



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

# **Parliamentary Debates**

**(HANSARD)**

THIRTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT  
SECOND SESSION  
1999

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 11 May 1999

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**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Strickland) took the Chair at 2.00 pm, and read prayers.

## VACATION SWIMMING CLASSES

### *Petition*

**MR HOUSE** (Stirling - Minister for Primary Industry) [2.03 pm]: I present a petition requesting that the Minister for Education abandon plans to contract out vacation swimming classes. I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly and it contains the signatures of 25 persons.

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 207.]

## JOONDALUP SHOPPING CITY, LANDCORP'S INTEREST

### *Statement by Minister for Lands*

**MR SHAVE** (Alfred Cove - Minister for Lands) [2.11 pm]: The board of LandCorp has negotiated the sale of the Government's half-share interest in Lakeside Joondalup Shopping City. This sale is fully consistent with the ministerial review of LandCorp's operations and the new legislation for the authority which was enacted on the final sitting day last year. The sale price of \$58.5m is an excellent outcome for the State.

The purchaser was LandCorp's joint venture partner, Perpetual Trustees (WA) Ltd, as trustee for the Armstrong Jones retail fund. Under the joint venture arrangement, Perpetual had a right of first refusal. It is understood that Perpetual has purchased the interest on behalf of ING Real Estate, a member of the ING Group. It was entitled to do this under the joint venture agreement. ING is the parent of a range of companies, including ING Real Estate, Mercantile Mutual and Armstrong Jones Management Ltd. Perpetual Trustees (WA) Ltd, as the trustee for the Armstrong Jones retail fund, is the Government's joint venture partner in the Lakeside Joondalup Shopping City.

The sale is a fully commercial outcome, that has benefited greatly from the wealth of experience resident in the LandCorp board and the independent expert advice that has supported the sale negotiations. The proceeds will be applied to meet the State's industrial and major urban land needs to promote economic and employment growth throughout Western Australia. Under the authority's legislation LandCorp has a mandate to complete the Joondalup project. This sale represents a major milestone in that critical path. LandCorp intends to invest approximately \$25m to develop the remaining Joondalup land in the next three years.

In accordance with section 17 of the Western Australian Land Authority Act 1992, I hereby table a copy of the ministerial approval for the transaction.

[See paper No 943.]

## SUPPLY POLICY MANUAL

### *Statement by Minister for Services*

**MR BOARD** (Murdoch - Minister for Services) [2.13 pm]: I inform the House of the purchasing policy reforms in the new "Supply Policy Manual". The State Supply Commission's new policy and guidelines manual is central to the strategy to improve education in contracting practice in the public sector. The manual is a condensed and easy to read summary of the State Supply Commission's policies, designed to reflect the maturing nature of government purchasing and accords with the philosophy of allowing chief executive officers greater flexibility in managing their agencies' needs.

In September 1996 the Government committed itself to improving the buying standards of government agencies through the Buying Wisely strategy policy statement on purchasing and contracting. The Buying Wisely strategy focused on making a cultural change from acquiring simple stores and services to making strategic business decisions about service outcomes and managing contracts.

The reforms being implemented on the purchasing policy are designed to achieve two key strategies: Firstly, to provide agency chief executives with not only a high-level policies and guidelines framework that recognises the complexities and purchasing of contracting, but also the flexibility for agencies to work with individual industry segments to achieve compatible contracting processes. Secondly, the reforms aim to devolve greater responsibility for purchasing and contracting to agency chief executives to place decision making and accountability where the service outcomes and risks are best managed. The reforms are the result of a major review program that has taken 18 months to complete and has involved extensive liaison and consultation with public authorities and key industry stakeholders.

The new framework involves a refinement of the policies to eight core policy groupings. This move is designed to simplify and consolidate the existing policy requirements. The core policies of contracting place a greater focus on achieving value for money and, through the new contract process guideline, a demonstrated model is provided to guide agencies in making sound financial judgments. Other core policies are designed to promote open and effective competition, manage the procurement risks, ensure a high level of integrity and ethics, and support local industry and other government initiatives. A unique feature of the guidelines is a new contract process guideline that will provide users with the key signposts to

successfully undertake complex and strategic purchasing and contracting; for example, key issues in planning the procurement, formulating the tender and managing the contract.

The Government recognised that modern contracting is complex and requires sound skills and good practices. The new policy framework will be complemented with new education and training programs to promote high standards of delivery within agencies. The policies relate to the purchase of goods and services where the State spends more than \$4b each year represented by the management of over 40 000 contracts a year. I commend the new policy framework to the House and table the new State Supply Commission Policy Manual.

[See paper No 944.]

**[Questions without notice taken.]**

**BILLS - ASSENT**

Message from the Lieutenant Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills -

1. Titles Validation Amendment Bill.
2. Acts Amendment (Criminal Procedure) Bill.

**BILLS - RECEIPT AND FIRST READING**

1. Acts Amendment (Mining and Petroleum) Bill.

Bill received from the Council; and, on motion by Mr Barnett (Minister for Energy), read a first time.

2. Liquor Licensing Amendment Bill.

Bill received from the Council; and, on motion by Ms Warnock, read a first time.

**APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (No 3)**

*Returned*

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**MR BARNETT** (Cottesloe - Leader of the House) [2.55 pm]: I move -

That orders of the day Nos 3 and 4 be now taken.

In doing so, I remind the House that it is the intention this week to conduct the general debate on the budget, which will necessitate sitting Wednesday evening.

Question put and passed.

**APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (No 1) 1999**

*Cognate Debate*

On motion by Mr Court (Treasurer), resolved -

That leave be granted for a cognate debate for the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No 1) 1999 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No 2) 1999, and that the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No 1) be the principal Bill.

*Second Reading*

Resumed from 6 May.

**DR GALLOP** (Victoria Park - Leader of the Opposition) [2.56 pm]: It has been the duty of the Opposition to point out the misplaced priorities in coalition budgets since 1993. These budgets have lacked vision and a sense of direction for the State. They have imposed unnecessary burdens on those who find it hardest to pay. The Government has squandered opportunities given to it when the State came out of the recession of the early 1990s and it has pretended that debt reduction through asset sales represents financial strength and progress. Taxes and charges continue to rise despite the massive program of contracting out government services, a program which was justified on the basis of the savings it was intended to bring.

The budget presented to the Parliament last week lacks not only this vision and sense of direction but also credibility. It is an unholy mixture of financial irresponsibility and community irrelevance. In it we see a complete backflip on debt and finance; in its presentation we see an attempt to conceal and deceive; in its content we see continuing misplaced priorities; and in its assumptions we see the Treasurer gambling with the future.

Mr Speaker, this budget delivers Western Australians a general government deficit of \$640m, the biggest deficit on record, and it comes after six years of massive privatisation and contracting-out; indeed, this Government has sold nearly \$4b worth of public assets since coming to power. The Government has enjoyed massive and record growth. Taxation revenue has increased by a massive 65 per cent from 1992-93 to 1998-99, yet there is the biggest deficit on record in the general government sector; indeed, it follows a deficit of \$213m delivered last year.

These deficits come as no surprise to the Opposition. In February the Opposition claimed that the Government was in financial trouble and predicted a deficit in both 1998-99 and 1999-2000. The Treasurer claimed that we got it wrong. We did not. In both the general government and consolidated fund sectors the Government is in deficit for both the 1998-99 and 1999-2000 years. This is clearly demonstrated on page 93 of the budget papers where it deals with the Government's forward estimates and their relationship to financial targets. One of the particular targets is to achieve an underlying balance. It reads -

. . . the Consolidated Fund and general government sectors run an underlying cash surplus.

The fact is that the Treasurer and members of the Government have not achieved that target; they are in deficit. It is in the Treasury papers for all to see.

The truth of the matter is that there is a deficit. I contrast that truth, which is demonstrated on a number of occasions throughout the budget papers, with what the Treasurer is telling the people of Western Australia. On ABC News on the night of Friday, 7 May, the Treasurer said -

This is simply not true. It doesn't matter by what measure you want to judge this budget, whether you want to judge it on a cash measure or on an accrual measure. Across government we have very healthy operating surpluses.

The Treasurer is wrong. By the method by which the Treasurer has always measured the budget, by the method by which he promised a surplus in the last election campaign, and by the method which both the public and the media understand, we have a deficit.

Mr Court: It is a surplus. You should learn how to read the papers.

Dr GALLOP: The Treasurer is now coming up with an idiotic argument by switching the budget over to the recurrent part. The budget is made up of two sections: Recurrent and capital. It also has both the general government sector and the total government sector.

The Treasurer is deliberately misleading the people of Western Australia, because he knows he has let the finances of this State run out of control and he does not know what to do about it. The Treasurer's claim of a \$171m surplus comes about only after we include all the net surpluses from what are called controlled entities, such as Western Power, AlintaGas and so on. The truth has been revealed by the economic commentators. The Executive Director of the Institute of Public Affairs, Mike Nahan, has claimed -

They've arranged the books to show a surplus when it is not there.

That claim is made not by the State Opposition, the Trades and Labor Council of Western Australia or the Council of Social Service of Western Australia, but by the Institute of Public Affairs. There is no question about it: This budget is in serious deficit, and it is about time the Treasurer acknowledged the truth. This deficit is simply another broken election promise. The Treasurer campaigned in the 1996 election on the premise that he would deliver a surplus in the consolidated fund for the next four years. On ABC Radio in February of this year he even claimed -

Well as I said that is our goal every year to deliver a balanced budget. We have done six and we want to make this the seventh.

Page 3 of the *1999-2000 Economic and Fiscal Overview* shows that the consolidated fund ran a deficit in 1997-98, when we exclude the impact of the pipeline sale; is in deficit in 1998-99; and is expected to run a deficit in 1999-2000 of \$337.7m. The Treasurer also claimed in Parliament in March this year that he would meet his financial targets. He said -

From my experience over the past six years, budgets are always under pressure at the six-month point. We will certainly bring the budget within our financial targets.

The budget papers show clearly that the Treasurer did not meet his financial targets. In respect of the target of an underlying surplus in the consolidated fund and for the general government sector, this Government is not meeting this target now, nor will it next year or the two years after that. This Government has done a complete backflip on deficit and debt, and that represents another broken promise made at the election of 1996. Any attempt by the Treasurer of Western Australia to try to conceal that fact through redefinition and financial obfuscation will not work, because the economic commentators have confirmed there is a deficit, his own Treasury papers have confirmed there is a deficit, and there is a deficit. Until the Treasurer acknowledges that and faces up to that, he will not carry out his responsibilities on behalf of the people of Western Australia.

I now deal with another election promise. Before the last election, the Treasurer promised Western Australians a social dividend. What happened after the election? He increased taxes and charges! That represented a problem, because most people expected that when he promised a social dividend, it would be a bit like being a shareholder in a company and when it started to make some profits there would be a return to the people. What they got by way of return was increased taxes and charges; they did not get their social dividend. What did the Treasurer do? He redefined the social dividend and said that what it actually meant was a debt-free future. In his second reading speech to the Parliament last year the Treasurer said -

The best social dividend that any Government can deliver is to make sure that future generations are not burdened by excessive levels of debt . . .

In this budget he has increased debt. The Treasurer promised a social dividend. He redefined the social dividend, and now

he has abandoned it. This budget will see total public sector debt increase by \$800m, from \$5b to \$5.8b. It is there for everyone to see in the Government's budget papers. However, despite what the Treasurer may claim, most of this increase does not come from the public trading enterprise sector but from the general government sector. General government debt has increased from \$449m to \$958.3m. It has more than doubled. This represents a massive backflip by the Government.

The issues raised by this backflip need examination. Most economic commentators have expressed concern that real risks are involved in the massive policy reversal that we see. Alan Wood from *The Australian* recently wrote -

He is clearly gambling on getting large asset sales through a hostile upper house and on a fast return to high economic growth to repair his Budget and clear debt.

The current forward estimates also show the general government net debt will not decrease but increase from \$449m to \$1.2b in 2001-02. This prediction is made under some optimistic economic forecasts, and it is also made under some optimistic political forecasts.

I deal first with the economic forecasts. The current government forecast of economic growth for 1999-2000 is 4.5 per cent. This compares to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia's forecast of 2.75 per cent growth in that year. The National Australia Bank Ltd is also forecasting growth of between 2 and 3 per cent. We could tackle this issue of different growth forecasts in a number of ways. Most of us will have read the literature from economic commentators that points to the enormous uncertainty in the world economy as it is currently moving. That has an impact on the degree to which growth can be estimated for the Australian economy. The other way to look at this issue is simply to consider what the recent budget estimates have told us. At the time of the 1998-99 budget, the Government forecast economic growth of 5 per cent in the State in that financial year. Its current estimate is 3.25 per cent. The Government also forecast state final demand growth of 4.5 per cent at the time of the 1998-99 budget. It is now forecasting growth of 0.75 per cent. In respect of employment growth, it had forecast 3.25 per cent. Its current forecast for 1998-99 is 2.5 per cent. Unemployment, which was forecast to average 6.75 per cent in 1998-99, is now expected to fall below 7 per cent. Therefore, one can see that the Government was optimistic with its growth forecasts in 1998-99. If we do not reach the growth forecasts, there is real danger that the Government's current program of spending and revenue will not be sustained. This will mean either massive hikes in tax and charges, huge cuts in expenditure or even more privatisation.

I now point to the political risks facing the Government relating to the amount of money which will come to the people of Western Australia from the Commonwealth Government. The Government's *Economic and Fiscal Overview* indicates that no guarantee has been given that special purpose payments from the Commonwealth will be maintained, particularly if the GST enabling legislation passes through the Federal Parliament. Why is that? If the measure is passed, it will not be long before the Commonwealth Government will say to the States, "You have your revenue now", and the Commonwealth will take the special purpose payments off the States when it is in a tight spot. A lot of contention is evident in economic and financial circles about the revenue the State will receive from the Federal Government should the GST be implemented. The economic risks are part of the overall context of international uncertainty, and the prospect of a GST impacting on state revenue by way of cuts to special purposes payments. At the very time the Government of Western Australia faces all these uncertainties, it has made a radical swing in direction to accumulate debt to fund programs in Western Australia which has led to a record deficit in the general government account.

It is important to note that we enter this situation after a period of massive asset sales to the tune of \$4b. The Government's justification for those asset sales was that savings in interest payments would be used to fund essential services, including infrastructure. However, the reality is that the Treasurer has sold off \$4b in assets, yet we are no better off. The money you are fiddling with at the moment, Mr Deputy Speaker, could well go into the Government's coffers given the problems facing the people of Western Australia. The reality is that \$4b-worth of assets was sold, yet we are no better off. That is why the Treasurer has been forced to incur more debt over the past two years.

I look now at the misplaced priorities in the budget. Today many in the community are asking: What improved infrastructure are we getting? Again we see the Treasurer's obsession with the central business district; namely, his constituency and the people to whom he talks and to whom he listens. That is why he is spending so much money on projects like the Northbridge tunnel, the belltower, Barrack Square and the convention centre. He then has the audacity to ask the Opposition from where it would find the money to fund the much-needed railway to Rockingham and Mandurah. The Treasurer is prepared to hold the people of these communities to ransom by saying that the rail link is dependent on the sale of yet another public asset; namely, AlintaGas. However, even this commitment can be questioned. When the Treasurer was pressed on increasing debt, he said that the sale of Westrail and AlintaGas would fill the gap. So much for the rail line to Mandurah! That also has been sacrificed on the altar of his lurch into debt and deficit policies.

The truth is that good government is a question of priorities, and it is on this issue that this Government consistently fails. It is a question not so much of where the money is coming from, but where the money is going.

Let us consider other aspects of the Treasurer's capital works program to illustrate the point that the reality in the budget papers is different from the way the Government has been described by the Treasurer and government members. The Treasurer claimed that there would be a "\$199m increase in the Keystart housing scheme funding to \$499m". Again, the reality is much different. The budget papers show that \$510m was loaned to new home buyers under the Keystart home lending scheme in 1998-99, and it is estimated that only \$499m will be made available to this scheme in 1999-2000.

Mr Court: Do you support it or not?

Dr GALLOP: I certainly do. This is a reduction of \$11m in funding for the Keystart program. The Opposition would lend its support to providing an opportunity for low-income people to purchase their own homes; however, the focus on Keystart

does not remove the Government's obligation to reduce Homeswest's waiting list by 25 per cent, as the Government promised to do at the last state election, but on which it is not delivering. This fact was clearly revealed in question time last week.

The Opposition has also compared what the Government has actually budgeted for by way of capital works with what will be actually spent in 1998-99. For instance, in the 1999-2000 budget year, there will be an increase in capital works expenditure compared with 1998-99 in the following areas: The Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet, up \$14.6m; the Government's Project Office - or should we call it the Treasurer's pet project office - up \$14.6m; and Main Roads, up \$148m. No doubt this additional money for Main Roads is required to pay for the almost trebling of roads maintenance and construction costs since the Government came to power and commenced its massive privatisation and contracting out of Main Roads' operations.

