of his department and all those around him who are not giving him the correct information.

Ms J.M. Freeman: Like the member’s previous government did.

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: The bureaucrats are the ones who normally bring a minister down if they are not doing their job properly and informing the minister of what is going on. I hope that the minister sees fit to get a commercial review of the facility. We have to look after the interests of the state, of course, and Brian and Melissa are not disputing that fact. We also have to look after the interests of the small business people who have put their blood, sweat and tears into this business and we have to come up with something that is fair for everyone. No-one is disputing that fact. No-one is arguing that that is not where we want to end up. The questions are: Why have we ended up here? Why have we got to this point right here and now in which 15 staff, three owners and three little children under five years of age do not know where their future lies? There has been a lack of communication and a lack of consultation by many people. Obviously, the minister may not have been aware of this situation, but many others were aware of it and they should have made the minister aware of the plight of this business. Unfortunately, they were not that keen to bring it to the minister’s attention. I will touch base on some of the things that have not occurred and the people who have not done things that might have otherwise resolved the situation and stopped it from getting to the current position.

The minister has indicated that there have been discussions about giving the owners a longer period in which to act. Yesterday, he talked about extending the deadline to the end of March. I spoke with Brian and Melissa today, and as far as I am aware, they have received nothing in writing. On 26 October, the day after they got the letter, the matter was discussed and they were told that perhaps they could be given an extension of time until the end of the expressions of interest process, which might be around the middle of January. Obviously, Brian emailed back saying, “For now I’ll take that—whatever it is. I don’t know what date that is, I don’t know exactly what you’re offering, I have not seen any paperwork or any lease and I have no idea what you want me to sign up to, but I will take anything because we are desperate to keep our business, to keep our family fed and to keep our employees. We have no idea where the future is taking us, but can you please put something in writing? Can we please have a meeting with the minister or anybody about what this actually means at the end of the day?” They were told that they could not. Then they went to the media and to the opposition. They were not getting a huge amount of support from their local member to deal with this issue because if they had, I am sure that it would have been dealt with at a faster pace. On the surface, it does not seem that complicated. I understand that there are heritage issues with the building and all these other factors that need to be taken into account, but that does not detract from the fact that if this business is to continue, they should be given the first option—as written into their sublease—to pick up the lease at a commercial rate so that the state does not lose out and they do not lose out. If think everybody would agree with that.

When we look at the facts around this situation, I do not think any sane-minded person would disagree with the argument that they have been left out to dry on this issue. They had booked a family holiday to Kalbarri but had to cancel it, because a day or two before they were about to leave, they got the letter saying that their business had to shut down and they had to be out of the premises by 14 November—at least that is what the minister’s letter said. The letter to them from PICA said that their business would have to close on 13 November.

[Member’s time extended.]

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Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: Of course, we have heard all this conversation about how that was not going to happen, but they received a letter from PICA telling them that they had to be out by 13 November. PICA wanted the keys, it wanted the place cleaned up and it wanted everything sorted out: thank you for coming; see you later! How anybody could confuse what that meant is beyond me. Were they supposed to read someone's mind: "This letter that is signed by the minister is not telling us exactly what it says. We need to read into this because what it's saying is that there's an EOI process and we can keep our lease until that process is completed. We don't know what date that is; it could be 31 March or it could be longer." Where were they supposed to get that information from? Nobody told them anything up until the letter dated 25 October—not one, single person. Is it any wonder that they have found themselves in this situation? Of course, there are other issues involved as well. At the moment, Picabar pays rent to PICA of around \$60 000 plus GST. PICA subleases the building and gets \$66 000 from Picabar. If all of a sudden the arrangements change for PICA and the minister excises Picabar from PICA because it is getting these other premises, who will get that rent? Obviously PICA will not get it anymore because it is not subleasing the building. The government will take over the building, so PICA has just lost \$66 000 in income. I have not heard PICA make any complaints about losing \$66 000. I know that it is not flushed with money. I know that every dollar it makes is scarce, so it makes me wonder whether someone has spoken to PICA in advance and said, "You're going to lose the \$66 000, but we have another deal for you. We have something else in the pipeline." Again, nobody has clarified that point. I cannot imagine that PICA would not be in a position to say that that matter has been dealt with and that it knew about it well in advance of the letter going to Picabar. It is beyond comprehension and I am sure that most people here would think the same because there is no way in the world an arts organisation can afford to lose that sort of money without, firstly, knowing that it is going to happen and, secondly, having a plan B. Obviously that plan B must have been worked out by someone, because PICA did not complain about it. It did not complain to me. It did not go to the public. It did not go to the media. It did not go to its supporters and patrons. It did not raise it with anybody. Therefore, I can only assume, with no other advice being available, that PICA knew what was going on and was happy with the transaction that was taking place. I certainly have not heard anything to the contrary.

As we know, Brian and Melissa were effectively given 19 days from the day they got the letter to close their business and walk out the door, "Thank you very much for all the heartache and struggle you have put into this place over the last six years. Thank you for building up a successful business. You can now move on, and you have 19 days to do it. Bad luck for your goodwill. Bad luck for everything else. The government is taking it over, and—guess what?—what a bonus for us! You have built up a great business, in a great location. We can now lease it to somebody else, or maybe you can lease it yourself again." The government wants to lock up the building and get them to strip it out and sack all their staff, but down the track they can put in an expression of interest and they might get the business back. How stupid is that? The government is saying, "Shut the door and close up, but, you never know, you might be lucky and you can get the business back again and start from scratch."

As the minister and a lot of other people have indicated, the operators of Picabar have been doing a great job in servicing the community and looking after that area. They have been running a very successful business, in very difficult economic circumstances. Are they being recognised or rewarded for that? Are they getting a fair deal? Are they getting a fair go? I cannot imagine anybody would say they are getting a fair go. The minister should go there and look them in the eye. He should look at their three kids aged under five and say, "Don't worry. The government is looking after you. We've done the right thing. We've dealt with this properly. We have a heart. We care about small business. We care about young families. We care about people who are taking a risk. We care about the fact that you have sacrificed everything to get to this point. But, guess what? We're kicking you out." Please! I do not think anybody in their right mind would do that. I hope that at the minister's meeting tomorrow, he will come up with a solution that is fair to the state and to Brian and Melissa and the 15 staff at Picabar. I cannot see why, without prejudicing anybody in this process, the minister cannot sit around the table with Brian and Melissa, have an intelligent conversation and come up with an appropriate solution. It beggars belief that that cannot occur. I hope that intelligent minds will prevail and there is a positive outcome.

Brian and Melissa have been told they must close on 14 November. That is around the time of the Perth Festival, just before Christmas and New Year, and just before the Fringe World Festival. They struggled through the difficult winter months. They now have the opportunity, in summer, which is a beautiful time of the year, to make a few dollars and try to win back some of the expenses they have carried for the last few months. But all the government can say is, "No. We're shutting you down. Close the door. You're not going to have a business there over the Christmas and New Year period. You're not going to have a business there for the Perth Festival and the fringe." Seriously! The government would rather put these people out of business before Christmas and see all the staff sacked than sit around the table and say, as we are now, "You can still operate. It makes sense. You're running a great business."

Mr W.R. Marmion: Maybe there's another agenda.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 31 October 2018]

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Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Bill Johnston; Dr Tony Buti; Dr David Honey; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Zak Kirkup; Mr Terry Healy

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: People are saying the minister has another agenda. Has someone else been lined up for this location?

Mr W.R. Marmion: Yes, for the Museum.

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: Has the deal already been done? People talk about conspiracy theories. When we weigh up all the circumstances in this case, we can only think: is there another agenda here? This is either the best series of *Yes Minister* we will ever see in our lives and the biggest level of incompetence by many people in a number of departments, or something sinister is going on. I am not sure. I am happy for the minister to say, "There's nothing sinister. It's total incompetence. Yes, it's a great *Yes Minister* series." If that is what the minister wants to say, fair enough, and I will say, "Minister, it's not your fault. Obviously your chief of staff and other people in the department have not looked after you properly and have hung you out to dry, so we will help you deal with that issue and get those circumstances under control."

As I mentioned yesterday, PICA and the Picabar have not had a perfect relationship. They have had disputes. However, one wonders where this went sour. I talked yesterday about an overpayment by Picabar of an outstanding utilities bill from 2012 to 2018. In October 2015, Brian and Melissa thought that their utility bills seemed a bit high and that maybe they should ask the question, because under the commercial tenancies agreement, they are entitled to see a copy of the bills to know what their share is. Do members know what PICA said? It said, "No, we're not giving it to you. We're not going to show you your accounts."

Mr W.J. Johnston: They are not a retail tenancy. That is for shopping centres.

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: Anyway, they asked for a copy of the accounts, and they were told they would not be getting the accounts. Therefore, in 2015, they said they would no longer pay their outgoings. They were still making their lease payments, but they said that until PICA produced the audited accounts of what they had paid —

Mr W.J. Johnston: When did you say that was?

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: That was in October 2015.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Who was in government then?

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: It does not matter who was in government. It had nothing to do with the government. PICA had this space, and PICA had subleased it. It had nothing to do with government or ministers or departments. PICA was subleasing it, and it was not treating its tenant properly.

In 2015, Brian and Melissa stopped paying their outgoings. They calculated that they had overpaid by \$110 000. Of course, up until 26 October 2018, which is an interesting date—it is the day after they were given their move-on notice—PICA wrote to them and said, "We want to settle this dispute that we have had, where we are saying that we do not owe you any money, and you owe us money. We want to give you \$89 022, and then we are all square and we can call it quits." Of course, PICA reduced it from \$110 000 because between October 2015 and the time it was settled in 2018, the outgoings were around \$19 000 or \$20 000, and when that was taken off the \$110 000, that left roughly \$90 000. This small business operator, which was struggling and overpaying its utility bills, was not being given fair treatment by PICA. There was a dispute between them and a number of threats of legal action along the way. But now that it has come to a head, PICA has come clean and wants to give them the money. Members can imagine how difficult it is to operate a small business right now, every single day. This business had overpaid its utility bills to the extent of \$110 000, and it was not treated fairly, because it was not allowed to see its accounts. People may ask who was in government at that time. It has nothing to do with government. It was a sublease by PICA. No-one had complained to government to say that Picabar was not doing the right thing. Picabar was happy to negotiate in good faith with PICA and say, "If we do a lease renewal, we are happy to throw in this outstanding amount, and it can be evaporated in the 10-year lease that we are supposed to sign up to again." That obviously will not happen now that PICA has moved on. However, that was only a first option.