The people of Western Australia are asking a simple question: We have had all this contracting out of government services and the privatisation of asset on the basis of new efficiencies in government as resources would be released and pressure would be taken off taxes and charges, so where are the benefits? It has not happened, nor have we experienced an increased quality of service. The reality is to the contrary. When we go to any regional area in Western Australia and ask people on the ground in local government - that is, those who use the roads and know about their communities - whether services have improved, they tell everyone who asks that they now have a poorer quality service than was the case in the past. Also, a direct connection no longer exists between the expenditure of money on roads and money entering the local community by way of Main Roads, as a fly-in fly-out mentality has been adopted by companies carrying out this work.

In addition, and in contrast to the claims the Treasurer made in his speech, if one compares the 1999-2000 budget with the estimated actuals of the 1998-99 financial year, one will find that Western Power's capital expenditure will increase only by \$17m, not \$33m as claimed; the Western Australian Land Authority's capital work expenditure will increase by \$44m, not \$93m; Westrail will spend an additional \$21m, not \$51m; and the Water Corporation's expenditure will increase by \$105m, not \$115m. The Opposition points this out because the attempt by the Treasurer to provide a completely misleading picture of this budget is a significant feature of his Government's publicity over the last week.

The Treasurer also misled the people on the increase in the budget in what should be key priorities of government; namely, education and training, health, law and order, and justice. The Treasurer in his speech and in his presentation to the media compared the 1998-99 budget estimates with the 1999-2000 budget estimates. What a way to compare one year to the next! He started with the estimates made in the previous year, and compared them with the estimates for the next year. The Treasurer should compare the 1998-99 outcomes to the 1999-2000 estimates. People want to contrast what an agency will actually spend this year with what it is estimated to spend next year.

The Treasurer's comparisons give some very inflated figures. This is the first time that such comparisons have been made. It was clearly done to mislead people about the budget. Let us take Health, for example. The Government continually mismanages and under funds the health system. This budget is no different. The Treasurer claims that health expenditure was an increase of \$153.3m over the budget estimate, but to get the real picture of any increase in health expenditure from one year to the next, one must compare the 1999-2000 budget figure with the estimated outcome for 1998-99. When one does this, one gets a completely different story, but, I might add, the true story. The Government budgeted \$1.542b in recurrent health expenditure in 1998-99. This was clearly not enough. As a result \$110m had to be injected during the year. The total recurrent health expenditure in 1998-99 therefore is expected to be \$1.652b. When one compares this figure with the 1999-2000 allocation, one sees there was an increase of only \$66m, a nominal increase of 4 per cent. When one takes into account inflation and population growth, one finds a cut in the Health budget from 1998-99 to 1999-2000 of 0.4 per cent, or \$6m.

I will add to that equation. When questions of private health insurance companies' premium increases are discussed in public, they always make the very important point that the indicator used to measure prices in the health industry is different from the consumer price index and that health prices always go up more than the CPI. So the estimate of 0.4 per cent per capita cut in Health is probably conservative. This means that Western Australians will continue to have a health system struggling to keep up with demand. The Western Australian health system lunges from crisis to crisis. This budget will only worsen the situation. There is no doubt that, just like last year and the year before, the Government will need to inject emergency funds into the system to stop it collapsing. For example, last year 18 country hospitals sought extra funding because they had not been allocated sufficient funds in 1998-99. I have no doubt that in this coming year once again we will see country hospital boards as well as the larger metropolitan hospitals coming cap in hand to the Government for an emergency bailout. This is not the way to manage our health system.

As to the Education budget, schools throughout country Western Australia are already functioning without full teaching complements and vital educational services three months into the school year because of an adherence to staffing formulae which do not reflect the special needs of country schools. There is a general lack of sufficient and appropriate public housing for public servants, especially teachers, in regional Western Australia which is causing many difficulties. I argue that one of the most important issues facing the Government and the Parliament of Western Australia today is the quality of education provided by our state government schools outside Perth. It is a major issue for the people of Western Australia. Indeed, it requires a Government that is absolutely devoted to turning the direction that has been set such that these schools are falling behind in the delivery of services to communities. I would rate it as probably the largest and most significant issue in regional Western Australia.

Let us consider the Police budget. Again we will compare the myth with the reality. The Treasurer claimed in his budget speech that there will be an increase of \$61.8m over the budget estimate in the areas of law and order and justice. The Police budget will get an increase of only \$11.7m in 1999-2000, a nominal increase of 3.2 per cent. Again, adjusting for inflation

and population growth, this is a real cut of 1.2 per cent, or \$4m. Such cuts do not stop there. Funding for key service delivery departments, such as Family and Children's Services, have also been cut. Funding for crisis support has been cut from \$27.5m to \$23.9m, a cut of 7 per cent. Funding for domestic violence prevention has been cut from \$3.3m to \$1.9m, a cut of 43 per cent. Funding for child protection services has been cut from \$7.5m to \$7.2m, a cut of 4 per cent.

Let me now turn to look at the taxes and charges in this budget. From 1992-93 to 1999-2000 state taxation revenue is expected to increase by 72 per cent. Despite what the Treasurer may claim, taxation revenue is still increasing. State taxation revenue increased by 7 per cent in 1998-99 and is forecast to increase by 5 per cent in 1999-2000. In this budget the Government has increased water, sewerage and drainage rates, third party insurance, stamp duty on motor vehicle purchases, and public transport fares. Remember, motor vehicle registrations were last year indexed to the consumer price index, which means that they will increase again this year by 2.25 per cent, after increasing by \$55 last year. As a result of the past three budgets, a typical family - in the Labor Party analysis the typical family has only one car, which is a pretty conservative assumption in today's world - will pay \$427 more per annum. That is the social dividend.

Mr Court: How much in this budget was it?

Dr GALLOP: It was \$56.

Mr Barnett: How does it compare with the growth of real average weekly earnings?

Dr GALLOP: Members of this Parliament need to take stock of what the vast majority of people in the community are earning. The Minister for Resources Development might not be so eager to have such a subject debated in this place. The problem with the whole goods and services tax debate is that all the commentators and people supporting the GST are in the high income brackets. They will receive an enormous benefit from the Howard GST package. Those on lower incomes know that they will be the losers under that package.

Mr Court: What do you mean by low income?

Dr GALLOP: I said "lower incomes". Most people in this community earn lower incomes.

This budget continues the Government's assault on public transport users. Public transport costs have increased in six out of the past seven years. Compared with 1992-93 a pensioner travelling from Armadale to Perth is paying 200 per cent more for a ticket while a pensioner travelling from Balcatta is paying 140 per cent more. A worker travelling from Armadale to Perth every day is paying 80 per cent more for a multirider ticket and a worker travelling from Balcatta is paying 60 per cent more. We must encourage people to use our public transport system. We are certainly not doing that by increasing the fares every year.

I would like to add some positive comments about this year's budget papers. It is pleasing to note that the 1997-98 actual expenditure was included in this year's budget papers for each output. This allows a comparison of expenditure of 1999-2000 with the previous two years. I am pleased to see that this suggestion from the Opposition has been taken on board by the Treasury. However, the move to accrual accounting in this budget, while we still have cash appropriations, has made government finances even less transparent. This, together with the departure of program reporting and the move to outcome-based management, has made it very difficult to make actual comparisons over time. I agree with Dr Mike Nahan's comment that the Government's shift to accrual accounting has made the budget less transparent and less accountable. We also understand from experts in the finance field that accrual accounting is still at an experimental phase for many departments. This makes any reliance on numbers produced under this format unreliable. In this sense, the Government should refer to its "Government Finance Statistics" results, which are presented at the back of the *1999-2000 Economic and Fiscal Overview*. These figures allow for comparison over time, and for comparison between the States.

Mr Court: Are you seriously suggesting you do not support accrual accounting?

Dr GALLOP: I am saying that the Government should use accrual accounting, but it should also present budget papers that can be read and understood. Accrual accounting is not inconsistent with reporting on a program basis, providing all the cash appropriation figures, comparing Western Australia with other States, and comparing the 1999-2000 budget with budgets in earlier years. This Government does not want those comparisons to be made because it wants to put a particular spin on every budget, which spin bears no relationship to the reality of the budget.

Mr Court: The Queensland Labor Government has delayed the presentation of its budget this year until August or September, so that it can present it on an accrual basis.

Dr GALLOP: The need for accurate, timely and comparable financial reports should never be underestimated in the quest for transparent and accountable government. However, financial reporting must never be seen as the only pinnacle of government accountability. We cannot overlook its limitations, and essentially narrow, technical perspective. With these factors in mind, we must ask ourselves: What is the overall performance of government? More specifically, can its overall performance be effectively measured? It is true that whole of government financial statements are now prepared, so people are able to determine the total cost of running government in WA. Coupled with that, individual agencies are gauging their performance by use of performance indicators, some of which are useful. However, there is no proper account of the overall performance of government, the macro view of government and the services it is meant to provide. As an elected representative, I ask myself: What do these financial statements and these bottom lines mean for the people of Western Australia? This Government must move away from equating progress with narrowly conceived financial outcomes, and start to measure the success of government also on the basis of wider economic, social and environmental measures. This State must move to government indicators of success or failure that have meaning for all Western Australians. Ideally, this should be done by involving the whole community in developing and monitoring a whole range of indicators that are based on social and environmental, as well as financial, measures.

In conclusion, this budget brings home to the people of Western Australia the deficiencies of this coalition Government. It is a Government lacking in credibility and vision. It is a Government whose only consistent direction has been to contract out and to sell government assets, hit families with increased taxes and charges and try to radically reduce the power of its old enemy, the trade union movement. This Government sits back and allows much needed public infrastructure to stay on the backburner, particularly that which is vital for the social and environmental future of our urban environment. Crime in suburbs and towns continues to grow. New and dangerous inequalities are developing in our education system, particularly between city and country. Public hospitals are battling to cope, and the quality of public services is deteriorating. That has happened under a Government which has had record revenue growth since it came to power. This is a Government of squandered opportunities, which treats the people of Western Australia with arrogance and contempt.

**MR BROWN** (Bassendean) [3.34 pm]: A few months prior to this budget's being handed down, I took the opportunity to survey my constituents about the matters of most concern to them and where they believed the Government should allocate its resources in this budget. I am pleased to report that there was a tremendous response rate to this survey. I publicly place on record my thanks to everyone who responded.

Needless to say, whenever members of Parliament conduct surveys, some cynicism is always expressed about the reasons for and value of them. That cynicism was conveyed to me in a number of letters and by comments on the survey itself.

Mr Johnson: How many responses did you get?

Mr BROWN: Hundreds.

Mr Johnson: Is that 200, 300, 500 or 600?

Mr BROWN: Around 500.

Mr Johnson: That is a pretty good response.

Mr BROWN: It is a very good response. I place on the record that I have conveyed to a number of constituents who expressed that scepticism, that surveys of this nature, although simplistic, provide an important tool. First, they provide direct feedback to a member of Parliament, rather than a member making his own judgment about what people are concerned about. Secondly, they prompt people to write on a range of other matters when returning the survey document. Certainly, I was pleased on this occasion to receive a number of letters and comments from my constituents about not only the matters contained in the survey, but also a variety of other matters of concern. That enables me to say that, first, people have been given the opportunity to contribute to this debate in the budget context. Secondly, I can indicate the types of responses I have received from my electorate. Although the number of responses statistically is not large, the number of people who responded is quite significant. Although I estimated that I had received 500 responses, many of them came from families and a number of people had contributed to one response.

I now refer to the questions asked. Some people who are more familiar with drafting surveys in a correct sense, have suggested that I might conduct a more sophisticated survey in years to come, and I will take that on board. However, my intention was to get people to respond, and I kept it fairly simple so that people would not be daunted by the prospect of responding to pages of questions. I will run through the results of that survey. My first question came under the broad heading of "Taxes and Charges", and I asked people whether they agreed that taxes and charges should not be increased above the inflation rate. Of those who responded, 90.8 per cent agreed with that statement. The next question asked whether people agreed there should be no increase in taxes and charges, and approximately 75 per cent agreed with that statement. It is interesting to note from the two results that although 75 per cent would prefer there to be no increases in taxes and charges, a number of people accept that it may be necessary for taxes to be increased by the rate of inflation. I then asked a question about specific taxes. Obviously, these affect people with different modes of expenditure. I questioned whether increased charges above the inflation rate would be acceptable for a number of services, such as water, TAFE courses, gas, fuel or any other.

The differing responses from constituents were interesting. Some said they would accept a higher than inflation rate charge for one service over another, but others indicated a very low acceptance. In the response, 6 per cent said they would accept charges above the inflation rate for water usage, 4 per cent said the same about TAFE courses, 5.5 per cent said the same about gas, and 5.7 per cent said the same about fuel. Although a number of respondents had a difference of opinion about whether it was appropriate for any of those to be increased above the inflation rate, in general, people did not like taxes moving on any of those above the inflation rate.

I then asked questions about expenditure and in what areas people wanted to see the state government budget directed. It should come as no surprise to anyone that Health was the top priority. I asked four questions about Health and whether additional funds should be directed at these four areas. The first question addressed reducing hospital waiting lists and 95.8 per cent of respondents indicated that additional funds should be allocated for that purpose. The second question was interesting in light of question time earlier today. It asked whether additional funding should be allocated to increase the number of public hospital beds and a staggering 94.7 per cent of the respondents were in favour of it.

Mr Johnson: Perhaps you should asked another suitable question in your survey; "Are there any other areas to which you would like to see expenditure reduced so that extra money can be allocated to Health?"

Mr BROWN: I am coming to that.

Mr Johnson: I like the survey. It is similar to ones that I often send out.



Mr BROWN: People believe government expenditure should be reduced in a number of areas. I will come to those in a moment because I will refer to the other end of the table which includes areas to which people would like to see expenditure reduced. Ninety-four per cent of respondents believed that additional funds should be allocated to the upgrading of public hospitals and 91 per cent believed that additional resources should be allocated to dental care. That is not surprising given that since the Federal Government removed \$100m from that program, the eligibility criteria for obtaining dental treatment in the Perth Dental Hospital has been narrowed and many people who were previously able to receive assistance are now unable to.

The three questions that I asked in the survey about crime and crime prevention related to the allocation of more police, additional crime prevention methods and road safety. I thought from speaking to people that they would heavily support the provision of more police, but that was not the case. Although about 83 per cent of respondents thought more police officers should be employed, the highest response rate related to the area of crime prevention. About 92 per cent of respondents asked for additional resources to be allocated to that area. About 85 per cent of the respondents supported additional resources for road safety.

Questions were asked about the upgrading of schools, technology and computers in schools, and the reduction of class sizes. It is interesting that 87 per cent - the highest response - believed that the upgrading of schools was a major priority and supported additional resources for that area.

Mr Barnett: We are doing a good job in that area; it is a big task and we are doing a lot.

Mr BROWN: As the minister knows, this is a key issue for a number of schools in my electorate; for example, Bassendean Primary School and Ashfield Primary School.

Mr Barnett: Some of the older ones.

Mr BROWN: That is correct. It is true that after representations were made to the Minister for Education by a number of schools in my electorate, funding was allocated to them. I was with the Minister for Education when he opened the farm school new buildings at the Lockridge Senior High School which are excellent buildings and much-needed. I was also pleased to see the opening of the new administration building at the Anzac Terrace Primary School. We were fortunate in that, three or so years ago, we received funds following an application for more money for both schools. We now say to the minister that it is our turn again. The issue here was that the upgrading of schools was seen as the most significant issue for the respondents. The next issue which interested me was reduction in class sizes. Some debate has taken place in this House about the importance of reducing class sizes and of the provision of technology and computers in schools. In relation to those two issues, the responses were close: Eighty-one per cent said class sizes should be reduced and 79 per cent said more technology and computers should be provided in schools.

People were keen to see very significant cuts have taken place in two areas of government expenditure; that is, government advertising which attracted a 5 per cent approval rating, and government opinion polling, which attracted a 12 per cent approval; people were very happy to see these not on the list of priorities.

Mr Johnson: Did you list those as the areas?

Mr BROWN: Yes, I did.

The member should understand that it is important for the Government, and for the Labor Party whenever the position changes for us, to understand the community's view about government advertising. Not only the survey, but also the letters that I have received, suggested two things to me: That government advertising is not seen as education, and it is not seen as government laying out the facts in an impartial manner without expressing an opinion. It is not seen as an exercise of the Government presenting the facts and asking people to make up their minds about them. Government advertising is seen as a promotion by the Government to sell a package, whether it is workplace agreements, the Regional Forest Agreement or whatever and it is not seen as providing facts. It is not seen as providing base information. It is not educational when the receiver of the information is left to interpret it and conclude whether it is negative or positive. It is seen as a sales pitch designed to sell the policy and that is the difference. The extent that Governments, irrespective of political flavour and colour and what has happened in the past, continue to do that will determine the level of cynicism about this use of taxpayers' money, regardless of who is sitting on the Treasury bench. People want information - they are reading more and absorbing information - they do not want propaganda; they resent it. These results indicate that people's perception of government advertising is that it is propaganda and not information on which they are asked to make decisions.

There is also great cynicism about government polling. If polling were seen as something a Government did before making a decision and the results of that polling influenced the decision, it would be better received. However, government polling is seen by many people who have contacted me as a means of finding the best way to sell a product. It is similar to the position in the commercial sector which says, "Here is a product we want to sell, what is the best means of doing that?" I have been told about sales meetings run by some of the large agencies where it is said that when one buys a product - such as a pair of Nike shoes or a Coke - one buys the product and the imagery surrounding it. That might be fine in a commercial sense, but it is not appropriate for Government to use taxpayers' money to create that imagery. It is not appropriate for people to use taxpayers' money to create that imagery. Shareholders and companies can determine how best to deal with their private money. They are entitled to decide whether it is worthwhile to pour money into that sort of imagery and in many instances it is. However, people have a different view when it comes to taxpayers' money. They expect education and information; they do not expect propaganda and they resent it.

In the survey questions were asked about family counselling and whether there was support for increases in that area and

82 per cent of those surveyed responded favourably. Other questions asked about public housing and received a 63 per cent favourable response. The survey asked questions about community facilities to which 83 per cent responded favourably and 89 per cent of those surveyed responded favourably to the question about disability support, a matter which has been before the Parliament on many occasions.

A range of other issues were apparent in my survey. One was the concern about the level of crime in the area. I have spoken previously in this House about the need to introduce an active and comprehensive crime prevention strategy. One of a number of concerns in my area relates to substance abuse and people being accosted, assaulted and otherwise interfered with when going about their normal business by those who are high on drugs particularly glue. I have raised the matter in this Parliament on a number of occasions and I have debated it with the Minister for Family and Children's Services. I recently raised the issue with Family and Children's Services and sought an understanding for an active and interventionist program to be implemented to try to involve young people engaged in substance abuse in the community in some way. I am pleased to report the department's officers left a recent meeting with an undertaking that they would endeavour to return with funding for an interventionist program to combat this problem. In a month's time when the department responds to my request I hope I will be told that funds have been provided and an active and interventionist program will be put in place to deal with this matter.

As we have said in this House before, this is not an issue which can be dealt with exclusively by the police. Sniffing glue and petrol are not offences or misdemeanours and currently the problem cannot be dealt with in any meaningful way under the Health Act. Therefore, the only real way to deal with the issue before rather than after crimes are committed is to have an active and interventionist crime prevention program in place which encourages young people away from this type of behaviour by seeking to involve them elsewhere. That will not be achieved through a school cadet program or by the opening of a youth service with a shingle stating "This is a friendly youth service". It will not be achieved by putting up a nice building somewhere; it will be achieved only by the engagement of appropriately qualified and experienced youth workers and health professionals who can work with these young people and seek to change their behaviour with the cooperation of the police so that those who do not wish to respond to this helping hand meet the full force of the law. I hope that this initiative will be implemented in my electorate. If it is, it will have some effect in reducing the rate of crime and the incidence of the behaviour which has caused many of my constituents grief.

Another issue which has been raised with me concerning crime is the greater use of technology. The Minister for Police may be able to comment on this. A range of new technologies have tracking capabilities. An example is the use of the global positioning system in cars and with bracelets. A range of technical devices can be used at low cost because they are electronically monitored by a machine and do not need an operator. A number of my constituents believe there are great possibilities in this area.

Mr Prince: We have the CADCOM computerised dispatch system which is scheduled to come on-line in 2001. It involves what you are talking about, not only using GPS to track every police vehicle, including motorbikes, but also providing digitally encrypted voice and data transmission between vehicles and base stations across the State. That will enable those who are in control, particularly in the case of a 000 call, to say which vehicle is the closest to the scene. At the moment that is done by a radio broadcast of a problem at a certain address asking who can attend. The new system will indicate who is on what job and where they are and physically track them. That is good for officer safety and management of people on the roads and the ground. That is coming.

Mr BROWN: I understood that in relation to police services in respect of vehicles and so on, but what some of my constituents are raising goes beyond that to the point where, in terms of home detention, it is now possible for people to wear bracelets which can be monitored and which make it apparent if people move beyond a certain area. We do not need to worry about a person going beyond the 50 metre radius of a house.

Mr Prince: I have not looked into that matter in detail - it is more for the Ministry of Justice - but I am aware that there have been some technical glitches with the bracelet which sends signals through a telephone line connected to the house even when the telephone is not ringing. Such technology with improvements is a very good idea.

Mr BROWN: Sure. The other matter is being able to monitor cars through the global positioning system. We can monitor boats and we should be able to monitor cars.

Mr Prince: We can, but we must put a GPS in every vehicle.

Mr BROWN: That would be necessary if we wanted people within the vehicle to be able to use the GPS. What is important is for the GPS to be able to monitor that vehicle.

Mr Prince: It cannot, because the source of the GPS signal is the actual transmitter-receiver on the vehicle, aircraft or boat. We can track vehicles only if we are able to plug into the American national spy satellite network, which can follow and identify a vehicle, otherwise we must rely on some form of transmission from the vehicle in order to find it. That is what GPS does. Some time in the future - perhaps in 10 or 20 years - GPS may be standard on vehicles of any price, then we will be able to track them across any given area. Perhaps that would be good for traffic management. At the moment we must have something that sends a signal from the vehicle, boat or aircraft before we can get a signal back.

Mr BROWN: As the minister knows, the cost of computers is reducing rapidly. Some Internet providers in America provide computers to their customers free of charge. They make their money each time the computer is turned on and the operator is bombarded with advertisements. That is part of the deal; one cannot turn off the advertisements because they are programmed.

Mr Prince: It is like so-called free-to-air television; it is not free at all.

Mr BROWN: That is right. They are free, but one is bombarded with the advertisements.

Mr Thomas: Just watch the ABC.

Mr BROWN: That is right. As many of my constituents have said, costs are decreasing rapidly in all areas. Six months ago, a digital camera was an enormous price, but it has come down since then.

Mr Prince: An advertising-standard camera was about \$9 000 to \$10 000; now it is about \$1 500.

Mr BROWN: I saw one advertised the other day for \$695.

Mr Prince: I am talking about one that a newspaper uses for its own advertising. The price has come down phenomenally in the past three years.

Mr BROWN: There is a great opportunity for improvements in technology which will aid detection and, therefore, certainly be of great assistance to the Police Service.

Another matter that has been raised with me is security patrols. Concern is raised about who should have financial responsibility for meeting the costs of such patrols. Pressure has been applied to local government to meet their costs. We already see in a range of areas such patrols working hand-in-glove with the police in a very cooperative way. What does that mean in a funding sense and in a political legislative sense in the medium term? It means two things: Firstly, although local government has always had some responsibility for crime prevention - that is, the design of suburbs and so on - the notion of local government being required to fund security patrols adds another layer of costs onto local government. In fact, for the enforcement of law and order, either in detection or enforcement, it transfers that responsibility from the State to local government. In other words, it transfers it from taxpayers to ratepayers.

Mr Prince: No, I disagree. Today the member for Vasse gave me a copy of an article out of *The Economist* about the Boston police as opposed to the New York police. Community policing where the community as a whole accepts that it has responsibility, which varies according to one's position or organisation in the community, is how most modern policing is effective. It does not work to try to lump the law and order problem or community disorder problem into one agency. Police should never have been considered in that way. Police are enforcement officers and they have particular powers over and above everybody else, but the actual disobedience of the law occurs across the whole community and the whole community should have a part in it. Local government has always had a part, particularly in mature suburbs - by that I mean in an infrastructure sense - and there is a real reason to say, "You take up a responsibility", and most do. In the growing suburbs where there is a huge requirement for future infrastructure it is much more problematic.

Mr BROWN: I understood that in terms of law and order local government has had responsibilities for design matters, planning matters and so on and for licensing and monitoring of dogs, cats and the like.

Mr Prince: And rubbish and other things which, in Scotland, are a police responsibility.

Mr BROWN: They may be, but traditionally local government has had that responsibility and the State Government has had the policing-type responsibility. Let us consider the responsibilities that are now being subtly and slowly transferred to security patrols. They are taking on a much lower level but nevertheless quasi-level of policing. Many security people are undertrained for the job. Sooner or later one of them will finish up in the difficult position of going to someone's aid and someone will be hurt in the process. Potentially, the security officer, because he does not have the training of a police officer in defence and so on, or a member of the public will be damaged. The security officer could be charged with overreacting or whatever the case may be.

Mr Prince: That happens now with members of the public. The worst recent case I can think of was on ANZAC day when a former Royal Australian Navy sailor in Sydney intervened to stop a robbery outside an automatic teller machine only a few metres from where he had marched that day and he was knifed to death. Each year people are charged by the police for going beyond that which the law permits in protecting others, property and so on. To my certain knowledge that has happened for 30 years and undoubtedly longer.

Mr BROWN: That has happened. I agree with the minister about citizens going to the rescue of others, but we are talking about hundreds and potentially thousands of security guards being employed for the purpose of watching and providing information, advice and so on. The minister might be right but I think that I am right. In such an environment security officers will be caught up in a crime or what looks to them like a crime.

Mr Prince: Security officers are present at, for example, football games, night clubs and so on. Historically some get hurt because it is in the nature of that function that they sometimes deal with people en masse and people who are sometimes intoxicated. Security patrols, which have been around since before we were born in some form or another, are now far more prevalent than they were. Given the numbers involved, no doubt someone will get hurt. That is no reason to condemn the security patrols as such, as long as, first, they have no more power than they have now and, secondly, they work in conjunction with the police. Neither I nor this Government, would ever countenance the situation that has developed in the United States, where many security patrols have been given powers over and above those of the average citizen but not police powers. That is a recipe for disaster.

Mr BROWN: I do not want to argue with the minister about his perception of the future. Circumstances will arise sooner or later that will lead to the provision of certain police-type functions to security officers who are not trained and who do not have the experience to exercise them. That is where it is leading and it is a recipe for disaster.

Two issues concern me: First, the Government will eventually say to people who live in neighbourhoods in which the break and enter rate is high and who are complaining, that it is not a problem for the State Government but for the local council because it has not provided security patrols. When security patrols become the order of the day, that scenario will occur. Secondly, it transfers the responsibility from the State Government to local government and is an added impost on ratepayers. They are real concerns and I believe they are shared by the community. The community members to whom I have spoken have asked why the Government is not meeting its responsibilities in these areas and why it has left this to local government.

The other matters I want to raise relate to recent changes made to the home and community care program. I am particularly concerned about the changes that have been made to this program because they will force the elderly in our society, and particularly the elderly who need home assistance, to pay significantly more than they are currently paying. Some people now pay a small amount for these services.

Mr Prince: And many people want to.

Mr BROWN: Under the new arrangements, people will be required to pay up to \$20 a week for those services.

Mr Prince: Irrespective of how many are provided. Those who are chronically ill and who are provided with many services will pay no more.

Mr BROWN: This is a very poor policy decision because these services have been provided to assist people to remain in their own homes rather than go into hostel or nursing home care. It applies to the elderly, many of whom are on the age pension. If any of those people are completely reliant on the age pension, as many are, and if they are renting accommodation, this imposition is very significant.

Mr Prince: Taking into account Meals on Wheels and that most people have been paying Silver Chain, which is the biggest provider, for a long time, very few will be paying much more than they are paying now, and some people who have been paying nothing will be asked to pay something. This commonwealth decision was made public when I was Minister for Health and it has taken two years to negotiate with the service providers.

Mr BROWN: I understand the HACC program is not an exclusively commonwealth program.

Mr Prince: The ratio is 60:40 between the Commonwealth Government and the State Government.

Mr BROWN: I believe that these changes cannot be made unless the State agrees.

Mr Prince: And the State either agrees or loses the funding.

Mr BROWN: I understand that New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia have not agreed to these changes. Only two States have agreed: Western Australia and Victoria - the two major coalition States. I am not sure what has happened in Tasmania. Why the Government would want to put this extra impost on the elderly and pensioners, I do not know. I am amazed.

This decision has come at a time when the elderly and pensioners have also been advised about changes to social security arrangements. Social security is obviously a matter for the Federal Parliament, but members know that pensions are paid on a Thursday. However, it has been possible for pensioners to receive their payment earlier than they were under pre-existing arrangements. Now the pension will not be available until the Thursday. If people wish to collect it before then, banks - particularly the Commonwealth Bank - will make it available but at a cost of \$25. I have constituents who are elderly and who find it difficult to get to banks and financial institutions to withdraw their funds. They rely on their families or friends to do their financial business and they now face inflexibility in the system. If they want to do as they have always done, they will be charged an extra \$25. That is appalling.

This change is being made when the federal Treasurer is expected to announce tonight a budget surplus of between \$5b and \$8b. That is five-sevenths or more of the state budget. This change is not being introduced because the Federal Government is going broke, because there is a need for belt tightening or because no funds are available at the federal level. This change is being introduced when the Federal Government has a GST Bill before the Parliament that will give people earning \$80 000 a year or more tax reductions of \$70 a week. Yet we see the measly mindedness of the Federal and State Governments in imposing this additional charge on the elderly and pensioners. It is appalling.

**MR KOBELKE (Nollamara)** [4.20 pm]: In the Governor's speech at the opening of this Parliament a year and a half ago, the Government was bold enough to have him assert that we were in the midst of the greatest period of resources development in Australia's history. While I have said before that that was gilding the lily somewhat, it indicated that the State was experiencing record resources development, and that the State Government was able to benefit by filling its coffers during that period of intense economic activity in Western Australia's resources sector. However, unfortunately the Government did not manage very well, and now, only a year and half later, when suddenly there has been a turnaround in the resources sector, the Government is bringing in a budget that will put us in debt to the tune of a further \$800m. That is a clear example of total mismanagement by the Court Government. The Court Government had it very easy in its first five years or so. The international demand for our materials and resources was very high, the level of production was high, and prices in the international marketplace were generally good. However, the Government did not rest there. It increased the level of taxes and charges to the people of this State at a totally unacceptable rate. The third element of the Government's key linchpins was to expand the media unit and be able to manage the media.

This Government thought it had it made, with high international demand for the State's resources, increased levels of taxation

on the people of this State, and the ability to manage and manipulate the media. However, it failed to deal with the fundamental issues of good government in this State. It refused to take up the recommendations of the Commission on Government in any meaningful way. It refused to properly manage many government agencies and departments. The approach of this Treasurer and his Government was to say, "Everything is going well; let it run down the hill; we do not need to have our hands on the wheel." However, now that there is a downturn in the resources sector and things are not going so well for the State's economy, the Government is totally lacking in leadership and is stuck up the creek without a paddle. It does not know how to handle the problem, and it has resorted again to increasing taxes and charges, and, more importantly, to bringing in a budget which has a huge blow-out. That is clear evidence that the Government is not competent and does not know how to address the real issues in an honest and successful way.

This budget is an exercise in deceit. We saw that again in question time today, when the Treasurer could not answer a fundamental question from the Leader of the Opposition about the level of the deficit. The Treasurer and his media minders have worked out a couple of standard lines - lines that are totally false with regard to what is really in this budget - and the Treasurer will be running those false lines over and over again. That gives us little hope that the real issues for this State will be addressed by the Court Government. In this budget, state debt will blow out by a further \$800m. The Treasurer has made no statement about the State's real financial circumstances, nor has he given a rational explanation of what strategies will be used to try to deal with this matter. The Treasurer has simply gone into media control mode again and tried to do a snow job, rather than explain what is in the budget and how it will serve the long-term interests of Western Australia. It is difficult to understand how we could have slipped so quickly into such a deep hole when, according to this Government, everything was going so well. As I have indicated, record revenues have come into the State's coffers since this Government came to power. The Government told us that by contracting out a range of services - this was derived in large part from the McCarrey report - we could save between \$300m and \$400m in recurrent expenditure every year. The Treasurer said also that by selling off BankWest and other major assets, our interest bill would drop by \$300m, or more, every year, and that the policies put in place by his Government would result in an annual saving of between \$600m and \$700m.

It is clear from this budget that there has been no benefit and no social dividend for the people of this State. Additional costs have been placed on the people of this State in the form of higher taxes and charges. They have also suffered in the form of a lower level of services being delivered from the public sector or from the privatised entities that have taken over the role of the public sector. It is clear from this budget that the Government has failed. We will attempt to show where the Government has lost and wasted the money, and how it has made decisions that have frittered away the advantages that should have accrued to Western Australia from the years of good economic growth in the resources sector and other parts of our economy. This Government has not been competent. It has thought that all it has to do is use media spin to get across a picture. In doing that, it has failed to address the real issues.

I will touch on one example that occurred this week to drive home my point about the style of this Government. This Government has set about constructing a new port at Naval Base. Most projects of this importance undergo a lengthy planning process to ensure that there is a demand, and that the infrastructure can be put in place economically and with the least disruption to other interests. The reports for the new port at Naval Base were concocted at the last minute. We have now reached the stage where the Government has awarded to a private developer, a friend of the Government, the right to build that new port, without an in-depth analysis of the need for that port from both a transport perspective and from the perspective of the economic cost to the State. The Minister for Planning has then come riding in on his white horse with the answer to the problem by proposing that the Stirling Naval Base that was built at a cost of more than \$1b be shifted to the mainland and plonked on top of the port that the Government will build, and that will justify that new port. That is an absolute joke, and it will cost Western Australia a great deal of money.