There has been a lot of miscommunication on this issue. Yesterday, the minister said a number of times, "Picabar will continue. We will support Picabar. It will be there." Guess what? Brian and Melissa own Picabar. They own the name "Picabar". That is their business. If they move away, Picabar will move away. Yes, the shell will be there and the building will be there, but the business will be gone. If the minister is saying that Picabar will be there, has he signalled to the owners that he is going to deal with them or is there some other reason that he will not honour that statement? The minister has made a number of statements in this Parliament. We will see how they eventuate and what they mean. It is disappointing that other members are not jumping on the side of Picabar to try to keep it open. Even the member for Perth said —

I have yet to get a full briefing but genuinely hope a solution can be found and advocated these views to the Minister.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 31 October 2018]

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Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Bill Johnston; Dr Tony Buti; Dr David Honey; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Zak Kirkup; Mr Terry Healy

He said that on 29 October 2018.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Commerce and Industrial Relations) [5.10 pm]: This is the second time that I have had the call to speak in this debate. I am not quite sure what the last half hour was about. I understand that the motion was somehow related to the question of accountability of government. The member for Carine got 27 minutes into his speech and then he explained to the chamber that the question of the sublease of Picabar had nothing to do with government. I do not understand why he spent 30 minutes of the debate speaking about an issue that he says is not related to government. I interjected and asked him when this dispute with the outgoings happened. He said that it was in 2015. I asked him who was in government at that time. He said, "This has nothing to do with government." That was his contribution. Thirty minutes of the debate was taken up by an issue that he said was nothing to do with government. I do not understand why the Liberal Party comes in here every week and moves the same motion and puts the same member on his feet, who never talks about anything relating to the motion. It is just bizarre.

Let us talk about the question of accountability. I want to draw the attention of the chamber to Hon Nick Goiran in the other place. He got up and said —

I rise this evening to grumble. Specifically, I want to grumble about the process at the moment for answers to questions on notice. I am not here to ask questions for the fun of it. If I ask a question of my colleagues, it is because I am seriously trying to get to the bottom of a matter. I asked a question as far back as Tuesday, 26 November.

This was on 18 February. He continues —

I am trying to get to the bottom of a serious matter about the Insurance Commission of WA.

Then he went on. He made those comments in 2014. Can members remind me who was in power in 2014? Was that a Labor government or a Liberal government?

Dr A.D. Buti: It was a Barnett Liberal–National alliance.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: In fact, the member is right. Talk about leading with your chin! Here they are complaining about accountability and their own member complains about the fact that the former government would not answer questions in the Parliament. Their own member of Parliament could not get information from the Liberal–National government. That is how bad it was when it was in power. They would not even give their own members information. What a joke! That is the problem with the Liberal Party—a party that has forgotten nothing because it knows nothing. It is a party that cannot contribute because it has no idea how to contribute. The party of Menzies has fallen and become the party of Nahan. It is embarrassing. The opposition in this state is an embarrassment. Sometimes when I am talking to businesspeople, they tell me that they think the government is doing a good job.

Several members interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Mr Acting Speaker, I did not interject a single time. During the hour and a half of contributions from members on the other side, there was not a single interjection from this side of the chamber. The glass jaws of the other side do not know what it is like. They should sit down and not speak.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Carine, you have had your say. The minister is on his feet.

Point of Order

Dr A.D. BUTI: The minister is not asking for interjections. He is asking for some protection. As he said, he heard the other side in silence.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price): Thank you. I have heard the point of order. There is no point of order but the minister will be allowed to contribute in silence.

Debate Resumed

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: This is the problem.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: If the member wants to ask me a question, I am happy to answer it. What question does he want to ask?

Mr A. Krsticevic: No. Keep going.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Sorry; I thought the member had a question for me. He is just making noise. I thought he had something to contribute.

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 31 October 2018]

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Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Bill Johnston; Dr Tony Buti; Dr David Honey; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Zak Kirkup; Mr Terry Healy

Mr A. Krsticevic: The question is: did you interject on me or not?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I asked a single question.

Mr A. Krsticevic: So you did interject.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I will tell the member what I did not do. I was not as stupid as the member for Dawesville, who deliberately comes into the chamber to make noise and not make a contribution. I will never be as dumb as him.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Dawesville, thank you. Member for Carine, you have been warned a number of times now. I will start calling you.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The Liberal Party does not like the fact that it was a hopeless government that was rejected by the largest swing in the history of the state. It was defeated and it has never apologised for its appalling performance in government.

Mr A. Krsticevic: What about the Darling Range by-election?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The member interjected about the Darling Range by-election. He should read the *Hansard*. I have already apologised to the people of Darling Range for failing them. What about the member? When has he apologised for his contribution?

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Carine, I call you for the second time. Minister, through the Chair please.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Very well, Mr Acting Speaker. This opposition was a hopeless government and it was rejected.

We talk about the Leader of the Opposition. I remind members that he was the minister who oversaw the total hiding of the truth over the Muja AB scandal. I cannot believe that when the Leader of the Opposition was the Minister for Energy, after the then opposition started pointing out how hopeless that decision was, he still contributed millions and millions of dollars to the joint venture. He did that after the opposition had started the criticism, not before. Everybody in the state knew the thing was a dog. The minister said in the chamber that it had not gone well, yet he still put millions of dollars of taxpayers' money into it. Where was the opposition? Where was the accountability? Where was the transparency? By the way, today the opposition criticised the use of KPMG for the independent review of Rottneest Island. Who did it get to review Muja AB? It was KPMG. Is that not interesting? Never once did it come into this place and fess up to the truth. It took the Langouland report to get to the bottom of that. It continues to say that all the decisions of government were made when it was in power. That is simply untrue. The first decision of government was made in May 2009. The opposition thinks that because Synergy did some planning, that was a decision of government. That is simply not true.

I did not notice that I did not get my 60-minute allocation. I am the lead speaker for the government. Sorry about that.

Mr A. Krsticevic: It's a bit late now.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, it is not. I thank the member for Nedlands. I did not notice that I was not allocated the right amount of time. I appreciate the assistance of the member for Nedlands. I thank him very much.

Mr A. Krsticevic: Point of order, Mr Acting Speaker —

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: No, that is right.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Mathematics is not his strong suit. I understand that.

Then there was the resignation of the overwhelming majority of the board of Synergy. Three directors resigned on one letter and the chairman resigned on another letter. It took a year of fighting through FOI to get the then minister, the now Leader of the Opposition, to release those documents. Over a year he fought the procedures to stop me getting the letter. Why did he want to do that? It is because the letter said —

We do not support your proposed Executive Chair governance model because it is fraught with considerable risk for a government trading enterprise and is incongruent with Australian corporate practice.

For any relationship to work in a government trading enterprise there needs to be mutual respect and trust between the Minister and the Board. In the absence of this we have no alternative ... to resign.

That is what people working with the Leader of the Opposition said about him. They could not work with him because they could not trust him. He fought tooth and nail to keep that secret. A classic example of this is that when the now Leader of the Opposition amalgamated Verve and Synergy—a decision opposed by everybody in the sector at the time—he made a submission to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. I put in

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a freedom of information application to get a copy of that submission. Because I made the application under the commonwealth regime, I actually got the document. But if the party does not consent to the information it contains, it gets blacked out. I got, I think, 14 blank pages back from the FOI application. That was the transparency of the Leader of the Opposition about the amalgamation of billion-dollar businesses with no business case—an issue he opposed before he was Minister for Energy, on the day he became Minister for Energy, and then implemented as Minister for Energy and never explained any of the issues around that or why he changed his mind. Every time I came in here I would say, “What happened between these two dates?” I gave the date of his press conference as Minister for Energy when he said he was opposed to amalgamating, and the date he announced he was doing it. I asked him what had happened in the meantime. He could never come in here and tell us what it was that he found out or why he changed his mind.

Ms J.J. Shaw: He lost his backbone.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Absolutely.

There is a whole range of other issues in the energy space such as the classic story of the cancellation of the solar feed-in tariff—remember that one? Hon Kate Doust, MLC, put in an FOI application on that, and she was told one document would not be released. That was the one document in which the chief of staff to the then minister made it clear that the minister knew all about the issue, even though he had gone to the media and said he did not. Guess what? That document was withheld from the FOI application. That was an unlawful act by the Minister for Energy of the time. It led to serious consequences for him. It was funny, because the Minister for Energy went to the media and said, “I’ll find out who did not release that document.” Of course, it was him! He was the decision-maker. He was the one who hid the document. It got to me only by accident, because the person who gave it to me thought I already had it. They gave it to me because they assumed, given it was an FOI application, that the document had been released because there was no proper basis for it not to be.

Then there were all those failures to advise the Auditor General about not answering questions. We have had this debate before. The now opposition does not understand that the reason we tell the Auditor General that we have not answered a question is because that is what the law requires. The opposition thinks that when we do that, that is somehow a sign of improper behaviour. No, that is the proper behaviour. The proper behaviour is to let the Auditor General know. The problem was that when the now Leader of the Opposition was in government he never told the Auditor General; he never followed the rules.

Then of course the Leader of the Opposition had his failure to comply with regulations 29 and 30 of the Electricity Corporations (Electricity Generation and Retail Corporation) Regulations. He got the Auditor General to complete a report, which was then—I do not know why—handed to him, rather than to Parliament. Within 21 sitting days that report was required to be tabled in Parliament. He went over a year—over 12 months—before he tabled any of them in Parliament. When I asked him why, he said, “Oh, we forgot.” They were his regulations that he introduced, and then he just thumbed his nose at Parliament and would not be accountable.

Of course, we still have to remember the Forrestfield–Airport Link. Let us get an understanding of this. The now Minister for Transport—the member for West Swan—is the minister responsible for the execution of that project. That project is actually underway now. There are workers on the site now, and we are paying money out for it right this second. The minister has twice written to the opposition and asked, “Can I read the business case? Can I read the project development plan?” for a project that she is responsible for delivering. What do members think the answer is? No—no! I mean, I would think that the Leader of the Opposition, who is on such important duties elsewhere in the Parliament, would have thought about that before he raised the question of business cases in this chamber during his rambling presentation.