Mr Thomas: One aspect to the private port that the Minister for Planning has overlooked is that it will probably require an amendment to the metropolitan region scheme.

Mr KOBELKE: I thank the member for Cockburn for that interjection, because it shows the total incompetence of this Government. That incompetence is driving a range of costs which are eating up this budget. Let us look cursorily at what is involved in this port. The Government may not need to put in any money for the construction of the port, but it will need to meet the cost of infrastructure. If the Minister for Planning's mad hatter idea of moving the naval port were furthered in any way, it would involve a cost for either the Federal or State Government. In addition, the Government owns major infrastructure in the Port of Fremantle, and any shift of usage away from the Port of Fremantle to some competing port is likely to have a major cost impact on the taxpayers of Western Australia. None of that has been considered by the Government, and in a few years we will have another hole in the budget because of that total mismanagement by the Court Government. That is what happens when we have an incompetent Government. The \$800m blow-out is due, in part, to the downturn in the State's economy, but it is due even more to the Government's incompetent decision making over the past six years. That is now coming home to roost for this Government. Unfortunately, the jokes that have been inflicted on the people of Western Australia by the Minister for Planning and other ministers of this Government have a cost, and we see in this budget the cost of that mismanagement.

The Treasurer's budget speech was all about selling the budget. It was not about explaining the economic situation in this State. It was not in any way about trying to rationalise the decisions that have been made in this budget and how they will meet the State's needs. The Treasurer simply put a political spin on a set of numbers. The Treasurer said at page 7 of the *1999-2000 Budget Speech* that -

The proof of our training policies is the 93.6% increase in apprenticeships since 1993.

That is patently false. What do we say about someone who comes in here with a prepared statement and makes that

statement knowing it to be false? It is simply unacceptable. The Treasurer had better come in here tomorrow to apologise or that statement will be seen to be a lie. He has an opportunity to correct the record or be known to be lying to this House. There has not been a 93.6 per cent increase in the number of apprenticeships since 1993; in fact, the number has gone down since the last budget. On page 1424 of the *Budget Statements* under the Western Australian Department of Training one can see that 5 000 new apprenticeship completions are estimated for 1998-99 and 4 800 is the target for 1999-2000. Therefore, even the Treasurer's budget shows a reduction in the number of apprenticeship completions.

Let us go back to the statement that there has been an increase in apprenticeships since 1993. In 1993 the number of apprenticeships completed was 3 406 and in 1998, according to the figures I was given in answer to a question on notice, there were 2 848 completions. From 1993 to 1998 the number of apprenticeship completions therefore fell by 558 or 16 per cent. I do not know how the Treasurer will explain his claimed increase of 93.6 per cent. Those are merely completions. Let us look at commencements. In 1993 the number of commencements was 4 553. In 1998 the number of commencements was 4 290. The number went down by 263 or 6 per cent. Therefore, completions have gone down since 1993 and so have commencements. There is no basis for supporting the Treasurer's suggestion that more people are in apprenticeships. Cancellations and suspensions have risen. In 1993, 1 361 apprenticeships were either cancelled or suspended. In 1998 the number had risen to 1 982; that is, it rose by 621 or 46 per cent. Therefore, between 1993 and 1998 completions dropped by 16 per cent, commencements went down by 6 per cent and cancellations and suspensions went up by 46 per cent. There has clearly not been an increase in apprenticeships. For the Treasurer to suggest an increase of 93.6 per cent is really quite a joke, except that if people do not know the figures, they might be fooled by that false information.

Further, the figures I have given take no account of the growth in the workforce since 1993. The workforce has grown. If one took apprenticeships as a percentage of the workforce, the decline would be even more stark. The Treasurer has clearly made a totally false statement to this House in trying to sell his budget. I have picked on one example. Perhaps the person writing the Treasurer's speech meant to talk about new apprenticeships, because the Federal Government has also been caught up with this media doublespeak of saying one thing while doing exactly the opposite. The decline in the number of apprenticeships is seen to be addressed by simply redefining apprenticeships. The concept of new apprenticeships means apprenticeships plus traineeships. The numbers have gone up because of a huge growth in traineeships, many of which are very good and worthwhile as training programs but some of which unfortunately are rorts and totally inappropriate. I will not go into that debate now. To somehow try to change the number of apprenticeships by including traineeships does the Treasurer no credit at all.

In the Department of Training many good programs are funded by this budget, both in the various independent TAFE colleges and also with the Joblink program, which is funded by this Government. I certainly congratulate it for continuing that very important program for helping young people to get back into employment or into further training. When one looks at the Western Australian Department of Training budget, one sees a 6 per cent increase in recurrent expenditure. Given that many other areas have been cut back, that does hold the line. I am very pleased that there has not been a real cut, as there has been in so many other departments. The Treasurer tried to make something of the fact that there was to be a great deal of capital expenditure. That is not true because, although there is a level of capital expenditure, which is good, it will be decreased by 20 per cent and not increased. I will return later to comment on issues that come under the Department of Training, but for the moment I will continue my remarks on the budget and the way the Treasurer has presented it.

Since the last year of the Labor Government and through the first six years of the Court Government, employment growth in Western Australia has been quite good. Compared with the rest of Australia it has been very good. However, by what yardstick does one measure the performance of this Government with respect to employment? Its employment record has been mediocre given the relatively high level of economic activity in Western Australia. As the Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, the Government is making unbelievable forecasts for economic growth. It is predicating this budget and therefore employment growth on a growth in state economic activity of 4.5 per cent in 1999-2000. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia has suggested that a more accurate figure would be of the order of 2.75 per cent. The National Australia Bank has given an estimate for state economic growth of the order of 2 to 3 per cent. One can see that the Treasurer is being very optimistic in suggesting that we will have that high level of growth. If we do not achieve it, the budget will simply slip much deeper down the hole into which this Government has put it. It will also very clearly affect the level of employment growth in Western Australia.

The Government does not have a very good record in projecting employment growth and has consistently been over-optimistic when bringing down the budget and suggesting what employment growth will be in the forthcoming year. The suggestion in this budget that employment growth in 1999-2000 is likely to run at about 2 per cent must be treated with a great deal of suspicion. If employment growth of the order of 2 per cent is not achieved, we will see a blow-out in unemployment because the general level of population growth has been running at about 2 per cent. We need to achieve an employment growth of at least 2 per cent. Given this Government's poor record in forecasting employment growth, one suspects that we have little chance of achieving the 2 per cent growth.

I also note in passing that since December each monthly figure published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics has shown an actual decline in the number of full-time jobs in Western Australia. Therefore, although the unemployment rate has been quite good and has fallen to 7 per cent, the number of full-time jobs has been falling. That impacts directly on families' potential to take out mortgages, to spend and to drive consumer confidence. It impacts on small business and its ability to invest and through that investment create a further growth in jobs. It is very important that we see a growth in full-time employment and a turnaround in the decline that has been taking place all of this year.

I have taken out of each budget the projected employment growth and the actual figure achieved for the past few years. In its budget last year the Government suggested that employment was likely to grow at 3.25 per cent in 1998-99. Its estimate

in these papers for the same period is now 2.5 per cent. As that is the best figure we have, I will assume that is the likely employment growth outcome for the current year. That means that last year the Government overestimated employment growth by 30 per cent. It was too optimistic. In the 1997-98 budget, the Government projected that growth would be 3 per cent, but achieved only 2.7 per cent. The Government's estimate was 11 per cent over, which is not too bad, given that it is hard to get these things exact. In 1996-97, the Government forecast employment growth of 2.75 per cent. However, employment growth only reached 2.3 per cent. In 1995-96, the Government projected an employment growth of 2.75 per cent; in fact, it achieved almost no employment growth. Employment growth was down to 0.2 of 1 per cent in 1995-96.

The first point I make is that these are only projections of growth, and no-one would expect that the Government would always get them right. However, those figures show that in the past four years, the Government has overestimated employment growth by 30 per cent, 11 per cent, 20 per cent and 1 275 per cent. The figures do not have a great deal of significance except to show that the Government's estimates have been out by a fair bit in the past. The second point I make is that in every case the Government has overestimated employment growth. We did not see in some cases an overestimation and in some cases an underestimation. In every budget in the past four years, the Government has overestimated the employment growth in the forthcoming year. On that track record one must suspect the 2 per cent employment growth contained in this budget. Therefore, one must be concerned that we will see a lack of growth in jobs and, commensurately, a growth in unemployment in this State, which is not acceptable.

I turn to the Government's overall record on employment. It has been a moderately good record compared with the rest of Australia. Let us compare the employment growth in the first six years of the Court Government with the employment growth in the first six years of the Burke-Dowding Governments. That comparison bears looking at because both of those periods, from 1983 to 1989 and 1993 to 1999, were roughly at about the same stage of the economic cycle. The Burke Government was elected when we were coming out of an international and national recession. Similarly, when the Court Government was elected in 1993, we were coming out of an international and national recession. In the first six years of the Labor Government there was job growth of 29.1 per cent. In the first six years of the Court Government the total job growth was 20.6 per cent. In the time that heralded the greatest resource development in Australia's history, the Court Government could achieve only two-thirds of the job growth that Labor achieved for roughly the same period and in the same part of the economic cycle. If the Court Government had achieved the same growth in jobs as Labor had done in the early 1980s and we saw a similar participation rate, currently unemployment would be running at 1.7 per cent instead of the 7 per cent-plus mark. Although the Government has a moderately good record, it is not something to crow about when like-with-like comparisons are made.

Mr Osborne: Promise is a fine dog, but performance is a better one.

Mr KOBELKE: I am sure that the member for Bunbury was commenting on the performance of the Court Government with its \$800m debt blowout in the budget. I thank the member Bunbury for supporting my comments.

I will now make a few comments about the Training portfolio. While I have commended the Court Government on maintaining the level of recurrent spending, there are major problems with management in this area and the interference of the minister in changing the structure. Regardless of the level of financial contribution by the Government to training, if it destroys some of the important elements of the structure, training will suffer. Real concern exists that changes being made by the Court Government are already eroding and have further potential to erode the quality of training in Western Australia.

The industry training councils play a very important role in providing independent advice to government on the needs of industry and assisting in that exchange of views between the Government decision makers and the players in industry who need the trained staff and who contribute very often in a major way to those training programs and who are best placed to put to government what the training needs of their industry will be into the future. We saw a change to the funding basis for industry training councils. They are now funded for core and non-core services. That was a total travesty and bore no resemblance to reality. It was a means by which a whole lot of money was passed to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other players the Government felt would be closer to it and give it the views that it wants. That will destroy any real independent advice to the Government on training. It opens up real questions about conflict of interest.

In order to survive, industry training councils are told, in limited areas, to become players in the market and to offer and market services which previously were provided by other players and over which industry training councils were able to be observers, commentators and organisations to report back to government. The Government is now suggesting that they must be players in the market in order to survive. In some instances that is already the case, because the CCI is now providing advice to government in areas in which it is a training provider. That does not lead to good quality, independent advice on how our training system should work.

The second area relates to the changes being made by the Government to the building and construction industry training fund. That fund was established by the last Labor Government to ensure there was a direct contribution from the building and construction sector to training. It was a very important move and one that should be maintained. This Government is ambivalent about it. In some statements it says it does not believe in a levy which requires industry to directly support training. On other occasions it has referred to improving the building and construction industry training fund to make it work better. Legislation through this Parliament in 1997 purported to do both of those things, as strange as that may seem. That legislation introduced a range of reforms to improve the functioning of the BCITF, which, basically, the Opposition supported. The Government also placed in the legislation a sunset clause which meant that the fund will collapse at the end of 2002 if no legislation is introduced to extend the life of the fund. The Opposition accepted an undertaking from the minister in this House that she would move promptly to put in place those amendments to appoint a new board as required under the amendment Act and to have the legislation up and running very quickly so it could prove itself and judgments

could be made on the quality of the training provided through the BCITF and its value to Western Australia. On that basis, the Opposition was hopeful that the sunset clause would be removed and the important role played by the building and construction industry training fund continued. That has not occurred. Partly through the change of minister and the attitude of the current minister, 12 months elapsed before any action was taken. It was only in April this year that the minister finally appointed the board. That languished from 1997 until April 1999.

In bringing forward the appointment of members to the new board and some of changes which he hoped to put in place, the minister tabled a report by Stanton Partners. I will comment on that before I speak about some of the changes to the building and construction industry training fund. The minister tabled two reports. One was not an addendum or a previous research paper to the other; they were across each other in content. One did not refer to the other in a way which made much sense. The answer to the question I asked about that did not clarify the issue. I asked about the cost of the report by Stanton Partners. In the answer I received to the parliamentary question, the minister indicated that the consultancy cost \$44 500 and was paid in three instalments: Approximately \$11 000 on 27 October 1997; \$22 000 on 24 March 1998; and \$11 000 on 20 April 1998. It is very strange that the last payment for Stanton Partners was made on 20 April 1998, yet the report was tabled in 1999. In his answer, the minister said that Stanton Partners worked through until April 1999. Is the Government's current policy to pay consultants 12 months ahead of their finishing work. I smell a rat. Does the minister expect us to believe that consultants are engaged and paid and then the report is completed 12 months later? It is a nonsense by which the minister is trying to hide something.

The Minister for Employment and Training is not the only one covering up; the Treasurer was also hiding these matters by providing false information to the Parliament. He has clearly set out to deceive the Parliament. We had the report on consultants engaged by government. I have the reports that go to 31 December 1997 and to 30 June 1998, the periods covering those three payments to Stanton Partners. These payments are not in the report. The payments to Stanton Partners for the report covering the building and construction industry training fund are conveniently omitted from the report on consultants tabled by the Premier. This is not the first time he has set out to deceive the Parliament, as he has with this budget. We all know he can be consistent in one thing - misleading and deceiving this Parliament. There is clear evidence of his doing it with the report of Stanton Partners relating to the building and construction industry training fund.

I now refer to the further actions taken by the minister on the building and construction industry training fund. Mr Thom, the Executive Officer - that is his correct title - of the Housing Industry Association Ltd wrote to members suggesting the minister had announced that its contributions did not have to go to the BCITF, but could go directly to the HIA training organisation. Last week I asked a question of the minister and he told me that was the way he would move. That was not the intention of the amending legislation. In certain specified circumstances, it allowed for a construction project to involve training and, therefore, that element involved in training could be rebated off the contribution to be made to the building and construction industry training fund. At that time, the Government did not state that it intended to allow a range of organisations to opt out of the building and construction industry training fund. Currently we are not in a position to know whether that is legally possible under the legislation. I suspect it is not, but time will tell. Nonetheless, if that is the Government's clear direction, it is seeking to undermine training in the State. Even when this budget indicates a need for increased emphasis in training in building and construction, we are seeing moves by the Government to undermine that training and to reduce the number of young people who receive training in trades required for those industries.

I will now make some brief comments on the workers compensation system and its total mismanagement by this Government. Last week totally unacceptable increases to the premium rates were announced to be paid by businesses for workers compensation insurance. Those increases are directly attributable to the changes made in 1993 by this Government to the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act. In that year, the Government rammed through the Parliament changes to the workers compensation system which were opposed in different respects by not only the Opposition but also the insurance companies and various sections of the industry. The Government was not consulting with people, listening to how the system could be improved. As we have seen many times - it is evident in the major problems in this budget - the Government was about a narrow political agenda and not about addressing the substantial issue of workers compensation.

When the Act was changed in 1993, the Government had in its view one thing - the sale of the State Government Insurance Office, the prospectus for which was held up until the changes to the legislation could be rushed through the Parliament. On the basis of the changes, with an improved bottom line, the SGIO could be sold for a higher price. Not surprisingly, it created major problems. The Government had not consulted about or addressed the real issues of workers compensation. It was about a secondary hidden agenda. When that is done, as this Government does so often, everything comes unstuck. In 1993 the Government was told that it should not remove redemptions from the workers compensation system. The insurance companies and the industry told the Government not to do it. The Government was hell-bent on its agenda. In removing redemptions from the system, it created a major cost problem. We have seen a huge blow-out in weekly payments as it became more difficult to opt out of the weekly payment system, by settling for a lump sum payment called a redemption. Further, insurance companies then turned to the second gateway for common law claims as a means of providing de facto redemptions because they had been shut to them. In turn, we saw huge blow-outs in the claims through the second gateway under common law.

The Government should have done something about it, but it did not. As early as 1995, it had legislation drafted to amend the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act and to return redemptions to the system. That was introduced to this Parliament in 1996. The Labor Opposition supported the amendments, but the Government did not proceed with them. They were introduced in 1997 and the Government did not proceed with them. In 1998 the Government brought forward the amending Bill and in June, at the last minute, on the very last sitting day of that session, it sought to remove the common law right of the second gateway. We opposed that, although we supported the Bill in general. At the end of last year, the Government again sought to restrict access to the common law through the first and second gateways. We were willing to



pass the Bill and even accept a fair degree of the restriction the Government wished to place on common law access, but we would not accept the unworkable and quite horrendous proposals first brought forward by the Government. As in the preceding years, it walked away from its legislation.

The increases in workers compensation premiums rest squarely on this Government. It has created these problems for itself by its total mismanagement of the workers compensation system. We are glad the Government has put in place a review of the workers compensation and rehabilitation system. It was very tardy in doing that. We have expressed our confidence in not only the three members of the review committee but also the terms of reference it has been given by the Government. We hope the review committee will come forward with workable proposals to reform the system so that it is honest and fair to injured workers, and efficient to enable the premium levels to stabilise and move downwards. The increases that have occurred over the past two years cannot continue because the whole workers compensation system is likely to be undermined by a prohibitive cost structure.

Concerning the report from that review committee, we hope that the Government will be willing to consult openly and widely so we can reach a consensus quickly and the amendments that may be required can be introduced into Parliament and passed without undue delay.

The last matter I will touch on is just one more example of the incompetence of this Government which seeks to address its narrow political desires and not good government and proper management, or even the constitutional requirements of Western Australia. I refer to the appointment of Hon Clive Griffiths to be the State's Agent General in London. The Government had a political problem prior to the last election. It had a problem with preselections in the South Metropolitan Region for which Hon Clive Griffiths was a member, and for which there was factional fighting over who would remain a member or who would become a member. The Government's solution was to offer Hon Clive Griffiths a good job and, to show that the deal was signed and sealed, that decision went through the Executive Council so it was enforceable. After the election the Government realised it had a problem when it no longer had a majority in the other place. There was some doubt whether, in the short period before those members took their seats on 22 May, the Government would find a replacement for Hon Clive Griffiths if he took the job which had been awarded to him.

Mr Thomas: The type of deal it did with Clive Griffiths cost Nick Greiner his job.

Mr KOBELKE: I was just coming to that point. I will not go into what may be the proceedings of this matter through the court and what may or may not stand as the court's interpretation of the law. The Government should have been mindful of clause 34 of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act. It is headed "Disqualification of certain office-holders and members of Parliament". It clearly states -

- (1) Subject to this Act a person is disqualified for membership of the Legislature if he -
  - (a) holds any office mentioned in Part 1 of Schedule V . . .

In part 1 of schedule V the Agent General is mentioned. According to the constitutional documents of this State, it was not open to the Government to appoint Hon Clive Griffiths to an office of profit under the Crown while he still attempted to hold his place in the other House. It was improper and, I suggest, also illegal with respect to the Constitution. As the member for Cockburn correctly pointed out, when Mr Greiner tried to get rid of a minister with whom he was having some difficulty and appoint him to a position, the Independent Commission Against Corruption found that that was a corrupt act. Mr Greiner then lost his position as Premier. He challenged it in the Supreme Court and the decision of the Independent Commission Against Corruption was overturned; however, that was too late for Mr Greiner. He was no longer the Premier of that State. In other States which have the mechanisms of government, which this Government has refused to put in place, to ensure that there is some accountability, things are done properly. If it were not just a matter of doing deals and looking after mates, regardless of what damage is done to the State's economy or Constitution, we might have a decent Government in this State. We have a totally incompetent Government which is driven by doing deals of a political nature or looking after mates. That is the reason this budget is a disaster. It shows that the Government has been driving with its hands off the wheel and has driven us into a great hole through its incompetence and total mismanagement of the State's economy.

**MR THOMAS** (Cockburn) [5.03 pm]: I wish to use this general debate on the budget to raise three or four issues which affect my electorate of Cockburn and two issues which affect my portfolio interest of Energy. I am pleased that the Minister for Energy is in the Chamber and is following the debate closely. I hope he will be able to respond to the points that I will raise relating to Energy. The first three issues I will raise are planning issues that affect my electorate. I am sorry that the Minister for Planning is not in the Chamber. If he is in the building, he should come into the Chamber because I would like to raise some matters with him and then receive some answers, if that is possible. I have tried to raise those matters during the past fortnight during grievances, but, as he has not been in Parliament for grievances, I could not get a straight answer from him on those matters.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Barron-Sullivan): This is the second reading debate. I understand what the member is talking about. He probably expected the minister to respond by way of interjection; however, this is not a forum for a backwards and forwards process of debate.

Mr THOMAS: Last Thursday when I raised the issue of the Fremantle Rockingham Industrial Area Regional Strategy, by way of a grievance, the Leader of the House, who was present, responded. Obviously he was not as familiar with the matters as the minister responsible and, hence, I did not get a clear answer to my proposals, so I will raise them again. The first issue which I will raise is about Jervoise Bay and the issues arising from that. Members of the House will be aware that has been an environmentally controversial project in my district which has attracted a fair degree of opposition. I have not concurred with that opposition. I have been a supporter of the project, notwithstanding the fact that a number of people have had

concerns about it. I have said to them that I understand their concerns. I understand that they would prefer to see Cockburn Sound left in an undeveloped state, but the advantages which flow from the development of that project outweigh the desires those people have, understandable though that might be. I have stated that the projection of 1 600 jobs in a clean, clever, non-polluting, manufacturing industry is something which Australia needs and which I would like to see located in Cockburn. I have said also that the environmental concerns which are attached to Cockburn Sound generally will not be exacerbated by the construction of the Jervoise Bay project. The ground water plumes entering the sound are not nutrient rich at that latitude and it is unlikely there will be algal blooms like that which occurred in the northern harbour and the areas of seagrass that would be disrupted are minimal. I have said also that not one metre of beach will be taken up by this project and the attachment which a number of people have to Challenger Beach, which I share, is not a concern that need arise out of the Jervoise Bay project - the southern harbour project - because it is a kilometre from the southern harbour and would not be adversely affected. The Government has used some aspects of this project as a sweetener to emphasise its positive aspects to try to induce the community to support the project. I am sorry that the Deputy Premier, as the minister responsible for this project, is not here because I would have liked an answer from him on these matters, albeit, as you said, Mr Acting Speaker, by interjection.

The area of Henderson, the shipbuilding and marine fabrication area in my electorate along Cockburn Road, is probably the premier manufacturing precinct of this State. It is an area which involves thousands of people in the industry which I described as a clever, non-polluting, manufacturing industry, and something which we should encourage. As an area, it has grown like Topsy; it has grown without planning; and it has grown along Cockburn Road, which was a relatively minor seaside road connecting Fremantle to Rockingham, but it was not designed to be the principal road of a major manufacturing precinct. As a result, the planning for such an area is appalling. It must be redesigned and replanned. A lot of the infrastructure must be rebuilt so it is appropriate for the area. I illustrate that by referring to only one aspect; that is, where the workers park their cars. There is virtually nowhere to park cars. As one would expect, the shipyards are built along the coast and there is very little room between them and Cockburn Road. During the day, one of the major manufacturers employs, I think, 1 200 people. As a result, probably more than 1 000 cars are parked in the vicinity every day on the side of the road, off the road in loose sand or on rock. In terms of quality and quantity, Cockburn Road is not designed to carry that traffic. It is a most unsatisfactory road to service such a major area.

A marine skills area is to be built to house educational facilities to complement the marine manufacturing that will occur there. We want to see that sooner rather than later. I am suggesting that Henderson must be redesigned to take advantage of the fact that it is a major prestigious manufacturing precinct in this State. Probably more often than any other industrial area, international visitors are taken there to be shown the scale and ingenuity of projects undertaken. It is something of which Western Australians should be proud. However, the road to that important area contains potholes. The right-hand turn into one of the shipyards is perilous and for people who have finished work at the end of the day, the right-hand turn onto Cockburn Road is also very dangerous. The workers have frequently made representations to me seeking action to clean up that basic infrastructure.

In the Jervoise Bay debate, the Labor Opposition declared that it hoped to gain the support of the minor parties in the Legislative Council to do what it could to block any incursion of Cockburn Road through the Mt Brown reserve. We felt that it was unnecessary and unacceptable. I am pleased to say that the Government accepted our position. It was agreed that rather than rerouting Cockburn Road to the east through the Mt Brown portion of the Beeliar Regional Park, it would turn along the current alignment of Russell Road to be connected to Rockingham Road. That is a major change in the road network of Henderson. To the south of that, the perimeter road around the industrial precinct will be built and Cockburn Road to the south will be downgraded. In general there is to be a major rearrangement of the roads in the Henderson industrial precinct.

I am suggesting that that is an opportunity to upgrade the standard of infrastructure in the area - I note that the Minister for Energy is here - by, for example, undergrounding the power and putting in an entrance statement to make it look like an area of which the people of Western Australia are proud. That would make it more acceptable to the people who live in the area. Traditionally, much of the industry in Cockburn has been ugly and some attitudes towards industry are based on the fact that for many years people have lived with an eye-sore. Further north along Cockburn Road in the Coogee area, the areas have been tidied up at the initiative of the Labor Government. They were scattered with skin sheds and abattoirs which were often made of galvanised iron, were rusting, had no landscaping or gardening and were not areas of which people felt proud. It was understandable that people who did not derive their living from those businesses would be resentful of their existence or would not welcome their extension. These days, industrial buildings do not need to be ugly and can be enhanced by landscaping and infrastructure that is appropriate to their role in our economy. I hope that, as part of the Jervoise Bay development and the ancillary projects that go with it, the Government will soon upgrade the infrastructure in the Henderson area. In particular, it should provide somewhere for the workers employed in these projects to park their cars. There is no room on the sites, which are hard up against the coast, and there is very little room between them and the roads. That creates a major inconvenience for the workers, particularly as public transport is not an option for them. I hope that the Government will proceed sooner rather than later on this. I understand some slippage has occurred in the timetable for the construction of the Jervoise Bay project, but I hope that will not be an excuse to go slow on the other work because that is an independent variable to the Jervoise Bay project. I trust that the Government will get on with it and clean up this area because the people who live and work there feel strongly about it.

The second issue to which I refer is the Fremantle Rockingham Industrial Area Regional Scheme. I referred to this last week in a grievance to the Leader of the House acting for the Minister for Planning. I am sure there is no member in this House who could say that a government proposal that relates to their area is as profound and possibly as damaging to an area as the FRIARS project. It is unprecedented in scale and type in Western Australia and possibly in Australia. The Government

is proposing to destroy an existing community. It is seeking to go about it in a cavalier manner that does not have proper regard for the interests and sensibilities of the local people.

The area of Wattleup to which I am referring is located in the Kwinana air shed. As a consequence, for many years now it has not been possible to subdivide land in the area. Most of the land there, apart from the townsite of Wattleup, is not residential; it is zoned rural. It is an old market gardening and quarrying area. Obviously the people there are entitled to a betterment and would like to develop their land. In the past I have worked on the staff of a Minister for Planning and one of the most frequent applications before him was an appeal to the minister against rejections for applications to subdivide land primarily in Wattleup, but also in other areas within the Kwinana air shed. Other areas are similarly prevented from being subdivided. It is not a matter of preserving a precinct as occurred in the Swan Valley; further residential subdivision is not permitted because of the Kwinana air shed.

People have suggested that the area would be more appropriately zoned for industry because that activity is permitted in the area, although residential development is not. On the face of it, that seems fairly simple and straightforward. The Government has gone one step further and said that the townsite, surrounded by rural land that has the ambience and social structure of a country town, would not be appropriately located with industry on three sides. It has suggested that it buy out the people living in the area. That has caused a great degree of consternation, which is not new to those people because they have been living with it for years. Some years ago the Government published a report which had the area of Wattleup asterisked, denoting that the future of the area was under question. I have said in this place time and time again that it is unacceptable to have people living in an area being told the future of their home is regularly under question. How can people get on with painting or adding to their houses - just getting on with their lives - when it is possible that their area will be closed down as a residential area?

We are pleased that the discussion paper has proceeded to a draft report and there is now a proposal. However, the people of Wattleup have been asking me what they will be paid for their houses. I do not want to talk down the value of land in Wattleup, but I am told by the people there that values have declined relative to other areas in adjoining suburbs because the future of the area has been under question. Members will understand that few people would be desirous of buying into an area if there is an asterisk next to it on the map that indicates the future of that area is under question. How many people in this place would want to sink their nest eggs into real estate in an area which is in that state? Obviously, if demand for properties in an area declined, the price would also decline. Therefore, the values that people will achieve if the properties are bought at a so-called fair market value are likely to be less than if they were in adjoining suburbs and therefore less than that required to buy equivalent houses in adjoining suburbs.

I would have submitted a proposition to the Minister for Planning in a grievance last week if he had been here; however, I sent it in a letter to him yesterday and placed a copy in every letterbox in Wattleup today. That letter says that the people of Wattleup deserve to be offered - they might not accept the offer - a price which is sufficient to buy an equivalent house in a similar suburb in the same area. The index I used is Hamilton Hill and Spearwood because there are areas in those two suburbs which were developed at the same time with housing of a similar age, on blocks of a similar size and which can be described as socially similar.

The south west corridor has developed incrementally. From generation to generation people have tended to move from one suburb to the next. There are many people in Wattleup - I know most of them now because I have been door-knocking for the past month or so - who were brought up in Hamilton Hill and through the generations have moved down one suburb, or those who may have been outside the suburb on market gardens have moved in. There is, therefore, an organic unity between that suburb and the adjoining suburbs. What I am saying - and the people of Wattleup support me - is that if they are to be bought out, the offers made to them should be enough to buy like for like. If someone has, for example, a three-bedroom brick and tile house with one bathroom on an 800 square metre block - which would be the archetypal property in Wattleup - and that is acquired by the Government as part of the Fremantle Rockingham Industrial Area Regional Strategy process, that person should be paid enough to buy a similar property in Hamilton Hill or Spearwood.

I can take members to the relevant streets because I know the areas and when they were subdivided. I can show them where houses were built at the same time as houses were built in Wattleup in the late 1960s and early 1970s, work out what it cost to buy a particular house in Spearwood or Hamilton Hill and say that the person who has a similar property in Wattleup should receive enough to buy a similar property in Spearwood or Hamilton Hill. That is reasonable.

It is also reasonable that people should receive a solatium. The Government has said that there will be no solatium. A solatium is payment made when land is resumed to compensate for the inconvenience of being moved. If a property is resumed, obviously the owner has no choice in the matter and is entitled not only to sufficient money to buy an equivalent property but also to compensation for the inconvenience of having to move.

The circumstances that have brought about the Government's contemplating buying out a whole residential suburb is not the making of the people of Wattleup. It is not their fault that the Kwinana air shed is there or that the State is now short of industrial land and the Government is considering acquiring their land for industrial purposes. If the Government goes ahead with the proposal in option 4 and buys out these houses, it will confer no benefit on the owners. It will confer a benefit on the whole State in that there will be adequate industrial land for industry to expand. That is good and we are happy to see that happen; however, that is a benefit for the whole State. It confers no particular benefit on the people in the townsite of Wattleup. Their land will not be made more valuable as a consequence. For that reason, they should be paid a solatium because they will be put to the same inconvenience as people whose land is being resumed and will have the additional inconvenience of the community that they have built up for many years being destroyed. The people down there very much appreciate their community. I have gone around door-knocking and speaking to people and one of the reasons most often

cited for wanting to live in Wattleup is that it has the ambience and the social structure of a country town. People believe that because there is a low crime rate and roads tend to go past rather than through it, they are happy to allow their children to walk to school. There is a wonderful primary school in the centre of the community with a high degree of parent involvement, and people are upset at the thought that the community will disappear if the Government chooses option 4.

The FRIARS report is out in the community for comment only until 30 June; the Government is asking people to say what they think. Under what other circumstances are people asked to decide whether they want to sell their houses when they are not told what they will get for them? Last week in the grievance debate, the Leader of the House indicated that there might be some flexibility. Elsewhere statements have been made that no solatium will be paid to people if their homes are acquired because they are not being resumed. They are weasel words because it is as good as a resumption or a forced sale if option 4 is adopted by the Government. The Government will zone the area residential and people will have no choice but to sell or stay where they are and be built out by industries. For most people that would not be a real option. One has to look only at the little house off Tydeman Road in North Fremantle where someone held out against industry to realise that that is not a practical option. Most people would not want to live in the middle of an industrial area with containers around them, or whatever industry happens to be there. If the land is zoned industrial, people will be forced out of their homes; and if people are forced out of their homes, they are entitled to a solatium.

I want a clear statement from the Government that it will pay like-for-like valuations. It can work out what it costs to buy an equivalent house in an equivalent suburb and offer people that amount of money and also a solatium because they are entitled to it as much as people whose houses are resumed. When the offer is made people may still not want to move. They may say that they are happy to be there realising that residential suburbs can adjoin general industry as, for example, in Canning Vale. One has only to drive along Ranford Road to see some very flash suburbs hard up against -

Mr Bloffwitch: And as you had in the past.