Dr D.J. Honey: Did it ever exist?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is a good question. Is there a business case for the Forrestfield–Airport Link?

Mr W.R. Marmion: Guess who would have done it—the department! Just ask them for it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am sorry; I will explain the problem. It is that the former minister attached it to a cabinet submission, making it a cabinet document, so we cannot get access to it.

Dr D.J. Honey: Of course you can.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The member for Cottesloe interjects, “Of course you can.” I am sorry to explain the law of Western Australia, but it says that for 20 years cabinet documents can be accessed only with the approval of the government that dealt with the documents. After 10 years an FOI application can be made, but normally they are only released through the ordinary processes after, I think, 20 years. So, no, member for Cottesloe, we cannot get access to that document, even though we are building the project right now—today. The member for Scarborough comes into the chamber every day but never asks the Minister for Transport any questions, and we can see why.

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The problem is that the minister would have to say, “Well, I can’t answer that question about the project that I’m responsible for because I don’t have access to the project development plan or the business case, because you, the Liberal opposition, won’t let me have it.” Do members opposite understand how bizarre that is? And then the opposition came in here today not saying that we do not release business cases, but saying they do not like the business cases we release. I mean, that is just ridiculous! Okay; the opposition does not like the business cases we release—well, you know, whistle! But at least we get on and do what we are supposed to do and release them. The opposition is not releasing the business case for a project that we are building and are responsible for!

So, for example, what were the considerations on the very, very critical issue of going under the airport runway? Because let us understand, members, the government of Western Australia has indemnified the airport, airport operators and users for damage to the main runway when it is tunnelled under—I think that portion of the works has now finished. But think about that. We gave that guarantee, but we do not know why the guarantee was given, the nature of the guarantee or the circumstances of the engineering questions around that guarantee.

Mr W.R. Marmion: Does the department?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, because you will not let us have the document.

Mr W.R. Marmion: The department did it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am sorry; you do not understand. The moment a document goes to cabinet, the department cannot touch it again.

Mr W.R. Marmion: Yes, but the people running the show know it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is the most ridiculous interjection I have ever heard! This is a former transport minister—a man who was part of the decision-making that led to the —

Mr W.R. Marmion: I never wrote a business case! The department writes the business case!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Neither have I, member!

Mr W.R. Marmion interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Would you just stop interjecting—I am going to go off my tree at you! You are so stupid! This is the most ridiculous interjection in the entire world! He was the transport minister responsible for the project. He is the former transport minister who now stops the release of the business case. He will not let that document out. I cannot read it because the member for Nedlands will not let me. Let us understand that. And then he says, “Well, I didn’t write it”! Well, if you did not write it, let me read it. I mean, you are complaining that you do not like the business cases that we have prepared that you have read, but you will not let me read the one you prepared!

Mr W.R. Marmion: I haven’t read any of yours.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: He was the Minister for Transport, and now he says he never read the business case for a project that he was responsible for!

Several members interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: What a joke! What a joke!

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: The minister is misleading the house. The member did not say that, and I want him to withdraw.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price): There is no point of order. Members, please keep the noise down.

Debate Resumed

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: What a joke! The member for Nedlands should be embarrassed! I bet he intends to vote in favour of this resolution! What an embarrassment! No wonder the member has urgent work outside the chamber—no wonder—because he cannot stand the fact that he was the Minister for Transport responsible for this project.

Mr A. Krsticevic: He’s back.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Oh, he is back? Excellent! I tell you what, member for Nedlands, you take the call in a minute and you tell us why I am not allowed to read the business case for the Forrestfield–Airport Link. That is all I want to know. Why am I not allowed to read the project development plan? What is in there that is so embarrassing to the Liberal Party that it will not release it, even after it lost government in the largest swing in the state’s history and got reduced to this rabble on the other side that we see every day? Can members opposite explain to the chamber, the people, the journalists and everybody else what is so shaming in that document that they are so embarrassed about and will not allow to become public? What an embarrassment! What a ridiculous

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thing! Members opposite are talking about accountability. They lost the damn election, yet their dead hand still sits there on the state, refusing to be accountable even in opposition. What a joke!

For Perth Freight Link, the former government bulldozed pristine native vegetation in the southern suburbs.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The former government unnecessarily bulldozed it against the recommendation of the department just so it could destroy the area and say —

Ms S.F. McGurk: Spiteful!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Spiteful!

It did it so that it could then say that the road had to go ahead because everything had been bulldozed and could not be turned into a park. That was the former government's plan. It had nothing to do with the construction of the project. It was spite and vindictiveness because it thought it was going to lose the election and wanted to put a big scar through the southern suburbs.

[Quorum formed.]

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Members opposite bulldozed the native vegetation in the southern suburbs even though they thought they would lose the election and it had nothing to do with building the road. I will make something else clear: the member for Bateman thought that building Roe 8 was a waste of time. His view was that Roe 8 and the tunnel had to be done. He knew that Roe 8 did not reach the port. Everybody who looked at this issue knew that Roe 8 by itself was a pointless project because it did not get to the port. The port was miles away! I think it was 30 sets of traffic lights away. It might have been 20, but it was a stupendous number of traffic lights that needed to be got through.

The then government also said that traffic on Leach Highway could not be restricted because it did not make any sense. However, it restricted traffic on Canning Highway and South Street. Its business case stated that it was okay to restrict traffic on South Street and Canning Highway, but it was not okay to do it on Leach Highway. That was an interesting issue. Members should remember that the road did not get to the port. If it is a freight link, you would think that it would link to the freight! We would really love to see this business case, and so would the people of Western Australia. According to the Liberal government of the time this was a critical decision of the people. Government members campaigned in the southern suburbs saying that they were the only ones to be trusted to build it. That is what they said! If members opposite were so proud of that project, why have they continued to hide the business case 18 months after they lost the election.

Dr D.J. Honey: We're waiting to see if you're going to —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: We are never going to build it!

The member for Cottesloe is so dumb on this issue!

Withdrawal of Remark

Dr D.J. HONEY: That is an unparliamentary term, Mr Acting Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price): There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Let me make it clear: it released two individual pages of traffic modelling. They showed that 100 000 extra trucks would travel through the member for Cottesloe's electorate if Roe 8 and Roe 9 were built. Do members remember that? If Roe 8 and the tunnel were built, 100 000 trucks a year would go north through the member for Cottesloe's electorate, which is more than if it had done nothing. If the government had not built Roe 8 or the outer harbour and had just let the existing port continue to increase, 100 000 fewer trucks would have used the member for Cottesloe's electorate —

Dr D.J. Honey: What are you doing to get stuff into the port?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Cottesloe!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The member does not understand. I am explaining to him that if Roe 8 and Roe 9 had been built, truck traffic in Cottesloe would have increased; it would not have been reduced. Does the member understand that? That was the traffic modelling done by his government, which only ever released two pages.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Cottesloe!

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 31 October 2018]

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Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Bill Johnston; Dr Tony Buti; Dr David Honey; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Zak Kirkup; Mr Terry Healy

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The previous government tabled two pages in this chamber, which stated that 100 000 extra trucks would go north through the electorate of Cottesloe if the highway were built, not if it were not. That is comparing doing nothing with building Roe 8 and Roe 9. If Roe 8 and Roe 9 had been built, 100 000 extra vehicles would have used the member for Cottesloe's electorate—trucks!

When he asks, "Where would the trucks have gone?", they would not have gone through Cottesloe. That is the point. They would have used other roads. Building the highway would have increased the number of trucks travelling north. I cannot believe it. He is the only member in the state of Western Australia who wants 100 000 extra heavy vehicles in his electorate. I have plenty of heavy vehicles in my electorate because I have Roe 5, which is the boundary for the electorate of the Acting Speaker (Mr S.J. Price). We know what truck noise is like. Part of the Kewdale industrial estate is in my electorate, so I know what heavy traffic is like. The member for Cottesloe has come in here and said that he does not want affordable housing in his electorate or high rise —

Mr C.J. Tallentire: He doesn't care about North Fremantle!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: He does not care about North Fremantle.

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: The dumb minister is misinforming the house. That is completely untrue. I have not said that. Several members interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: We were told that was parliamentary.

Ms J.J. Shaw: Point of order, Mr Acting Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price): I will deal with this one first. There is no point of order. Member for Swan Hills.

Ms J.J. SHAW: The minister did not refer to the member for Cottesloe as dumb. He said that he was dumb on this matter. He was talking about the knowledge of a particular subject as opposed to a characteristic that the member for Cottesloe may or may not possess.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, member. That is not a point of order. Before you carry on, minister, can everyone settle down and allow the minister to give his contribution in silence without interjecting from any side. That would be wonderful.

Debate Resumed

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It beggars belief that any member would come into the chamber and ask for an extra 100 000 heavy vehicles to go through their electorate, but that is what the member for Cottesloe wants to do. That is up to him. I do not criticise him for this; I am just surprised at it. I do not understand why the member for Cottesloe opposes affordable housing in his electorate. When I say "affordable housing", I am talking about high-rise buildings.

Dr D.J. Honey: It's a lie!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is not a lie.

Dr D.J. Honey: It's a lie!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: With respect, Mr Acting Speaker, I wonder if you could ask the member to withdraw the word "lie".

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price): He was not actually aiming it at you. He was just making a general comment.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Fair enough. If that is the standard, I am happy to accept the standard. Normally in the past —

The ACTING SPEAKER: There is no point of order. However, can we raise the level of debate and get away from personal accusations that are coming close to being included. Then we will have to start ruling on stuff.

Debate Resumed

Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Bill Johnston; Dr Tony Buti; Dr David Honey; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Zak Kirkup; Mr Terry Healy

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I will reply only to interjections from now on. If I am not interjected on, I will not make any inflammatory commentary. We will get back to the extraordinary hypocrisy that the Liberal Party demonstrates.