Mr THOMAS: Yes. There are some very flash suburbs along Ranford Road hard up against industrial areas separated only by a railway line, which would be the case in Wattleup if there were general industry to the east of it. That is acceptable and is their choice; however, it is a choice they should make knowing that there is a fair offer as an alternative. It would not be just for the Government to offer any less. I hope that before 30 June the people of Wattleup will have an indication that they will receive a fair offer if the Government proceeds with option 4. So far that assurance has not been given. I have spent time in Wattleup in the past month and met many people. Some are strongly opposed to the Jervoise Bay development. They believe that industrialisation of the area is pushing them out of their homes. They are saying now that the chickens have come home to roost as that has proved to be the case. I have said that I believe the development of Jervoise Bay and the areas in the Kwinana air shed are independent variables.

I give credit to some of the people who have provided leadership in that community, in particular Hazel Duggan, the President of the Wattleup Progress Association, and Val Williams, the secretary; Mary-Anne Separovich, a local City of Cockburn councillor, who in my view was supended, quite unjustly, from that position some weeks ago; and Mr Ken Seinor, who is a famous name in the south west corridor. Those people have made it their business to let me know their views, and are selfless and dedicated advocates of the interests of their community. If the Government rides roughshod over that community, it will be most unjust, and it will be resisted strongly by the Labor Party. People may well go along with option 4, but they need to be given a fair offer in order to consider that properly and should not be forced into accepting that situation.

Another matter that relates to my electorate is the proposal to establish a Cockburn Sound trust. During the debate about the Jervoise Bay project, I was the author of a proposition that a Cockburn Sound trust be created that would be similar to the Swan River Trust. I recall that in the late 1980s, when the Swan River Trust was created by the Burke Government, there was a lot of planning controversy about the Swan River and people had various planning proposals and uses for the river. It was recognised at that time that inland water in a city would always be subject to use pressures of various types. Cockburn Sound is effectively also inland water in a city. My colleague the member for Rockingham has drawn attention to some of the uses on the western side of Cockburn Sound at Garden Island; and the Minister for Planning has made some rather strange comments about Garden Island. A number of pressures are being placed on Cockburn Sound. Many people wish to use it for recreational purposes, and they are the source of much of the opposition to the Jervoise Bay project. Industry also uses Cockburn Sound, and as the Leader of the House said last week in response to my grievance, per hectare Cockburn Sound is probably the most productive land in Western Australia, and there is always pressure from industry to locate in that area. That has pollution implications for Cockburn Sound, because effluents of various types have been discharged into the sound over many years. That matter has largely been addressed in recent years and is continuing to be addressed, as it must.

There are also residential pressures on Cockburn Sound. The people who live along the edge of Cockburn Sound have various interests in the way that it should be managed. Strangely, there are also agricultural pressures. People do not often think of that, but, because of the market gardening areas around Spearwood which have been farmed in the past but which will be farmed less in the future, a considerable amount of material is contained in the ground water and will take some time to be flushed through into the sound, and that will have environmental implications. Cockburn Sound is effectively an inland waterway that is sensitive and it needs to be managed properly.

Cockburn Sound is in the outer harbour of the Fremantle Port Authority, and the Fremantle Port Authority is the legal titleholder of a substantial part of Cockburn Sound. The Royal Australian Navy is based on Garden Island, on the other side of Cockburn Sound, and I am not sure of its legal status and whether it is a user or a titleholder of the water. Before the creation of the Swan River Trust, the titleholder of the Swan River was the Department of Marine and Harbours, that was related to its transport function. That was obviously outdated, because the Swan River had long since ceased to be primarily

a waterway that was used for transport but had many other uses and came under many other pressures. The fact that Cockburn Sound continues to be the outer harbour of the Fremantle Port Authority is still an important aspect of its use and will continue to be for a long time. However, that is only one use, and the Fremantle Port Authority, the owner of Cockburn Sound, is only one stakeholder. Cockburn Sound should be vested in a trust in which the residents, industry, recreational users, the Fremantle Port Authority and the Royal Australian Navy can be represented, and by which the sound can be managed as a valuable waterway within the metropolitan area of Perth that is subject to a lot of use pressures.

I was very pleased when the Australian Labor Party adopted the notion of creating a Cockburn Sound trust. I was also pleased when the Deputy Premier announced that the Government would adopt this policy as part of the package to try to make the Jervoise Bay project more acceptable to the people of Cockburn and surrounding areas. However, sadly, since the Deputy Premier said the Government would do that, we have not seen any sign of action, and I wonder when we will see some action on this matter. Legislation will be required to create the trust and get it going, but the dollar cost will be very cheap. It will not require vast sums of state or commonwealth money. The main costs will be in parliamentary time and in dedication and commitment to the project. I have been approached by many people, some of whom are involved with Community Networking Inc, an organisation in my area that is concerned with environmental matters, and by Phil Jennings in particular, who is associated with the Conservation Council of Western Australia and with the Wetlands Society, which is a long-established conservation group in my area that enjoys a high degree of support, primarily through its association with the setting up of Beeliar Regional Park, for which it was largely responsible. Those people have asked me at meetings whether the Cockburn Sound trust will be set up. I have said that, as far as I know, it will be; the Deputy Premier has said it will be, and he is a man of his word. However, it has been suggested that it may not be set up like the Swan River Trust with its own legislation and powers to enable it to do the job properly but may be set up as a subsidiary trust under the Waterways Conservation Act. The Waterways Conservation Act is umbrella legislation under which bodies can be set up to manage waterways. Two such bodies that come to mind are the Peel Inlet Management Authority and the Leschenault Inlet Management Authority.

Prior to the establishment of the Swan River Trust in the late 1980s, the Swan River had been managed by the Swan River Management Authority, which had been set up under that legislation. It was not adequate and would be similarly inadequate in the case of Cockburn Sound, because such a management authority would not have the planning powers that are necessary to enable that body to resolve the use pressures that are present in Cockburn Sound. We need a body that will have the power and resources to be able to deal with the Fremantle Port Authority, the Royal Australian Navy and the companies that are established around Cockburn Sound and to make decisions with regard to activities that are likely to affect the sound. I am concerned not just about the sound itself. Activities that take place some kilometres inland may have an impact on the environment of the sound. The algal bloom that occurred the summer before last in the northern harbour at Jervoise Bay was the result of ground water seeping into the sound which had been polluted from the Woodman Point sewerage treatment plan, which is some hundreds of metres inland, and by a Weston Bioproducts plant which has been putting effluent in the ground water and is about one kilometre inland. The trust which will be established to oversee and be responsible for Cockburn Sound must have the power to have an input at least into the planning and land use decisions which will affect Cockburn Sound, even if those activities or proposed activities take place some kilometres from Cockburn Sound. Anything less than a body established with its own legislation and powers analogous to the Swan River Trust will be acceptable to neither the people of Cockburn nor probably the people of adjoining areas. We have not had an opening of Parliament this year yet with the Governor's speech outlining proposed legislation. I hope that at the start of the next parliamentary session, or some time before, an announcement will be made about the introduction of proper legislation to establish the Cockburn Sound trust, so we do not create a mickey mouse organisation under waterways legislation.

Other matters I raise relate to my portfolio responsibility rather than my electorate of Cockburn; namely, the AlintaGas privatisation and the cost of the Collie power station. Late last year, on 23 December, in the dying days of that parliamentary year, the Minister for Energy announced that the Government intended to privatise AlintaGas. Not one person has said to me since then that such a sale is a good idea. The Government sought to bribe the people of Western Australia, particularly those of the south west corridor, by stating that it would use the money generated from that sale to build the southern link railway. The minister hypothecated that the commitment to direct that money to that purpose was not as solid as the Treasurer had indicated. It may be that it was the Treasurer's idea, upon which he had not consulted other ministers. Whatever the history of the consideration of that matter within the Government, it is proposed to privatise a natural monopoly.

Every one of the many people to whom I have spoken on this matter has said that a natural monopoly should not be privatised. Some say, as I have said, that insurance companies, banks and airlines, perhaps in this day and age should appropriately not be run by government. Things change. Qantas is a good example. It was regarded as a crucial part of the country's economic and strategic life to have a direct link to London. At the time, the British Imperial Airways was not prepared to fly closer to Australia than Singapore; therefore, Qantas was purchased by the Australian Government to maintain a link between Singapore and Australia to provide a link to London. That was considered to be critical to our wellbeing as a nation. Many companies now provide links between Australia and London, and anywhere else for that matter, and it is no longer appropriate for the Australian Government to own an airline. A similar argument can be mounted about banks and insurance companies. I have no problem with such businesses being privatised. Nevertheless, a natural monopoly, such as a gas distribution system, should remain in public ownership.

I know the minister disagrees with me on this matter. He will say that that privatisation is okay as the Government can regulate to ensure that the public interest is protected. The Opposition's response is that that aspect is fine, but the investors - the mums and dads as the minister calls them - will want a return on their investment. Therefore, pressure will be applied for increased distribution charges. The minister and I, and the National, Liberal and Labor parties, differ strongly on this

important philosophical issue. The people of Western Australia should have a say on this matter. The Government actively misled the people of Western Australia at the last state election as it did not disclose that it intended to privatise AlintaGas. If the idea occurred to the Government since that time - which I doubt - it still does not have a mandate for this sale. Whether that situation arose through active deception or the idea occurred since the last election, the Minister for Energy, who is in the Chamber, should defer any action on AlintaGas' privatisation until after the next state election. He should take the issue to the people of WA. If he obtains a mandate, he can proceed with the sale justified in his actions. However, he does not have a mandate at the moment.

We can debate the issue for as long as we like, and I am happy to do so over the next two years. However, if it is not taken to the next election, the necessary vote will be taken by a Parliament elected at a poll in late 1996 when people had no knowledge of the possible privatisation of AlintaGas. I suggest that a different result may have occurred if the Government had come clean on the issue.

One of the first issues to arise when I was appointed as the Labor Party spokesperson on energy was the Collie power station. The present Minister for Energy came into this Chamber waving a contract saying "Prosperity in our time", or words to that effect. He had signed a contract with a company to build the Collie power station at a cost of \$575m. The minister was very proud of the contract. Another company at the time had said it could build the power station for tens of millions of dollars less, and the Labor Party said that the company should at least have been given the opportunity to put in a bid. The Government ignored the Opposition - it had the numbers, and went ahead with that contract.

The budget papers and correspondence I received today from Western Power indicate that the Collie power station has cost \$804m, not \$575m, to build. A number of reasons are provided for that variation. The minister would be aware of this correspondence from Western Power before it was sent to me. One reason for the change is that \$80m is attributable to rise and fall in costs during the period of construction. I look forward to the estimates hearings to have this variation in the contract price explained. The minister came into this Chamber very proud of the turn-key contract he secured for the project; but it has cost \$200m more than the minister outlined to build this facility. A number of reasons are given for that change, such as currency movement and the fire. However, the bottom line is that \$80m is attributable to rise and fall in costs. I hope the minister will make explanatory documentation available to members. I acknowledge that Western Power made available one of its senior officers, Mr Kirkpatrick, to walk me through the matter. I am more than happy to listen to what is said. Nevertheless, a pretty good story is needed to account for an increase of \$200m on the \$575m starting price.

Mr Barnett: We will go down to Collie and debate it if you like.

Mr THOMAS: I would love to.

Mr Osborne: You will be too embarrassed to turn up.

Mr THOMAS: I will be at the opening, if I am invited.

Mr Barnett: You will be invited.

Mr THOMAS: I look forward to it. We will look at the matter in some detail in the Estimates Committee. In answer to the member for Bunbury, I am more than happy to debate that issue with the minister in Collie. I will be particularly eager if the member for Collie will also attend such a function as I suspect she will be on my side, not the minister's.

**MR MCGOWAN** (Rockingham) [5.50 pm]: I intend to take the opportunity in this debate to deal with a range of issues that have arisen in the past few weeks. As one who has given consideration to political issues for a long time, the past week has been a turning point in politics in this State. I say that because this Government is showing strong signs of stupidity in many of the things it is doing, and a great deal of hypocrisy in statements on a range of issues. One of the more significant events that took place last week was the Government's announcement on the Regional Forest Agreement. Even more significant than that was the Australian Labor Party's policy announcement on Saturday about forests.

Mr Osborne: The boy from the eastern States who worked in the Navy and spent his life at sea, and now he lives in Rockingham he knows all about forests!

Mr MCGOWAN: The member for Bunbury is gone. He should prepare his résumé because he will lose his seat next year. The Labor Party's announcement on Saturday of a new forest policy to preserve all the old-growth forest from 2003 was a great achievement. It was an outstanding announcement which will resonate in future decades.

Mr Osborne interjected.

Mr MCGOWAN: The member for Bunbury is wrong. One job that will be lost is his. The announcement by the Labor Party on Saturday was of historic importance; I have pushed for that for a long time and I am proud of it. It will remain in the memories of the public of this State and not only is it important to the people of Western Australia, but also it is absolutely the right thing to do.

I will deal with a range of other issues, including the Treasurer's announcement last week in relation to debt. First I will deal with the easiest target; that is, the Minister for Planning and the spectacular views he expressed yesterday on the future of Cockburn Sound. Even the most committed watcher of the member for Riverton would have been surprised at how ridiculous, outrageous and stupid his announcement was yesterday.

Mr Baker: Two to one of the callers to the Sattler program supported him yesterday.

Mr MCGOWAN: Obviously the member for Joondalup takes his lead from callers to the Sattler program. The statement

by the Minister for Planning will go down in history as one of the most stupid announcements ever made by a minister of this State. The transcript indicates that the minister said -

I actually thought long and hard about it, and was asked to give my vision for Kwinana in the next twenty or thirty years, and I gave the formal vision as Minister for Planning, but I said, look, there's a couple of issues with Cockburn Sound that we could look at en toto . . .

The transcript continues -

But being Minister for Planning does give me the opportunity to . . . sometimes to embrace the big picture issues . . .

That big picture issue is his proposal to move the navy base at HMAS *Stirling* from Garden Island to a private port in Kwinana. It is absolutely ridiculous. The minister talked about the future planning of this State. That facility was started in 1968. In 1987, as a result of the Beazley White Paper, half of the Royal Australian Navy was moved to Western Australia, and that involved \$10b-worth of assets being based at Garden Island. The Minister for Planning wants to put that in jeopardy with a scheme that he claims he thought long and hard about. The naval base pours more than \$100m a year into this State's economy and provides 3 000 jobs. Most importantly, it is a major defence facility on the western side of the continent. The Minister for Planning, by his intemperate and stupid remarks, is indicating to the Commonwealth Government that he, as the senior person in planning in this State, does not think the base should be located on Garden Island. He thinks it should be on the other side of Cockburn Sound. The logistics and the effort required to make that move would be impossible. It was designed as a self-contained naval base with its own harbour, and it performs a great role. Garden Island is already available to the public. Those who have read *The West Australian* today will know that it is a pristine environment, and it is something of which we should all be proud.

The proposal by the Minister for Planning also encompasses moving the RAN armaments, weapons and explosives depot across the sound into the middle of an industrial and residential area. It would involve moving hundreds of torpedoes, missiles and shells, and tonnes of explosives from a secure compound at the northern end of Garden Island into a very insecure and unsuitable environment in a private port. The minister's stupidity is breathtaking. I noted that today in question time when I interjected he was very sheepish about the whole concept, and I suspect that his colleagues have told him how idiotic his idea was and that he should keep quiet. That is a big picture issue for the Minister for Planning. He has had a reputation for some time for making silly statements, but this one takes the cake. I will not persist with this matter because I know that this idea will not come to fruition. However, members should all reflect on the capacity of, and ideas coming from, this minister.

I now address the issue of the Rockingham rail link. It was widely acclaimed by the Treasurer when he announced in his budget speech that \$3.3b would be allocated for capital works. He said that would boost the economy, push this State forward and so on. How much does he propose to allocate for the southern suburbs rail link? He has allocated \$3m from a total of \$3.3b. That is nothing short of pathetic, but it goes further. He stated in his budget speech that -

The successful sale of AlintaGas and Westrail would allow no increase in net debt and substantially fund the Perth to Mandurah railway.

That is a major change in government policy, slipped into the budget speech. The Treasurer has indicated that, in addition to the sale of AlintaGas being a hurdle in front of the construction of the rail link, Westrail must also be sold. He has now placed two hurdles in the way. If he continues to treat the people in the southern suburbs of this fine city in this fashion, he will reap the consequences. Two major hurdles have now been placed in front of the construction of the rail link and that is unacceptable.

*Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm*

Mr McGOWAN: Before the break I was dealing with a few important issues which indicate the Government is turning the corner and heading towards its end. In general terms, this Government's popularity plateaued after the last election, and in the past week it has begun its downward spiral, which all Governments eventually do before they meet their demise, certainly in a democratic system. I had referred to a couple of examples of gross stupidity by the Minister for Planning, one of which was his advocacy of shifting the entire HMAS *Stirling* naval base to the other side of Cockburn Sound, a \$1b investment which he said would be a good idea. He claimed that he had considered the idea for a long time. However, I think he probably thought about it for only a few seconds before it came out of his mouth! He is probably now feeling sheepish about the whole issue.