Liberal Party members come in here complaining about accountability, yet they will not release to the people of this state the business case for the Roe Highway extension, which is not being built. What is it hiding here? It is a road that does not exist and that we are not building. They are in opposition, but they will not release the business case. What is so embarrassing in the business case that leads to that decision? What do they think the people of Western Australia would not like in that business case? It does not make sense that after the Liberal Party has lost the election and, as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, the road was cancelled, with the support of the commonwealth government, and other projects were implemented in its place, it still will not release the business case. Then members opposite have the audacity to come into the chamber and claim a lack of accountability, not because the Labor government does not give them the business case, but because they are not happy with the business case that they have been given. I accept that the Liberal Party may not understand the business cases provided by the Labor government. That is fair enough. I do not criticise them for their lack of imagination. That is up to them. I criticise them for their behaviour. Their behaviour in this matter is appalling. Why is it that the opposition cannot release the business case for Muja AB, which is now shut and the project finished completely? Why can they not release the business case for a road that has not and will not be built?

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: Your own minister signed off on Muja AB.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That falsehood has been perpetuated. No, go and read, member, when —

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, I am trying not to. The member for Dawesville makes it very easy for us to be personal, but I will just make a point. The member for Hillarys has had senior roles in governments in two states. He should read the Langoulant report. It says that prior to the change of government in 2008, Synergy wanted to further the life of Muja AB, but it could not do that without getting government support. This is on the public record. It sought bids and it had 11 bids. As it happens, I know what was in those 11 bids, but because of the way I found out what was in them, I cannot talk about it. Let me make it clear that none of those bids ever led to a submission to cabinet for approval to spend money. The idea that before the election the government of Western Australia approved action by Synergy for the refurbishment of that project is simply wrong. Read the Langoulant report. I can tell members that in May 2009 the government of Western Australia, then led by Hon Colin Barnett, made the decision. On the day he made the announcement, he came out and criticised the Labor government for not having done the refurbishment. Let us also go on to understand why the Liberal Party will not release that business case. On one side, Synergy, which put the plant in and the land underneath the plant, had the technical expertise to run the plant, and \$250 million of borrowings. Its 50–50 joint venture partner put in \$82 000 for 50 per cent. All the asset and \$250 million of borrowings guaranteed by the taxpayer was the other 50 per cent. What is more, of the money contributed to the joint venture, \$110 million went directly to the joint venture partner as an engineering contract. No wonder it was prepared to put \$82 000 on the table for 50 per cent of a project that it then got paid \$110 million to do. Where is the business case? Even now, all these years later, we still have never seen the business case for that project. As I said, the plant is shut. I do not understand why the Liberal Party will not release the business case after the whole thing has finished. What is it hiding in this?

Then Liberal Party members come in here and complain about accountability, not because we will not release business cases, but because they do not like them when they read them. How ridiculous can they be? They refer to broken promises and increased taxes. I would love members opposite to look in a mirror occasionally. I remind them of all those land tax increases that they had when they were in government. I am sure that this is an interesting one for most members in the chamber. In the second term of the Barnett government, the first bill that every Minister for Finance introduced to Parliament was a tax increase. Is that not bizarre? Interestingly, I think two of the three or three of the four members in their inaugural speeches, including the members for Bateman and Riverton, talked about lowering taxes as one of the objectives they had for entering Parliament, yet the first thing they did as the Minister for Finance was bring a bill to Parliament to put up taxes.

I remember the member for Carine's contribution to one of the debates about justifying it. He said that we had to support the tax increases because the community was demanding services. Because the community demanded services, the Liberal government had to put up taxes, otherwise it would not be able to afford to pay for them. That is the truth. I used to make the point in those debates that, intellectually, absolutely nothing is wrong with putting up taxes, but I am not saying that I am seeking to increase taxes. It is just bizarre when members join Parliament and say that the reason they have come to the chamber is to keep taxes down, and then the first thing they do when they have any chance to do anything with taxes is put them up. That is the point I am making. There is a word for that. I think the word is hypocrisy. I am not sure whether we are allowed to use it anymore. I am never sure what the rules are. That is what I would call that behaviour. Budget after budget, when the revenue was falling out of

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the sky for this lot, they still put up taxes. It was the biggest increase in state revenue in the state's history during the period of the high prices for commodities; the royalties were falling out of a tree and the then government literally did not know what to do with the money, but it still managed to spend it all.

This is amazing. The now Premier went to the 2013 election and outlined the cuts that we would take to government expenditure to fit our new promises into the budget. The Liberal Party went out and criticised him, calling him mad. Members opposite asked why we would outline cuts to pay for expenditure. That was their attitude to financial management. No wonder they had to come back year after year and increase land tax. They used to say that it was okay because they were increasing land tax, but only on the large landlords. One day in one of the debates I asked whichever Minister for Finance was increasing land tax that year what his modelling was for the flowthrough effects on small businesses. As we all know, on costs are passed through to the tenant. They are not paid for by the landlord. The minister said, "What?" I said, "What is your modelling for the fact that when you increase the land tax on the big retail shopping malls, the landlord is going to pass the land tax on to their tenants and that is already written into their rental agreements?" He said, "What?" I mean, that was the detailed business case that it did for increasing land taxes three years out of four when they were in the second term of government. The member for Carine says that they had to do it because the community demanded more services.

I again go back to the first term of the former government. The current member for West Swan, the current Treasurer, the current Minister for Tourism, the current Premier, others and I would come in here and say that the government could not just spend the money, because the high commodity prices were going to end. I remember when the high commodity prices ended, the member for Riverton said, "Oh, what, we are supposed to be Nostradamus? Nobody predicted that the prices would come down." I never knew when they were going to come down and I never knew what level they were going to come down to; I just knew that they were going to come down because every commodity boom for the length of human history has ended in oversupply and, therefore, low prices. It is called the free market; it is an extraordinary thing. We would wonder whether the Liberal Party that came to Parliament telling us that it is the party of free markets would have known that. It would have understood that the revenue base was under stress. Remember, there is another issue that it never took account of. It never explained, acknowledged or was accountable on this and it never understood that the inevitable result of the GST system was that three years after we got the revenue, we lost the revenue. The problem was that the previous government had three years to spend the money like drunken sailors and that is what it did. That is why it put up expenditure in this state by the largest increase in the history of the state. It is extraordinary. Think about this: the highest taxing government in the state's history was a Liberal government. The highest spending government in this state's history was a Liberal government. It is just bizarre. The thing that the Liberal Party says it does not do is what it did, and the Labor Party sat in opposition saying, "If you continue to do this, you are going to ruin the state." And guess what? It did.

Finally, after three years of domestic economic recession, we are out of it. We are not yet growing, but we are now back to zero. Liberal Party members often come in here and say, "Look, the figures and statistics for our economy are bad; it's not as good as the other states." They never say, "It's because it's better than when we were in government. Yes, the state is growing after years of neglect and losses in our term of government." Yes, it had that massive commodity price cycle that delivered an enormous rain of money that it did not know what to do with and it wasted it on projects that were bizarre and dysfunctional. Everybody who lives in the eastern suburbs curses the previous government every day when they try to drive to West Perth through Elizabeth Quay. The other day I did my usual rat run around the side and through the middle of Elizabeth Quay and the bloody road had been stopped and I could not use it. That was bad. I had to go back out to The Esplanade and was delayed further. It is a real problem. Talk about business cases. Everybody who lives in the eastern suburbs said, "If you cut Riverside Drive, Manning Road and Labouchere Road in South Perth will get chopped up even more." And guess what? That is exactly what happened. Residents in my electorate are always complaining these days. Manning Road has always been bad, but it is terrible now because all the traffic that was pushed off Riverside Drive has to go somewhere, so it goes down Manning Road and up the freeway. That is exactly what the Labor opposition said was going to happen. Where was the business case? It did not exist—the \$500 million of taxpayers' money. Then there is the bus station. The most expensive bus station in the world is the Northbridge underground bus station. Think about that. Where is the business case for the Northbridge bus station? The thing is built; why will the former government not release it? This is ridiculous. Talk about lack of accountability, hiding the truth and being scared of the facts.

These are the things the Liberal Party did. a classic one is Perth Stadium. The stadium was part-financed with a private financial investment and \$700 million was laid off for the builders to borrow from a commercial bank. The previous government would not tell us how much that was going to cost. I found a footnote in the *Annual Report on State Finances* that said it had to calculate the effective interest rate for all financing leases. I just asked, "What is the effective interest rate referring to the footnote?" Who the hell reads footnotes? As it happened, I did. I found out that the interest rate on the PFI for the stadium was 7.7 per cent. Think about that. The previous government was then able to claim that that \$700 million was not part of state debt, so it artificially

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dropped the state debt down, but the state still had to pay the money on the debt. We still had to pay the debt back and we still had to pay the interest. The interest rate was over double what it would have been if it had been borrowed from the Treasury Corporation. Not only did the previous government have this artifice, trying to hide the debt as a financing lease through the construction process, but it then had the audacity to pay twice as much for the resulting debt. The taxpayers were—I am not sure if I am allowed to say the word—lied to, and then they were deceived. They were lied to about the extent of the debt and then they were deceived on the interest rate. Think about it. The former government resisted for nearly two years to tell us the truth about that. Estimates after estimates, questions in the chamber and in questions on notice, the previous government would never tell us the truth. It was only when I found this footnote in the bottom of the *Annual Report on State Finances* that I finally found a way to get the information.

Then there was another one—a large project in the hills, member for Kalamunda. The previous government paid, I think, an 11 per cent interest rate because it did it through a PFI. Some of these decisions were appalling. Then it deliberately would not tell the truth. We then have the classic story, of course, of the Perth Children's Hospital—another disaster in which the former government would not be transparent or honest about what was happening. Remember, members, that that hospital was supposed to open before the 2013 election. It did not open before the 2017 election, but when it originally announced it, the former government said that it would be done by the 2013 election. The hospital was four years late and the previous government was never honest or transparent about it. Again, we went into estimates committees a number of times and it would not provide any information about any of that. There were so many occasions. Another one includes the arrangement with Premier Coal, in which the former government gave a loan to Premier Coal and would not tell us about it, but it was disclosed by Premier Coal in its annual accounts. Again, it would have remained secret to the people of Western Australia except it was disclosed by the counterparty, not because of any transparency or honesty by the Liberal government, but because the accounting rules of the counterparty required it to be made public. Why would the Liberal government hide it? It just shows us how silly it was. It was trying to hide the transaction and obviously did not realise that it was going to be disclosed in any case, otherwise it would have had no reason to claim that it was commercial-in-confidence and therefore not going to be released in both estimates and in this chamber.

The travesty of the Serco contract at Fiona Stanley Hospital will cost taxpayers tens of millions of dollars virtually forever. It is a 30-year contract. Liberal Party members think that they are somehow good businesspeople. I used to ask businesspeople, "How many times do you do a service contract for 30 years?" I cannot find anyone in business who does a 30-year service contract. Five years, perhaps. But 30 years? That means we are locked in. That means the government of Western Australia is excluded from getting any upside from any efficiency for 30 years. If new technology comes along that allows work to be done in a different way, the government of Western Australia cannot benefit from that—only the other party can—because the former government put the contract out for 30 years. What an old-fashioned approach! It is the most ridiculous Thatcherite style of approach, in which all the benefit is given to the other party and the taxpayer pays higher costs. If the former government was saying that that would cost Western Australian taxpayers less, it would have had an argument, but it costs more. It increases the cost and we get no flexibility. We cannot change our circumstance following change. Thirty years ago, nobody had even heard of an iPhone, so imagine what technology is going to be developed in the next 30 years. We have been excluded from the benefit of all those new things because of the contract entered into by the former government, when the member for Dawesville was giving advice. This is the thing.

Mr W.R. Marmion: It's all your fault.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is not only his fault, it is yours as well.

The lack of transparency was highlighted by the Auditor General constantly during the former government's time. Read the Auditor General's report on some of the major asset purchases and other things. That was a government that thought that accountability was for fools. It was a government that would sell land and then not explain how it had come to the price. That was one of the Auditor General's criticisms. The Auditor General made it clear that the former government needed to provide more information on the sale. Then there are all those questions around occasions in which it had conflicts of interest. The member for Scarborough's involvement in the Scarborough Beach redevelopment has never been explained to us. Remember that she was involved in the media event for that announcement for a \$48 million public investment at the Scarborough beachfront. Where does she own property? Why was she involved in that?

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: As I was saying before I was rudely interrupted by the dinner break, we are debating a bizarre, incredible motion moved by the Liberal Party—the party that fails to understand that it was defeated because it was rejected by the people of this state. One of the reasons it was rejected by the people of this state is that it was not open, transparent or honest with the people of this state. It is just extraordinary that the Leader of the Opposition came into this place and moved this motion. I have only a few more things to say.

Extract from *Hansard*

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Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Bill Johnston; Dr Tony Buti; Dr David Honey; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Zak Kirkup; Mr Terry Healy

Ms J.M. Freeman: Mr Acting Speaker —

The ACTING SPEAKER: I am trying to remember the name of your seat, member.

Ms J.M. Freeman: It is Mirrabooka.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I call the member for Mirrabooka.

MS J.M. FREEMAN (Mirrabooka) [7.02 pm]: You should remember the name of my seat, Mr Acting Speaker, because it is my seat —

[Quorum formed.]

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Well may you remember the seat of Mirrabooka, Mr Acting Speaker, because it was the seat of Mirrabooka that the previous Liberal government betrayed. It broke promises to the constituents of that seat. It was not accountable. It did not deliver the gold standard on transparency. Well may you remember the seat of Mirrabooka because the people of Mirrabooka certainly remember the broken promises of the previous Liberal government. They remember that in 2011, with much fanfare and glory, the government announced MAX light rail. I will speak really loudly so I can be heard in my own space. It was a rail to end all rails, to deliver rail to the people in that eastern corridor who needed an efficient form of transport. It had been determined through years of great study from all sorts of transport authorities. The government announced it with much fanfare and said it was going to be fully funded and fully costed. The government said it would deliver light rail into Mirrabooka by 2018.

Mr M. Hughes: I remember that!

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: The member for Kalamunda would remember it because he was the principal of a school in the Mirrabooka area. It was delivered in such a way to suggest that it was going to be fantastic. It was out there on the advertisements that the government did for the Bigger Picture campaign. There was a big release of the campaign with a mock-up picture and a mock-up of the project but it did not look like Mirrabooka to me because every person in the picture was white!

Mr M. Hughes: And carrying a tennis racket?

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Yes, that is right.

Dr D.J. Honey: It's okay to be white!

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: It is okay, yes. Would the member for Cottesloe like to say that a bit louder? In fact, I am very proud of my white heritage but I also recently saw the author, whose name escapes me at the moment, of the book that says why I am no longer explaining about racism to white people. She talked about the insidiousness of racism in representation, and that picture was a really great representation of racism. There was great fanfare, great ads and a great mock-up of the plan, yet it was no reflection of the people to whom the project was going to be delivered. The government did not need to do it because it was never going to deliver that project to the people of Mirrabooka. It was the first big broken promise to the people of Mirrabooka, along with the taxes and all the other aspects, including land tax in an area that was being developed. MAX was going to link Mirrabooka to the city.

I have an extract from the *Hansard* of Tuesday, 18 October 2011 in which Mr M.W. Sutherland, who became the Speaker, asked the Minister for Transport —

Can the minister please update the house on the planning of the Liberal–National government's light rail project ...

The Minister for Transport at the time—I am not sure whether he was also the Treasurer; he went on and off being Treasurer at different periods—responded with great aplomb what he was going to deliver to the community. Then, on Sunday, 2 September 2012, a press release launches the —

... centrepiece of the state government's commitment to public transport—a new light rail system to be called Metro Area Express or MAX.

The announcement was made at Polytechnic West on the Balga campus. I recall that the local member was not invited. The member for Girrawheen was probably the local member at that point in 2012. Government members stood there and said, "This is what we're going to do." They had not spoken to Polytechnic West about it, which was to build a particular facility because that was where they were going to put the depot.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: No, the member would not have been invited.

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Mr Buswell said that the government was going to start construction in 2016. I suppose what was so galling about it was that, at the launch, the Premier stood there and said, “You’ve got to come and buy land in this area. You’ve got to buy land.” Because of that and because of changes to the planning laws in that period, we ended up with very large developments near Balga TAFE. There are something like 12 units in some developments in inner suburban streets. They were told—it was constantly pushed to the community—that the Liberal government was going to deliver MAX light rail.

Mr D.T. Punch: They got people to speculate.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: They got people to speculate.

Mr D.T. Punch: It was shameful.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: It was shameful, member for Bunbury. There was no transparency or accountability; there were broken promises and a failure for the people who were betrayed. The people of Western Australia were betrayed, but more so the people of Mirrabooka—people invested.

One of the really outrageous things for that community was that the member for Girrawheen, when that area was in her electorate, and I, when I came into the position, and the previous member had worked with the City of Stirling on the Mirrabooka revitalisation project. It included joining up Mirrabooka Avenue with Sudbury Road, which goes along beside the bus station, and putting a road through what was quite a lot of land that was mostly owned by the Department of Housing. That was going to open up this area for development, after a few buildings that had been bought by the City of Stirling had been knocked down. It would have brought connectivity to the township of Mirrabooka. That was delayed. Why? Because the former government had to replan the road to make it large enough to put the MAX light rail down it.

Mr D.T. Punch: Through the centre.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Through the centre of the road, member for Bunbury. That revitalisation project would have taken off during the period when the economy was booming, land was difficult to get and people wanted to build office blocks. It was delayed because the Western Australian Planning Commission would not let the City of Stirling put the road through unless it was planned to put this light rail through it. Roads were changed, things were delayed and money was spent. I understand upwards of around \$30 million was spent on not delivering this project to those people.

Mr D.T. Punch: On not delivering.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: On not delivering this project to Mirrabooka. But opposition members are telling us about accountability and talking about broken promises and trust! This was appalling for the people of Mirrabooka.

I will quote some of the articles written at the time. On 11 March 2015 it all started to turn pear-shaped. The first article was headed “MAX plan backtrack may derail developers”, and it reads —

The State Government’s change of heart over the MAX light rail system has left a raft of developers with compromised plans for property projects along the city’s northern corridor.

Another headline was “Back on Track: New Road Worrier’s City Vision”. We then had a new Minister for Transport, Dean Nalder, and he wanted to shelve parts of the MAX light rail project. The article reads —

Mr Nalder, a first-term MP promoted to the Cabinet after Troy Buswell’s mental health breakdown, said he was “very committed” to MAX, but a rethink was needed.

“A rethink”! That was in 2014, and the project was supposed to commence in 2016.

We used to ask questions in this Parliament. People kept telling me that I was a doubter and a negative person. They asked what my problem was and why I did not want this delivered to the community of Mirrabooka. The now opposition spokesperson for Treasury said then —

“My sense is that the community see the Mirrabooka into the city (line) as the priority as it deals with the congestion issue,” ...

On 10 December 2014, Colin Barnett released the news that the Perth MAX light rail project was firmly on hold, but he also said MAX was not dead. He used to sit in here and say, “Trust me; we’re going to deliver that to the people of Mirrabooka.” The former government could not deliver because its fully funded, fully costed promise was based on getting half the money from the federal government.

Mr D.T. Punch: What a surprise!

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: What a surprise!

Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Bill Johnston; Dr Tony Buti; Dr David Honey; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Zak Kirkup; Mr Terry Healy

In 2014, after going to an election in 2013, after announcing MAX light rail in 2011, after standing in front of the Mirrabooka bus station in 2013 during an election campaign with all the bells and whistles and a big map showing where it was going to be, and standing there with the candidate for Mirrabooka, who should be ashamed, they never apologised to the community that it was an enormous —

Mr M. Hughes: Hoax.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Thank you, member for Kalamunda. It was a hoax. But it gets worse. The former government then refused to give material to *The West Australian* under freedom of information that it had been granted by the Information Commissioner. *The West Australian* had requested FOI documents about MAX light rail and the airport line, and about what was discussed in the lead-up to the election. The Information Commissioner, after an appeal, ordered that the documents be released. The then Premier and the then government appealed to the Supreme Court. An article in *The West Australian* on 16 June 2015 says —

Treasurer Mike Nahan —

The now opposition leader, who moved this motion —

has defended the use of public money on a Supreme Court challenge to the Information Commissioner, ...