I had also referred to the Government's capital works program, which was announced in the budget. Much fanfare was made of the \$3.3b capital works program; however, in its summary of major expenditure initiatives, the Government indicated that only \$3m of that capital works budget has been allocated to the south west metropolitan rail link. The Treasurer also made a major change in government policy when he indicated that the successful sale of AlintaGas and Westrail would allow for no increase in net debt and would contribute substantially to building the Perth to Mandurah railway. That means that this Government is now placing two hurdles in the way of the rail link and indicates that the Government is not very serious about it and does not mean what it says. The reason I can say that with impunity is that the Treasurer's budget speech is probably the most carefully thought out speech of any member of the Government throughout the year, and he said it deliberately. This is another snub to the people -

Mr Marshall: It will never happen.

Mr McGOWAN: I believe that; under this Government it will never happen, not while the member for Dawesville is here.

That is a great shame in my view. Another issue indicating the hypocrisy of this Government is the explosion in debt levels. The overall debt levels have increased in the budget as follows: Public sector debt has increased by \$800m; a general deficit is running at \$640m; and general government debt has increased from \$449m to \$958m, and it has predicted a further increase to \$1.2b in 2001-02. That prediction is based on the Government's forecast of an increase in the economic growth rate of 4.5 per cent, which will mean that government revenues will also rise at an equivalent rate. The Western Australian growth rate will not be 4.5 per cent; it is estimated to be running at 2.75 per cent by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and between 2 and 3 per cent by the National Australia Bank. Debt will increase by \$800m at a time when revenues will be decreasing. Estimates about increasing debt in future years are based on a totally unrealistic growth estimate. The Government has been pinged on this by *The Australian* commentators. In his analysis of the budget, Alan Wood, a well-known monetarist commentator, stated -

Here the most relevant figure is the general government deficit of nearly \$640 million showing in these accounts.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry calculates that on an underlying basis, the deficit is higher, \$733 million.

There is no mystery about why the Budget is blowing out. It reflects inability to control public spending since Court was re-elected in 1996.

That is amazing in the light of what has taken place in past years. The reason it is so hypocritical is that this Treasurer and Government have always claimed to be the great debt busters. The Treasurer has said it so many times it has become boring. Debt has blown out by \$800m this year. In his 1997-98 budget speech, the Treasurer said - I was sitting here and I heard him say it -

The coalition will continue to follow the financial strategy which we undertook during our first term in government. To underpin this financial strategy we must ensure that we do not borrow money to pay for current expenditures and that we continue to reduce the burden of interest payments on our Budget.

Of that current deficit, \$200m is current expenditure. Further in that speech he said -

... in both 1996-97 and 1997-98, the State's net debt will increase slightly before declining again in 1998-99 once the peak in the capital program is passed.

That is quite clearly incorrect.

Mr Prince: If you object to the public sector being reduced in numbers, and given that over 80 per cent of our expenditure is in wages and salaries, where do you cut?

Mr McGOWAN: It is interesting that the minister should ask that. In my view some projects put forward by this Government are quite unnecessary and out of step with the times and with what members of the public think. We need not be geniuses to think of the convention centre which has the potential to blow out to \$140m of public expenditure, and the Barrack Street redevelopment. There are a whole range -

Mr Prince: Where do you cut?

Mr McGOWAN: I just named two. If the minister had half an ounce of sense, he would take my advice on them. The hypocrisy gets even more breathtaking. In the 1998-99 budget speech the Treasurer said -

This Budget marks an end of the discredited political practice of mortgaging our children's future to win votes today.

Does that sound familiar? It goes on -

This budget will break the shackles of excessive debt that has tied Governments down since the 1980s.

Mr Omodei: And it did.

Mr McGOWAN: The minister is out of his seat.

Mr Prince: You incurred the debt and we had nothing to show for it, no capital works - nothing.

Mr McGOWAN: In the 1980s I was a university student and was at high school. This minister has the lack of sense to say I incurred some debt. I did not.

Mr Prince: I meant the word "you" as being in the sense of your party.

Mr McGOWAN: The then Treasurer had far more to do with it than I did. The minister should look at the royal commission's report on that matter. Those opposite want to know who is responsible. The Treasurer was far more responsible than I was.

Mr Prince: It was your party - your government.

Dr Hames: Do you take no responsibility for the actions of your predecessors?

Mr McGOWAN: No; I do not. Does the Minister for Housing take responsibility for the Vietnam War? That is a sensible question.

Dr Hames: I do not, and I do not think the analogy is reasonable.



Mr McGOWAN: I do not think he should either. Do those opposite take responsibility for the take-or-pay contracts of 1980? Members of the coalition parties were in the Liberal Government then.

Dr Hames: I do not know anything about them.

Mr McGOWAN: Maybe the minister should learn about them. In the 1998-99 budget speech the Treasurer said -

With the shackles of debt now being broken, and lower interest payments, the State Government has the ability to deliver further dividends to the people of Western Australia.

That is, dividends like an \$800m debt. Obviously that is in this financial year. He continues -

Most importantly, the major capital works program outlined in this Budget is being achieved without burdening the future generations with high borrowings.

The Treasurer said all of this just last year. This is the great debt buster. Last year these were his great plans for this State. Not more than a year ago, and in every budget speech prior to that, he spoke about the avoidance of debt. He continues -

This is a Budget which sets the framework to take Western Australia into the next millennium with low debt and state-of-the-art infrastructure.

Frankly, that was wrong. He misled the Parliament in that speech. This year the budget blows out the government deficit and the overall government debt. He has discredited his entire reason for being in government. Over the past six years he has said that he takes that debt most seriously, but not in a year before a tight election. Next year's election will be extremely tight for him, and those opposite will be lucky to survive in office. He is trying to spend his way out of it in the worst possible fashion. At the start of my address I said that this is a time in which to highlight the stupidity of the Government and the Minister for Planning, and the hypocrisy of the Treasurer and the debt levels, and I have.

I now turn to the Regional Forest Agreement. I take great pride in the decision of the Australian Labor Party last weekend to preserve all of the State's old-growth forest from 2003. It allows those who hold the value and the content of those forests dear to have a real choice when we come to the next election. The people of Western Australia have been presented with a decision and they can make a choice between a Government that intends to allow logging of one-third of the State's forests and an Opposition that intends to keep them for posterity.

Mrs Edwardes: What about the 10 000 workers?

Mr McGOWAN: I will deal with that in a moment. This is the Minister for the Environment who does not believe environmental issues are the most important, and that has been borne out in every thing she has said.

Mrs Edwardes: We made a balanced decision, as you well know.

Mr McGOWAN: The voters have a real choice. Most Liberals - be they small "l" or large "L" - and both Noel Crichton-Browne and Ross Lightfoot, agree with our position on this issue, as do the vast majority of Labor people. Most Labor branch members and Labor supporters in the community support the position put forward by the State Labor Party on the weekend. I support that position, not just because those people do, but because I believe it, and because it is important. It is probably one of the most important issues we will ever deal with in this Parliament. From my dealings with them, I know many young people - those from my generation and younger, and high school students - regard this as an issue on which they will make up their minds in terms of governments and political parties. I said I would concentrate on the stupidity and hypocrisy of the Government so I am glad the Minister for Local Government is in the Chamber. He comes second to the Minister for Planning in terms of hypocrisy and stupidity. I have with me a newspaper article from the *Manjimup-Bridgetown Times* of 29 July 1998 dealing with the forests, entitled "Omodei on attack", which never saw the light of day.

Mr Omodei: I will interject to say that it's pronounced Omo-day. Do me the courtesy of saying my name right.

Mr McGOWAN: I am not sure all of the minister's colleagues know that; perhaps he should also tell them. The article states -

WARREN Blackwood, MLA Paul Omodei -

Mr Omodei: It's Omo-day; never say die!

Mr McGOWAN: I am sorry. The articles states -

WARREN Blackwood, MLA Paul Omodei and Manjimup shire president Keith Liddlelow have criticised protesters in Lane Poole Forest Block, north of Northcliffe.

According to Mr Omodei, action such as cutting down trees in which protesters were perched should be undertaken.

Mr Omodei: You bet. They were illegally on the premises stopping people going about their lawful business and they should be removed.

Mr McGOWAN: The minister should keep saying it; I would like to hear more.

Mr Omodei: Do you think those people were in that place lawfully? Do you think it is right that they should stop people going about their lawful business? Answer the question!

Mr McGOWAN: I will answer the question. The Treasurer believes in capital punishment for murders. The minister believes in capital punishment for climbing a tree. Talk about stupidity! The minister believes in killing people who climb trees. What sort of a person is he? The minister voted the other way on the abortion debate, and he is now saying that people who climb trees should be killed. What sort of position is that? I am so pleased the minister is in the Chamber.

Mr Omodei: I did not say that and the member knows I did not.

Mr McGOWAN: That is gross stupidity on the part of this minister. In terms of stupidity, the minister comes second only to the Minister for Planning.

Mr Carpenter: A distant second.

Mr McGOWAN: Admittedly, a distant second; but he comes second. I have another article from the *Manjimup-Bridgetown Times*.

Mr Omodei: Can you see the headline that states "Omodei stands up for workers"? Can you say you have done that?

Mr McGOWAN: The minister referred to the fact that some councils in this State have had the temerity to say that they did not want to buy products from timber companies. That is quite outrageous because the minister never does it for the other side. When councils become involved in issues that the minister supports, he never says that they should never be able to say it. He has used his position as member for Warren-Blackwood, and the fact that he perceives there is an interest in relation to his electorate, to use his ministerial responsibilities in this way. The fact that he has done that is outrageous.

Mr Omodei: Do you think councils should black-ban companies going about their lawful business?

Mr McGOWAN: Councils are democratically elected and can buy from whomever they want. Most shire councils throughout the State would agree with me. At the same time, in terms of stupidity, the minister twice filled in an annual financial register stating he holds shares in Wesfarmers Bunnings Ltd, which shows how much he cares about that financial register. He does not think it is important.

Mr Omodei: The difference between you and the reporters from *The West Australian*, is that at least they checked.

The SPEAKER: Order, members! This is an opportunity for members to give a speech about the budget. There is far too much interchange on matters that have little to do with the budget. If members want to raise personal matters, there is a way of going about it; they should consult the Standing Orders or ask the Clerk about it. Members should not be doing those sorts of things as byplay in a budget debate.

Mr McGOWAN: I will move onto the other issues I wanted to raise during the budget debate. One of the principle matters is the Government's Regional Forest Agreement, which is relevant to the budget because the Government has allocated \$41m in compensation to companies in the south west. I disagree with the outcome of the Government's RFA. The RFA has allocated a total of 232 800 hectares of old-growth forest to be protected. That leaves 114 200 ha available for logging by the various logging companies. About 33 per cent of the old-growth forest left in this State is available for logging. The total figure of 347 000 ha of old-growth forest, of which one-third is to be logged and two-thirds is to be preserved, represents less than 10 per cent of the total original old-growth forest. In effect, we will preserve about 7 per cent of what was in place at the time of European settlement. Additionally, the Government has transferred for logging 50 000 ha of high conservation forest, which was identified in the 1994 forest management plan. It has transferred that 50 000 ha to the areas of state forest which are available for logging. It could be argued that that means the Government has preserved only an extra 100 000 ha of forest for future generations.

Significant areas of old growth forest will continue to be logged, including the Giblett and Jane blocks which have very high conservation values. Parts of other significant old-growth blocks will be available for partial logging; Sharpe and Hilliger are two areas which will be set aside for logging by the Government. That is unacceptable. A plan must be put in place, as we have, to preserve all of it.

Mr Omodei: To devastate the city in the south west and all of the towns. What a brilliant plan that is!

Mr McGOWAN: It is interesting that the minister has said that, because the Government's policy claims it will cut by 25 per cent the combined jarrah-karri harvest by 2003.

Mr Omodei: Fifty per cent of what you would cut.

Mr McGOWAN: The minister can say that all he likes, but I was not here.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members! The member for Rockingham is trying to make his speech.

Mr McGOWAN: The Government claims that, by 2003, it will cut 25 per cent of the jarrah-karri harvest. Under the current proposal by the Minister for the Environment, that means that only 400 jobs would be lost. In March, the Minister for the Environment indicated that a 10 per cent cut in jarrah and karri logging would cost between 540 and 620 jobs; yet, a 25 per cent cut in jarrah-karri harvesting will cost only 400 jobs. There is something unusual about the figures put forward by the Government in relation to the job losses. Be that as it may, I acknowledge that there will be job losses and, under the Government's plan, there will also be job losses. I would like to see a proper program put in place to look after the people who will be affected. That has been done in other States. Measures have been put in place to preserve those people's futures, including intensive management by Governments to ensure that other jobs are found for those people. We need to put in

place such programs in this State. The Government is circulating those criticisms, and the Minister for Local Government offered to resign if there were any job losses, but I cannot see that happening.

Mr Omodei: Do you know the people you are taking jobs from are people who used to vote for the Labor Party? I don't think they will vote for you any more. If you think you are going to win the election by this strategy, you will be sadly mistaken, because those people, including the Australian Workers Union, will be campaigning -

Mr McGOWAN: They can campaign; that is their right.

Mr Court: Ask about the 10 000. It is counterbalanced by 155 000 -

Mr Carpenter: What about the 10 000 people -

The SPEAKER: Order! We are taking up the member's opportunity.

Mr McGOWAN: The Treasurer interjected on me. The budget sets aside \$10m for salinity action plans across the State. We all know that the State faces significant salinity problems, and I would like something substantial to be done about them.

Mrs Edwardes: We are doing something.

Mr Omodei: What about the Labor Party?

Mr McGOWAN: The figure is \$10m, is that right? It is obviously right.

Mrs Edwardes: What about the heritage trust money? The Federal and State Governments are putting more money back into the environment than you guys ever did.

Mr McGOWAN: How much? The Government cut \$5m from the Department of Environmental Protection. How much is it putting into it?

Mrs Edwardes: We are putting far more money into it.

Mr McGOWAN: Tell me how much. The minister does not know.

Mrs Edwardes: We are putting far more money into it than you guys ever put into the environment.

Mr McGOWAN: How much is the Government putting into salinity?

Mrs Edwardes: Through State Government, through the national heritage trust funding. What did you do with contaminated sites? You did nothing with them.

Mr McGOWAN: The minister does not know how much the Government is putting into salinity. The Government is putting in a total of \$10m. In its election platform it promised \$58m per year for salinity. Its Environment platform at the previous election stated that \$3b of private and public investment over the next 10 to 30 years would go into controlled measures on salinity and that the State's contribution would be about \$58m per year to be phased in over three years.

It is nearly three years since the previous election. Where is the \$58m? It is not there. The Government committed itself to \$58m. In fact I remember seeing it on television at that time, but the \$58m is not there. The State currently faces 1.8 million hectares of salt-affected land. In the south west 80 per cent of waterways, streams and rivers are salt-affected. About 70 per cent of dry land salinity in the country exists throughout the wheatbelt and the great southern. Something must be done about that. The minister can say all she likes about doing more than ever before, but the Government promised \$58m and it is putting \$10m into salinity.

Mrs Edwardes interjected.

Mr McGOWAN: I have three minutes left. We need to follow the example of BP, which put together an excellent program of carbon sequestration. In time, it will plant enough trees to put in place carbon receptors to take in all the carbon that its Kwinana refinery produces. That is an excellent idea. It has undertaken some initial projects with the Department of Conservation and Land Management, but it will do that on its own in time. I have read quite a bit about that excellent program. The Government needs to follow the lead and institute major tree planting programs throughout the State.

Mrs Edwardes: We are planting.

Mr McGOWAN: The Government is doing nowhere near enough. We have the National Party -

Mrs Edwardes: Can I tell you how many? We are planting -

Mr McGOWAN: Ten thousand hectares, is that what the minister was going to say?

Mrs Edwardes: No, we are planting in excess of 25 000 hectares per annum and in excess of 30 million trees.

Mr McGOWAN: That is not what CALM says; it says 10 000, and that is nowhere near enough. The minister does not even know what her own department is saying. The Minister for Primary Industry allows every application to clear land. Much more needs to be done on that front. There is a range of ways to generate income and carbon credits for the State, and that should happen in the near future, but cuts to the Environment budget are not the way to do it.

**MS ANWYL** (Kalgoorlie) [7.36 pm]: About a year ago, and indeed the year before that, the Court Government promised people in my electorate that they would receive a social dividend. They were promised that if they were able to bear the

huge impact of increased government charges and taxes they would see a form of social dividend. I note in the rhetoric surrounding the budget that the concept of a social dividend appears to have gone out the window. I had the pleasure of watching in Kalgoorlie-Boulder the Treasurer's address from some ballroom or other in Perth - of course, the Minister for Youth was present and he answered some limited questions, too - but nowhere did I hear mention of the social dividend. What has happened to the social dividend? It was with us for a couple of years but it has gone. I can conclude only that the Court Government no longer wishes even to pretend that it is about delivering a social dividend to people in my electorate. Certainly, people in my electorate do not perceive that they have received a social dividend; in fact, many of them will suffer from the impact of further increases in taxes and charges as they appear in the budget.