He said that those documents should not be released because they were related to election commitments in the lead-up to an election.

Mr D.T. Punch: Where's the transparency?

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Where is the transparency? The now Leader of the Opposition was hiding from the community the reasons that the MAX light rail project had fallen over and was not going forward.

An article from 15 June 2015 states —

University of Notre Dame senior politics lecturer Martin Drum said the Government was going to extraordinary lengths to avoid scrutiny of the airport line and MAX.

In that article, the then Leader of the Opposition said the then government was being secretive and deceptive. It goes on. An article appeared in *The West Australian* on 25 July 2013 titled "Barnett 'in a bid to avoid rail scrutiny'". Then there was in an editorial in *The West Australian* on 25 July 2013 titled "What have you got to hide, Mr Premier?" Then an article on Thursday, 18 July 2013, titled "Barnett closed to being open" states —

Last week we asked if Mr Barnett would repay money spent planning MAX and advertising it in the taxpayer funded "Bigger Picture" ...

That was given the government's logic of denying the FOI claim. What is really interesting is that the Supreme Court was not persuaded. The decision in *West Australian Newspapers Ltd and Department of the Premier and Cabinet [2015] WAICmr9* states —

I am not persuaded that the application of the Caretaker Conventions to the particular facts of this matter results in the disputed documents failing to be documents of an agency.

That was for the purpose of releasing those documents and it found that they should be released. The former government came to the people of Mirrabooka and Western Australia and said, "We're going to deliver this by 2018." It then delayed it to 2019. Then it delayed it to 2021. When it went to the election in 2017, it still lied to the people of Mirrabooka. It knew it was never going to build MAX at that time. There was no transparency. In 2017, it still maintained that it was going to build MAX.

In a letter to me on 5 November 2015, the then Minister for Transport, Hon Dean Nalder, said —

As you may be aware, the Minister recently requested a review of the MAX light rail project, in line with the change in the State's fiscal circumstances. The deferment of MAX light rail has provided the opportunity to consider the cost-effective alternative use of bus ... transit.

So we went from light rail to a bus. We went from an iconic project, with the government telling people to speculate and buy land in the seat of Mirrabooka, to a bus!

Mr D.T. Punch: From excitement to disappointment.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Yes; we went from excitement to disappointment. The government went from promises to broken promises. That is the track record of this Liberal opposition. That is the track record of this Leader of the Opposition. That is the track record of Dean Nalder, the opposition spokesperson for Treasury. In no way can we support this motion, because it is hypocritical for the opposition to criticise this government. The people who break promises in this place are those on the other side.

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MR S.K. L'ESTRANGE (Churchlands) [7.20 pm]: It has been very, very interesting to listen to Labor members talking about accountability and transparency. All of their speeches essentially played the blame game. They focused all of their attention on the past.

Mr D.T. Punch interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: What matters to the people of Western Australia, member for Bunbury, is how they are being impacted today by the state of the Western Australian economy and by the conditions that confront them, with very low wages growth, their own personal debt levels —

Ms J.M. Freeman: Unemployment went up to 24 per cent in Mirrabooka under your watch!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): Member for Mirrabooka, we heard you in complete silence. I expect that to continue, because we should be prepared to hear what people say. If you do not want to listen to it, go outside.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The member for Mirrabooka talked about broken promises. The gall of the member for Mirrabooka to talk about broken promises when members opposite are in government now! Labor went to an election on a platform of the now Premier promising and committing to the people of Western Australia, prior to the election, that there would be no new taxes and there would be no increases to taxes under his government.

Mr W.J. Johnston: That's not true.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: It is reported in the paper, minister.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Show me!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: We will show the minister after this speech.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, minister!

Mr W.J. Johnston: What date?

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: We will get one of the other members to show the minister. He can google it; it is there. It is a pledge that only the Treasurer would not commit to, but the Premier did. He was the frontman for why members opposite are all sitting there now. He was out there saying that there would be no increases to taxes and no new taxes. He has completely backflipped on that several times since Labor came into power. That is the first bit, member for Mirrabooka.

The second bit he committed to was to pay off debt like a mortgage. The Labor government has come into this place and has cranked up the forward estimates of debt by an extra \$3 billion. Everyone knows that the forward estimates presented by the former government a year out from that election would have had us in the twenties of billions and paying it off. Members opposite know that. Blind Freddy could have worked out that the GST was going to be resolved at some point in time.

Several members interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The member for Kalamunda is sucking up the member for Fremantle's deluded belief that the state Labor government got the actual GST turnaround. It had nothing to do with the Labor government; it had nothing at all to do with it. Members opposite can do whatever they like because they do not care about the people outside. In this Parliament bubble, they keep believing their own rhetoric. We all know for a fact that it was driven by a Western Australian senator, who got the support of the backbench and then pushed the federal Liberal cabinet. He then got the then Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, to agree to it. The federal Treasurer at the time, Scott Morrison, agreed to it, and with the support of all the Western Australian federal members of Parliament, they pushed the case for change and now it is happening. For members opposite to say they got the GST is absolute rubbish. We prosecuted the case all through the last term of the Barnett government.

Mr M. Hughes interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Sometimes, just like the member for Kalamunda coming into this place, things take time. The Liberals in Canberra are delivering and it had nothing to do with him.

Let us get back to the topic of this debate. In essence, this debate is about accountability. I can tell members now that when in government, accountability is something the government owns. If members opposite are prosecuting a case that the former government did not own its accountability, fine; they can prosecute that case. But right now the people of Western Australia are interested in this government's accountability to them, not to a debate and playing party politics in this chamber and deciding they are better than us. That is not what this is about.

Mr M. Hughes interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The member for Kalamunda should know better than that. As I heard the member for Mirrabooka say, if he is a former principal in Mirrabooka, he should know perfectly well that the people in

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Mirrabooka are doing it tough. He should know perfectly well that the kids out there need better frontline services in health, in education and in law and order. I can tell him right now, they are not getting it under the watch of the member for Kalamunda. He should be ashamed. He should go to his former students in Mirrabooka and apologise for his government's deceitful election campaign and its behaviour since it has been elected, when people are hurting and the government is turning its back on the people.

In question time the Premier said, "Is that all you've got?" When we were prosecuting the case that the poor business owners at Picabar in Northbridge needed to be looked after as small business operators, he turned across the chamber and said, "Is that all you've got? Is that your big issue?" I looked at him, member for Kalamunda, and said, "It's a big issue for those two business owners, Premier." He stayed silent. I can tell you right now, the arrogance in this place and the arrogance in how they are treating the people of Western Australia will cut through to our benefit, so keep doing it. Do not stop, member for Pilbara. Get out there and tell everyone in the Pilbara that everything is fine. He should keep telling them that he is doing a good job.

A member interjected.

Point of Order

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I believe the member for Pilbara is interjecting from a seat that is not his.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): Yes. You are aware of that rule, are you not? If you want to interject—from your own seat please. Carry on, member for Churchlands.

Debate Resumed

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. The member for Kalamunda used the term "hoax". The real hoax is that the government said it would pay off debt, but it is not. The real hoax is that the government said it would not raise taxes, but it did. I will tell you what another real hoax is—the biggest one of all, proven by a 9.3 per cent swing in the electorate of Darling Range—that the government said it would keep fees and charges to inflation. What an absolute untruth. It is absolutely wrong. The government has cranked fees and charges up over 13 times the rate of inflation in two budgets within the context of one year. The government is not being accountable to what it said it would do.

As shadow Minister for Health, I will focus on some of the issues close to my heart that are to do with the health service in Western Australia. I can tell government members right now that they promised they would deliver better frontline services if they were elected. We are not seeing that. People are experiencing the opposite of what they are prosecuting. Their accountability is to them. Accountability is not playing the blame game; it is owning responsibility. Accountability is that when something goes wrong, the government actually does something to fix it. That is what accountability is and I think members opposite need to redefine what they think accountability is. It is not simply getting up and telling everyone in Western Australia that things are bad because the former government was a bad government. That is not a reason; that is not members opposite being accountable to the people who elected them.

Mr D.T. Punch interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Show some responsibility, member for Bunbury, and actually demonstrate accountability to them. I can tell members right now, we had a very, very damaging Corruption and Crime Commission report into the North Metropolitan Health Service earlier this year. Nobody missed that, but I will read members a couple of quotes from that report. Page 1 of the CCC report states that the department's policies and procedures were ineffective, warning signs went unexplored and a culture of fear left staff reluctant to speak up. It further states that the health department's own investigation failed to address the conduct of any particular public officer and did nothing to deal with the officers responsible. So what do we do about that? Members can play the blame game if they want. We all know it started under the watch of former Minister for Health Jim McGinty.

Mr M. Hughes interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Yes, it did, member for Kalamunda. Do members know what we did when that report came out? The media release I put out was not about the past because we accepted that it happened under our watch. It also happened under a part of Labor's watch under former Minister McGinty. That is a given. It is not the fact that it was terrible, it was disgraceful or it should have been picked up earlier, but the report came out under this government's watch. What is the responsibility of government? It is to be accountable for fixing it, not playing the blame game and trying to push it all aside. That is not what the government should be doing. I put out a press release that asked whether the minister would commit to a top-down interrogation of how contracts are being managed right now. That is being accountable.

I also said that the minister should order an immediate review and rewrite of policies and procedures that were seen to be wanting because of that CCC report. That should have been enacted straightaway. This is not rocket science, but the government did not do it. I said that the minister should look at holding senior public officers

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accountable for any warning signs that were left unexplored. That is accountability. I also asked what additional processes Minister Cook has implemented to allow staff to report their suspicions without fear of reprisal. That is what I think the government should do. I gave the government the blueprint. What do government members do? They keep blaming the past. They do not 'fess up and say, "We're in charge. Let's fix this."

What did the minister do? Just prior to the CCC report going public, he appointed Mr Danny Cloghan to conduct a six-month review. He was paid up to \$150 000, and what was he to do? He was to conduct a review into the North Metropolitan Health Service to evaluate and identify any issues relating to the governance and effectiveness of the workforce and integrity functions of the North Metropolitan Health Service. We as an opposition thought that the government had obviously received the heads-up that this CCC report was coming down and it would be grim. It put in place somebody to help tidy it up. That seems reasonable. We found out that Danny Cloghan was a former chief of staff to former Minister Jim McGinty. We thought that this looked like jobs for the boys. How transparent and accountable will this be? Under questioning, Minister Cook tries to slur and draw me into the mire as if I am bagging out the actual Public Sector Commissioner. What absolute rubbish! It was nothing to do with the Public Sector Commissioner. It was everything about the Cloghan appointment and the terms of reference for what he was doing. In any case, we said, "Let's look at what the Public Sector Commissioner has been tasked to do." Interestingly, in Minister Cook's reply to me during question time, he said —

... we asked the Public Sector Commissioner to undertake an independent evaluation of the systems and accountabilities inside the health system.

That was his answer to our question in question time. What was fascinating for us was we looked at what had happened that morning during a hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission for its inquiry into public sector procurement of goods and services and its vulnerability to corrupt practice. That CCC committee was doing an inquiry and it had the director general of health, Dr Russell-Weisz, in the chair in front of it. He was asked what inquiry the department was doing. He said that it was doing a Public Sector Commission inquiry. The committee asked how it was doing it and he said —

It is an inquiry for the minister, so the Department of Health, health support services and north metro health service will cooperate fully. It relates to the time period between October 2014 through to May 2016.

The CCC report findings covered more than a decade. The minister in this place was trying to tell us that we were not onto something and we said he should be accountable and doing something. We gave them the blueprint for how to try to address it. Minister Cook says that I am trying to bag the Public Sector Commissioner. I say that I am not. I am sure she will do a great job—I have no doubt—but it will be in a two-year period, when the CCC report covered over 10 years. I mean, come on! This is not difficult; this is about being accountable. Stop the slanging matches and playing the blame game, throwing mud back at us from the Barnett government days saying, "You did this, therefore we can be as bad as you", if the government thinks we were bad.

Mr K. Michel interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: That is not what the government is supposed to be about, member for Pilbara. It is supposed to be accountable.

Mr K.J.J. Michel: You were bad!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I love it when the member for Pilbara interjects. He is the billion-dollar politician. Beyond anybody's wildest dreams, he has the largesse of the offerings from royalties for regions, which reformed his city and from which he is benefiting now. But I am told that the government committed a further \$1 billion worth of election commitments to his electorate. The member for Kingsley normally sits next to the member for Pilbara. I can tell him right now that she is not too impressed; she has a very tight margin. While the member for Pilbara is out there making all these promises that the government is now breaking, it also committed an enormous amount to look after him and save him in that seat. But the government is not looking after Kingsley and some of his other peers. I would be very grateful if I were the member for Pilbara.

Let us move on, because serious issues are confronting the health sector. I need to spend a little time quickly going through some of those. I could certainly do with more time but I will only get limited time tonight. The first thing the minister and this government said about frontline services is that it is increasing the budget and improving the delivery of frontline services. It says that on the one hand, and then on the other hand it significantly cuts funding. When asked about the funding cuts under questioning in this place the government denies it and plays a sleight-of-hand approach to budgets. That is almost like it is playing a game of snakes and ladders with itself, because it will eventually come unstuck with the people. They will judge the government not on what it says, but on outcomes. Eventually they will cotton on that what the government is saying is not happening.

I will give an example. The North Metropolitan Health Service's actual total cost of service remained largely unchanged between 2016–17 and 2017–18, increasing from \$2.405 billion to \$2.449 billion. The minister wants

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to portray a budget blowout of \$191 million against the target, but the reality is—from notes we have gathered ourselves—that the increase was due to two main reasons. Firstly, the government cut the budget unrealistically in 2017–18 to \$2.257 billion, down from \$2.329 billion in 2016–17, and secondly, there was a \$99 million increase in approved salary expense that was largely out of the control of the board. The government changed the circumstances and then justified it to rip out \$191 million. We found by looking through some of the other areas that it is really quite frightening. We found that the state government cut the budget for 2018–19 with a target total cost of service of the North Metropolitan Health Service—just one of the health service providers—of \$2.148 billion. The McGowan government has intended to cut the North Metropolitan Health Service budget by around \$300 million a year compared with what it is currently operating at.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: These are the types of things that are going on. Government members might say, “We can get away with that, because we will be able to present a budget surplus on track because our goal is to present a budget surplus”, but what is happening to service delivery? This gets back to accountability. The government has to be accountable when it says that it is going to improve services. But if it is not, it has to do something about it. Annual reports are always a good read. I recommend the members for Kalamunda and Pilbara look at the North Metropolitan Health Service “Annual Report 2018”. Go to page 44 and look at waiting times for emergency services. They should look at the waiting times in their own hospitals. That is what they should be focusing on, not on their pork barrels. Get out there and look at service delivery, because at North Metropolitan Health Service there is a very important statistic under triage category 3, which means somebody has to be seen within 30 minutes or they could die. Does the member for Pilbara know what the target was? The target was for 75 per cent of the category 3 people who present at the emergency department to be seen within 30 minutes. Guess how that was achieved last year? It was not achieved at all. It was 43.14 per cent across the North Metropolitan Health Service for people who face imminent danger if they are not seen within 30 minutes. That is not good enough. That is not because of the hardworking nurses, doctors, orderlies and security staff who are needed to run an ED now. They are working their backsides off to do the best by the patients who present at those emergency departments, but they are under-resourced; and, if they are under-resourced, the statistics tell us. They do not lie. We can play here and we can fight the good fight in debate, but the reality is that the statistics do not lie.

I now look at the elective waitlist patients waiting over-boundary. That means that they are supposed to be seen within 30 days and if they are seen after that period, they are over-boundary. There are different categories of that. There are blowouts there. If we compare all the categories in 2016–17 and 2017–18, the blowout for category 1 increased from 4.5 to 5.5 per cent, category 2 increased from 6.6 to 7.3 per cent and category 3 increased from two to 2.8 per cent. Everything is going in the wrong direction. The government needs to be accountable for those results. It is pretty simple. There are many service delivery areas, but there are three big service delivery areas that the government wants to get right. The first one is health, because when people get sick, they need to be looked after. The member for Pilbara knows that. People need to be looked after. Health is critically important. We know that we need an outstanding education system for our kids to grow the future of our state and we know that we need highly effective law and order. They are the big three. They are the government's bread and butter, and then a whole pile of others are important. They are the three big ones that mums and dads with families worry about the most. The overarching one over those three is, of course, the economy and their personal cash flow situation and household debt. If the government focused on diversifying the economy, as it said it would, and focused on doing what it said it would do with jobs, and if it were able to nest its efforts with the commonwealth's efforts to grow jobs, the economy would be doing better than it is now. But it is not. When CommSec put out its report, it had Western Australia last. What was the Premier reported as saying about that on the front page of *The West Australian*? “Nothing to see here.” It is like Obi-Wan Kenobi saying to the stormtroopers, “These are not the droids you're looking for. Everything is fine; let us through.” “This economy is going fantastically. You don't need to look at us. Nothing to see here.” No, there is something to see here, because Western Australia was last or second last in every category. The government is not doing what it committed to do when it came to government. The member for Kalamunda has gone all quiet on me now. Do not go sookie on me now. Come on; you were arcing up earlier. Show a bit of spine and get back into the game.

Service delivery is absolutely critically important to making sure that the people are looked after.

I will just move on beyond the statistics, because there are so many of them. A really pressing point that I highlighted earlier is the accountability around how the government is making appointments. The appointments in the North Metropolitan Health Service is one of many examples. The government essentially wiped out the North Metropolitan Health Service board, one of the most highly qualified boards in the country, and replaced the board chair with its own former Labor powerbroker and former Minister for Health, Jim McGinty.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Can I ask you a question?

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: No. I have not finished yet, minister.

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Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Let me finish; I am on a roll.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr W.J. Johnston: He asked for interjections.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: No, I did not.

The ACTING SPEAKER: No. He might have addressed a comment to the member for Kalamunda.

Mr W.J. Johnston: He said that the member for Kalamunda needed to arc up. That's what he said.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): Minister, I am not going to argue with you. I am calling you once.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Thank you for that protection, Mr Acting Speaker. Where was I? I have lost my train of thought.

The government put its Labor powerbroker in charge of the North Metropolitan Health Service, and he appointed his own former chief of staff, his old mate, to run an inquiry into integrity, and away they went. Not long after all that, we read in the paper that morale had slumped and bottomed out. Surprise, surprise. The government has the poor, hardworking nurses, doctors, support staff and everybody else in the health sector who works really hard going, "Hang on; there are people acting corruptly and ex-politicians appointing their mates to oversee how we are going to clean up the mess." They do not trust any of that; it is disgraceful. It looks disgraceful. At the very least, if the government is going to show some leadership to the people out there who are doing it tough, who have been kicked in the guts and are down because of the whole corruption scandal, it needs to say, "We're going to fix it", grab shadow Minister for Health Sean L'Estrange's media release and use it as a blueprint, and then say, "We're going to follow that and do it." Then the staff would say, "At least they're taking it seriously." Frankly, the government's efforts have shown that it is not serious at all; it is actually just enjoying the largesse of government.

A news article the other day reported that there is a toxic culture and bullying, and that one in six staff are subject to bullying and harassment. That is disgraceful. Do members know how that was reported? It was reported because a journalist lodged a freedom of information request to find those results. The government kept that nice and quiet until it was exposed. Does the government think that the people of Western Australia think this is a good way to show accountability? Of course it is not a good way to be accountable to the people. The government getting its razor gang out there and slashing and burning funding to a key, basic, fundamental frontline service is not being accountable either. The government should think very, very carefully about what its priorities are and where it should be spending the money. Members opposite are all going on like the member for Mirrabooka did about Metro Area Express and how disappointed she was, and they are all going on about how wonderful they are with their Metronet, or spaghetti net, or whatever they want to call it, which is going to solve the world's public transport problems and load the state with debt for years to come with the operating subsidies that will be required to run it. But forget all that—the people of Western Australia need a good health system.

The first priority should be to fix health infrastructure. That is what the government should be focusing on. We know King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women is not up to spec because the Australian Medical Association has told the government time and time again and the Minister for Health admitted during estimates committee questioning earlier this year that it is not good enough. The same goes for Graylands Hospital for people suffering severe mental health issues; that is not up to spec and needs to be sorted out. We also still have issues with Royal Perth Hospital and a lot of the other existing infrastructure that is considered to be okay is 30 years old and deteriorating. That still needs to be planned for. Where is that in the budget? We could not find it.

The things that really matter, for which the government is accountable to the people of Western Australia, are being ignored. The government is more interested in signature projects for the Premier, ministers and the party than in what it is actually here to do, which is to deliver and be accountable for effective frontline services to the people of Western Australia, first and foremost. That is what it must do.

The issue of mental health is also of concern. I will highlight again some of the real concerns we have. It was very sad to learn earlier this year that the suicide rate for Western Australia had gone up by 10 per cent. That is terrible; nobody in this Parliament would be happy about that. But what is really sad is that the Mental Health Commission's prevention budget was 11 per cent less than it was last year. The government is actually allocating less money to that service at a time when suicide rates have gone up. To further reiterate this point, Lifeline WA telephone crisis support has answered 28 621 calls for help—an increase of 11.3 per cent on the previous year. People are hurting out there. Between 2015–16 and 2017–18, calls to the Meth Helpline increased by 35.8 per cent, but by 2016–17, one in four calls were going unanswered. What did the government do this year? It cut the budget for that essential service by \$154 000. This is what accountability is. All I have heard from members opposite so far tonight is that accountability is about tit-for-tat blame games on broken promises. They have got it all wrong. That is not what

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accountability is all about. Accountability is about delivering the service the government said it was going to deliver—on time, on budget and doing it well for the people who put it in power. That is what being accountable is.

Mr W.J. Johnston: That is not right.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The member for Cannington says that is not right. I tell the member for Cannington what: the people in his electorate think it is right. They think actually delivering services is right. I can tell the member what I read just the other day in a *WAtoday* article. It states —

Perth's mental health system was under such stress last week that a 'code yellow' was called, reflecting an internal emergency relating to overcrowding and the lack of mental health beds in the system to accept patients who had presented at an emergency department.

One patient was reported to have been chained to a bed for 60 hours in an emergency department. Emergency departments are not where people with serious mental health issues want to end up. They need support. The health budget needs support. The government needs to reform how it is delivering services so it delivers what it is supposed to be delivering to the people of Western Australia. The government needs to stop hiding behind this blame game and demonstrate accountability, not through budget cuts and sleight-of-hand announcements of funding that will not stand up to reality, but by delivering on the key performance indicators that the people of Western Australia expect it to deliver so the services support them.

MR T.J. HEALY (Southern River) [7.51 pm]: It is an honour to follow the words of my former economics teacher, the member for Churchlands, Mr L'Estrange. I still like to call him Mr L'Estrange and I should say, member for Churchlands, that we had our 20-year anniversary on the weekend of students from my old class. One asked what it was like being with Mr L'Estrange and I answered, "Mate, nothing's changed!"

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: They are having a good time then!

Mr T.J. HEALY: Seriously, they did. Effie Samaras and many other people in that group hold the member for Churchlands in respect. I said it will be interesting when he challenges; that will provide some dynamic excitement in this house!

I would like to make my contribution to the debate on this ridiculous motion. The member for Churchlands stole my lines. I was telling the member of Jandakot that he stole all my lines. What gall the opposition has to stand in this place and tell us that we lack accountability, that we have broken promises. The former Liberal government's lack of accountability, its broken promises, its increases in taxes and lack of transparency have ensured that it has become the smallest opposition in Western Australian history. One of the documents I like to read to my two daughters is an old book. I asked the Speaker beforehand whether I could read it. It is *The Liberals' Little Book of Big Lies*. I am going to read from that document for members. It talks about the commitments that were made, and not made, and not kept. The story says —

Perth was a growing city.
Every day there were more and more cars on the road.
The trains were full.
And the buses just could not keep up.
"The trains will go to Ellenbrook!" Or so they decreed.
But before they could get there that plan was denied
Turns out it was nothing but a big fat lie.
It was one big mess in need of a fix.
So the Liberals threw some "promises" in the mix.

And there is a little fully funded, fully costed logo there —

"We'll send trains to Yanchep and out to the airport,"
"And on top of all that how about a light rail called MAX!"
"We'll order more trains!"
"And make buses go further"

...

But now it is clear: it was all just a tall story.
All that Perth ever got was excuses and lies.
And the Liberals new transport "plan" sounds like a pig that can fly.

I think nothing better summarises the broken promises of the Liberal government than that book. It is a fantastic contribution. The former government, the former Liberal–National alliance government—whatever it called itself—now the Liberal opposition, lied. It lied about public transport and it lied about trains. Twice it promised the Ellenbrook rail line. Twice it promised my community that it would build a train line from Thornlie to Cockburn. MAX light rail was fully funded and fully costed. The member stands here talking to us about broken promises.

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The member for Cannington, the Minister for Mines and Petroleum, made a fantastic contribution to this debate in which he discussed the Perth Airport line. Of course, it is fantastic that the previous government promised it. I remember the 2013 election campaign; it was fantastic that we had a Metronet plan that you guys could copy.

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Member for Bateman, sorry?

Mr D.C. Nalder: What was that?

Mr T.J. HEALY: The former government copied our proposal —

Mr D.C. Nalder: Where?

Mr T.J. HEALY: For the airport line.

Mr D.C. Nalder: No.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Please tell me.

Mr D.C. Nalder: Your line was down Tonkin Highway, coming in on Horrie Miller Drive; we went underneath.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Okay, we both have a plan for an airport line. Member for Bateman, did you promise a line to the airport?

Mr D.C. Nalder: I didn't personally, no. I wasn't even in Parliament.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Sorry, I would like to refer to the member's Railway (Forrestfield–Airport Link) Bill on which he spoke. The former government likes to say that it built the line to the airport.

Mr D.C. Nalder: We put the contract in place. It's the same thing.

Mr T.J. HEALY: The contract that the member is not providing details on or the business case for.

Several members interjected.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I refer to the member for Bateman's speech on Wednesday, 22 April 2015, in which he said, "Construction of the Forrestfield line will commence in 2016" —

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The Acting Speaker was very strict on me, and I appreciate it. I am just looking forward to Mr Acting Speaker being as strict with the member for Bateman, who is interjecting on the member.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): My reading of the member for Southern River is that he is having a bit of a dialogue —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: But that is not the point.

The ACTING SPEAKER: As far as I am concerned, it is the point.

Debate Resumed

Mr T.J. HEALY: That is exactly what I want him to do. But I thank the member for Cannington for his protection. It is okay.

The member said that construction of the Forrestfield line would start in 2016. No, it did not. Also, on 16 May 2018, the member for Bateman told us that all the Metronet projects were part of his government's Perth and Peel@3.5 million transport plan. They were all there and they were all put in place by the former government. He said —

Not one Metronet project was not in the former government's Perth and Peel transport plan. The only difference was the timing of the project ...

The timing of the project is the key —

Mr D.C. Nalder: And the route to Ellenbrook—go read it!

Mr T.J. HEALY: When the former government said that it was going to build the Ellenbrook line now or in five years or 10 years—that is the problem. When the former government said that it was going to build the Thornlie–Cockburn line now or later—that is the problem. When the former government said that it was going to build MAX light rail and do all of these things—that is the problem. The former government made promises —

Mr D.C. Nalder: I didn't personally, no.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I will admit that the member was elected in 2013, I believe, so he was not a member of Parliament for the fully funded, fully costed promises. But I imagine that the fact that the member was a minister quite early means that he was a key part of parts of that.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 31 October 2018]

p7582b-7608a

Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Bill Johnston; Dr Tony Buti; Dr David Honey; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Zak Kirkup; Mr Terry Healy

I come back to public transport—the opposition lacks accountability. On the business cases for projects, it was said earlier that we have constantly asked for the business case for the airport line, but we have not got it. We have asked for information about a number of business cases, and they have not been provided. The opposition is sketchy about its support for the Byford line and the other projects this government is committing to. I would like to translate —

Mr D.C. Nalder: So where's your business plan?

Mr T.J. HEALY: We show you ours and you will show us yours—is that it? The member cannot have it both ways. Member, I only have three minutes.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Hang on for a sec, I would appreciate it if you address your comments to me for the rest of your time, and that the member Bateman keeps quiet, please.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Education funding cuts—my school, Southern River College, was promised funding during the 2013 election campaign. It was a broken promise. Education assistant cuts—no new primary schools were built in my community for over 10 years. I have a quote here from Mr Acting Speaker on TAFE fee increases but at this stage I will not quote him. Perth Children's Hospital had delays. Royalties for regions was a disgrace, with councils not even able to maintain the operation and the maintenance of the projects. Pristine, beautiful bushland was bulldozed to make way for the former government's Roe 8 plans. Earlier today, the member for Cannington discussed that scorched earth policy. Members opposite will not release the business case for Roe 8. What is there to hide? They will not release the business case for Muja AB. All these things are available to members opposite but they do not do them.

There was a discussion about Rottnest earlier today. During the matter of public interest, the Premier said that a number of untruths have been put forward about Rottnest Island. The opposition said that there was nothing in the budget for Rottnest. It made false statements. I echo what the Premier said. The Leader of the Opposition said that the government has reduced maintenance on Rottnest. That is not true. The opposition said that we had cancelled the tender for the Rottnest marina. That is not true. The only significant investment by the Liberal opposition in Rottnest was when the member for South Perth punched Peter Collier at their love-in earlier this year.

Point of Order

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Mr Speaker, the member referred to an honourable member in the other place by his actual name and not his title.

Mr T.J. Healy: I withdraw—Hon Peter Collier.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): I do not think there is a point of order.

Debate Resumed

Mr T.J. HEALY: I understand that later this year, the love-in will be held in Albany. I have to tell members that the Speaker will not allow the sort of raucous behaviour in Albany that they got away with in Rottnest. I would like to finish, in our final minute, by saying that there is a lack of trust in Liberal opposition leaders. This opposition is being led poorly. I want to read from a newspaper article. a former Liberal opposition leader who also lacked trust —

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.