I listened with interest to the interchange between the Treasurer and the Leader of the Opposition about what the actual cost of the budget might be. Certainly the Opposition has calculated that for a family with one car the budget will cost about \$56 a week. Heaven knows what the cost of the federal budget, which was delivered today, will be for people in my electorate, particularly if later this year we see the imposition of a goods and services tax at a time when people in my electorate already pay well above the state average for food and other basic commodities such as clothing. They already pay a much higher than state average amount for rent and they already pay significantly more for basic needs such as fuel. The Opposition's estimate is that the past three budgets have cost an average family with one motor vehicle roughly \$427 per annum. That is a significant amount.

I was reminded of the impact of these increases a couple of weeks ago when a constituent of mine named Sergio, who lives with his wife, came to my office and said that his age pension had increased by approximately \$5 a fortnight. At the same time, his Homeswest rent had been increased by about \$8 a fortnight. Effectively he is in the red by a couple of dollars a week.

I have often said in this place that we forget about the income levels of our constituents. Perhaps it is a feature of the composition of the House; that is, members on the government side tend to have constituents with a higher average income than the constituents of members on this side of the House. Constituents in my electorate earn much more than the state average income, but the reality is that many families are struggling because their cost of living is also extremely high. That is particularly so when one bears in mind that the cheapest rent in that area for a two or more bedroom home is \$250 a week. Given that the state average rent for similar accommodation is \$154, it is not hard to work out that with the higher cost of food, petrol and a number of other commodities people will struggle.

One of the challenges confronting the goldfields at the moment is the need for diversification of industry. As members know if they listen to, watch or read any form of media, the mining industry is confronting a raft of issues. Diversification of industry is important for job creation in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. As a community we are disappointed by budget 2000 in respect of infrastructure needs such as rail and road links with Perth and the surrounding areas. The rail link to Esperance - particularly the Leonora to Esperance line - is very important to my electorate. The Esperance port moves about 1.64 million export tonnes and about 300 000 import tonnes per annum. At the moment, the railway line connecting the source of those exports - the north eastern goldfields via Kalgoorlie-Boulder to Esperance - is in dire need of repair. However, this budget does not address that issue.

Where are we heading with Westrail freight? We are selling it notwithstanding that clearly the Western Australian public, the National Farmers Federation and others do not want that to happen. Many conservative organisations also do not want that to happen. Indeed, the Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission, which receives \$1.3m of government funding each year, does not want the sale to occur. The chairman of the board, Kath Finlayson, has twice stood for election representing the National Party. I am not complaining about that; we need more women in Parliament. However, this would-be member of the coalition Government and her board are concerned about the sale of the Westrail freight service. People who rely on that freight service are concerned that not only is the Leonora-Esperance line in a severe state of decline, but it is also to be sold off and there is no news about what its priority might be to its future owners. We also have a significant problem with the Perth to Kalgoorlie-Boulder railway line. That issue is not new. The former Minister for Transport, Hon Eric Charlton, announced just before his retirement that we would have a super bullet train between Perth and Kalgoorlie-Boulder. That is all very well, but in its present state the railway line cannot cope with the dilapidated, antiquated, 24-year-old *Prospector* train let alone a super bullet train. There is no relief in this budget for that situation and one wonders what is the Government's intention in respect of prioritising these rail links prior to selling Westrail.

Improvement of the road link to the Pilbara has been requested over many years. The sealing of part of the highway between Mt Keith and Wiluna has been announced, but the real challenge is the Wiluna to Meekatharra or Wiluna to Great Northern Highway section of the road, which is yet to be sealed. An alternative might be available other than going through Meekatharra, but there is some dispute about the best option for that road. Again, that is a long way away.

If the Court Government were concerned about issues confronting the mining industry, it could ensure that these very important infrastructure links are available. Instead, we have almost weekly if not daily examples of waste of money in the Main Roads tendering process. The Government's obsession with privatisation and contracting out can be very clearly seen to have cost the Western Australian taxpayers a lot of money.

These issues are close to the heart of the Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission. I said that the development commission receives funding of about \$1.3m and it has a brief in terms of social and economic development. I have been a critic of the commission because I do not see it carrying out social development projects with anything like the same zeal as it has for economic development projects. That is a real challenge, particularly given the amount of funding it has retained notwithstanding that we have seen funding cuts across many other government agencies.

One of the other major challenges to industry diversification and job creation is the cost of energy. Of course, the cost of

gas has decreased by 25 per cent and that was good news for industry. However, we are now confronting the sale of AlintaGas. The Government can deny it until it is blue in the face, but it denied its intention to sell AlintaGas and we are now witnessing that sale. I expect that in due course we will witness the sale of Western Power and the Water Corporation. Why stop at AlintaGas?

I now turn to some of the more pressing capital works needs in my electorate. I believe in giving praise when it is due. The Government has made a commitment to a much-needed seniors' college within the Eastern Goldfields Senior High School. In 1993 and again in 1996, the coalition promised to build a second high school in my electorate. So, in 2001 we expect to see the opening of a seniors' college. That will be very good news for the young people studying in my electorate. However, we are currently facing problems with staffing schools, and I will return to that issue in a moment.

Members should remember that Aboriginal people comprise more than 6 per cent of the population of my electorate. An Aboriginal child entering year 8 in Kalgoorlie-Boulder has a less than 1 per cent chance of completing year 12 and only about a 7 per cent chance of making it to year 12 at all. I ask members to think about that because it is an alarming statistic. Those statistics speak for themselves in describing the challenges in the area.

One of the longest awaited capital works is the Kalgoorlie courthouse. I agree with the Minister for the Environment that I have made this speech before, but I can remember the minister in her capacity as the then Attorney General visiting Kalgoorlie and making some promises about the courthouse. Needless to say, the volume of work going through that courthouse has increased since the minister's visit. Her successor, the current Attorney General, has visited but we -

Mr Carpenter: Andy Warhol?

Ms ANWYL: It is not Andy Warhol; I think the member for Willagee is mistaken. The amount of work which goes through the courthouse is second to no other regional centre. Recently several prisoners who had been sentenced for escaping from the Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison nearly escaped from the inadequate lockup at the courthouse. Over the years as a community, we have discussed the need for a juvenile detention facility of some kind. At present, juveniles are held in the police lockup for up to 72 hours, but that is not a good state of affairs. I feel much sympathy for the police officers who must preside over that situation; I am sure it causes some anxiety for individual officers. Some years ago, the Government promised to spend \$16.7m to upgrade the Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison, but the money was withdrawn without explanation. In its glossy four-page brochure entitled *Budget 2000: Securing our Future*, the Government talks about how prisons are one of its priorities. Despite that, no real allocation has been made to the Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison. That concerns me because everybody knows that anyone can break into or out of that prison, and people regularly do. Although it is classified as a low-security prison, it contains a maximum-security area. I visited the prison recently because I am concerned about the potential for an escape which might result in harm being caused to the staff of the prison or members of the community as the prison is in a residential area of Boulder. One does not need to be too bright to see that there will be ways of getting around the razor wire when it is installed and getting through the perimeter fencing. It is beyond me why it is not possible to erect a secure fence around that prison. I am concerned about the potential for one or more of my constituents to be hurt as a result of the shoddy situation at the Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison.

To some extent the consequent problems of not having a juvenile detention facility, those associated with the transport of juveniles by police officers, will be addressed by legislation before the Parliament. That Bill will lead to the privatisation of the work force which transports prisoners and I am told that will extend to juveniles in country areas. However, we still have a problem with the number of serving police officers. One of the most senior police officers recently told the Select Committee on Crime Prevention forum held in Kalgoorlie-Boulder and chaired by the member for Mandurah that his main concern with crime prevention was that he did not have the number of police officers he felt necessary to provide proper law and order in Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

We have evidence that the use of intravenous drugs in Kalgoorlie-Boulder is 4.5 times the state average. That figure was derived by looking at the number of needles and syringes used and it appears that Kalgoorlie-Boulder's problem is much worse than that in any other regional area. We know that alcohol and other drug abuse can be associated with a propensity to commit violent acts or property crimes to obtain money for drugs. We have seen an increase of \$300 000 in the Health budget for capital works associated with the sobering up centres. That is worthwhile, but there is no dedicated residential or other form of rehabilitation service in Kalgoorlie-Boulder for people suffering alcohol or other drug abuse problems. We have a high proportion of people with drug problems. Every few months a member of the visiting judiciary will comment on that in court when he is faced with a list of people, 70 to 80 per cent of whom have difficulties with these substances. Alarm has been expressed at the lack of a dedicated facility. When I have raised this matter in the past I have been asked what I am complaining about because in my electorate there is a large population of young people and people who earn a lot of money. Both of those points are true, but to suggest that drug abuse is therefore acceptable and there is no demand for a residential facility, is ridiculous because the Health budget, through the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital, must pick up the demands of these people for detoxification and for limited overnight admissions for problems caused by their alcohol or other drug problems.

I have obtained figures from the hospital which suggest that up to 150 bed days are taken up with that type of detoxification. Capital expenditure is allowed for within the hospital budget and I understand that the hospital intends to use that money to develop a specific mental health ward. That is long overdue, but I am not sure of the wisdom of mixing patients with specific mental health problems with those needing detoxification. I note that dual diagnosis occurs within the population, but we also know from statistics that many people, particularly women, are admitted having attempted to self harm. The number was in the range of 200 in one year. Therefore, that is again a significant number.

There will be some increased charges for particular services. Water costs are to rise by 2 per cent. There had been a change

recently because a number of people right across country areas were unable to fathom why they had received big increases in their water accounts compared with commensurate periods earlier in the billing period. Some changes have been instituted because of that concern. However, the case was exemplified by one couple who came to my office with an account for about \$15 000 for a three-month period. That has been reduced to less than \$10 000. That gives an indication of the potential to receive incredibly large water accounts. Those increases are likely to affect many people.

Third party registration costs has increased by 3.6 per cent. We are constantly told that we have the cheapest third party insurance in the country. However, we must remember that in 1993 a significant number of the rights that accrue when people take out insurance were taken away because a threshold is in place and people are not indemnified for personal injury per se; they must pass a threshold. If the Government succeeds in removing common law workers compensation rights, I suspect it will be after these remaining vested rights that people injured in car accidents have, because the Government has a track record in that regard.

Mention has been made of the increase in stamp duty on motor vehicles. Many people in my electorate drive vehicles which are worth more than \$20 000. Many of them choose to purchase four-wheel drive vehicles for reasons associated with their employment or the fact that they may drive regularly to Perth for family or other social reasons. There is a well-founded perception that it is safer to drive a four-wheel drive, particularly if one is risking hitting various wildlife, such as emus, kangaroos and so on. That is certainly one of the reasons that people purchase four-wheel drives. The average increased cost of buying such a vehicle will be approximately \$1 500 for a new vehicle. Again, that is a significant impost, and the mining industry is making something of that.

I spoke of the praise that I have for the Court Government because of the junior college that the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area is to receive. However, there are some real infrastructure needs in other schools in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. The South Kalgoorlie Primary School, which I am told is the largest regional primary school, has some old Bristol classrooms, if they can be called classrooms. They are not functional, particularly in hot weather. They are transportable buildings that date back to the Second World War. It is not proper that they be classed as permanent buildings, as they are. There are also cluster classrooms. I had the pleasure of inviting the Minister for Education to visit South Kalgoorlie Primary School and another school in my electorate two Fridays ago. One problem with the cluster classrooms is that four classes are in close proximity, all of which are bursting at the seams. South Kalgoorlie Primary School had 40 new students turn up in one week a couple of weeks ago. Therefore, constant pressure is on the classes. There is a continuing shortage of teachers in the goldfields. Two Fridays ago, about eight positions were still unfilled.

I also visited the Kalgoorlie Primary School with the minister. Fortunately for him, I suppose, a large working bee had resulted in the grassing of the play area of that school. That had been requested for many years and had not been attended to by the Education Department. There is some substandard roofing at that school. That needs to be repaired sooner rather than later. Certainly, some potential for hazard exists. Although I am assured by officers of the local Department of Contract and Management Services that that will not be a problem, clearly there is a problem because the roof in that classroom is leaking, and there is still some potential for large slabs of building material to fall from the roof, as occurred there, fortunately during a school holiday period so that nobody was injured.

Other schools in my electorate need assistance. Some children from my electorate attend those schools, even though they fall within the boundaries of Eyre. Those schools include Boulder Primary School and East Kalgoorlie Primary School. Further classrooms at Hannans Primary School and O'Connor Primary School are certainly needed, given that they are continuing to have a large influx of students and further large residential developments are proposed for each of those suburbs.

Although announcements have been made on Homeswest issues in my electorate, recent answers to questions on notice demonstrate that Kalgoorlie-Boulder has the highest number of people on a waiting list for priority housing in a regional area and has one of the longest waiting periods to obtain any form of accommodation. My experience in my electorate office is that the number of women and children who come through who have left their homes principally as a result of domestic violence issues is a major contributor to that. I estimate that up to 50 per cent of the constituents who visit my office have that type of problem. I recently attended a one-day meeting of women's refuge workers from around Western Australia. I was pleased to have my suspicions proved correct and a pattern was confirmed; that is, the ability of women fleeing domestic violence to access Homeswest or private accommodation is a major problem in this State. It appears that despite the framework that we have in this State via the domestic violence prevention unit, the exit accommodation side of matters is simply not being picked up. I say to the Minister for Housing, who is here in the Chamber, that there is a need for some type of specific allocation of housing stock for this purpose, because there is a huge unmet need for women who are fleeing domestic violence, often in difficult circumstances.

As to the Health budget, we have a situation at the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital at the moment whereby the problems of attracting and retaining nursing staff are continuing. The State Health Department has refused to enable the regional health service board to make adequate offers of incentives to attract and retain nurses to the difficult-to-staff Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital. If only we had some initiative of the type that has been brought forward in the education area, we might move towards solving this problem. However, I am told by a variety of sources that the autonomy of health service boards to make offers has been completely kyboshed by the Health Department. It is absolute madness in this economic environment and at a time when nurses are finding it less and less attractive to work in the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital. It was disappointing to see no dollars set aside for country incentives for nurses, although the Federal Government will offer some initiatives for doctors in rural areas.

Another effect in Kalgoorlie-Boulder has been the significant increase in the number of people who are waiting for some

assistance from the public dental scheme. The statistics I have received show a significant increase in the number of people needing to access some form of assistance for attempted suicide, and for assisting people who are left behind as grieving relatives of those who have self-harmed. I notice from the budget an amount of funding allocated to an Esperance task force on suicide but sadly no such funding has been made available in Kalgoorlie-Boulder despite my requests to the relevant minister and despite the fact that a suicide prevention group, which can number up to 20 to 30 people at any one meeting, clearly needs assistance with coordination and resources. We have heard of the establishment of the position of youth development officer. I pressed the minister for some time to establish that initiative, so that overall coordination would occur. Even though that position has been announced three or four times now, we still do not have anybody employed in it, which is creating some frustration in my electorate.

I turn briefly to the setting out of the budget of the Office of Youth Affairs. I do not know that it is much better set out than it was last year. As far as entertainment value goes, it has some very interesting measures of output and matters to be achieved. The principal aspect of this budget is that the Government makes absolutely no secret about where its youth dollars will go; that is, they will go towards the cadets. This Government appears to have blind faith in the cadet system. I do not criticise the cadets and members will not have heard me do so in this place. The cadet system may be very valuable for the young people who participate and receive \$450 per head as an incentive to do so, but young people in this State have many other needs which will not be met by cadets.

Mr Board: May I comment?

Ms ANWYL: Briefly.

Mr Board: We do not have blind faith; what we have is faith. The reality is that we have 5 000 more young people involved in life-skill training. We will provide as many alternatives and options as possible. There will be others. I have always said that the cadets are not a panacea but another option. The more options and opportunities we create the better.

Ms ANWYL: I have very limited time, so I cannot afford to enter into a dialogue. However, if the minister wishes to make a speech, I will be happy to have a dialogue with him.

In the overall budget we have heard of the necessity to contract expenditure across many government agencies. Happily the minister's agency is one where that has not occurred. The budget papers show a \$640 000 increase, all of which is to go to the cadets. As I have said, I do not have a difficulty with the cadets and I have not criticised the concept in this place, but the \$640 000 increase comes at a time when the community of young people in Western Australia has many other needs. Some 38 per cent of our community are aged under 24. Perhaps too much emphasis is placed on funding that program, given that all of that very significant amount of money will go towards increasing cadet representation.

When one looks at the budget papers, one finds a slight increase of \$62 000 - probably less than the consumer price index, I would imagine - to youth policy development and coordination. It never ceases to amaze me how the minister's staff can come up with these output measures. There was a classic one last year of how the minister rated his own performance. This year's budget papers contain a measure of the quality of advice assessed by the minister. The reason for it is that an assessment by the minister is a new measure for 1999-2000, so there is nothing to compare it with. However, on a scale of one being poor and five being excellent, the quality of the policy advice is set at four. I cannot wait until the estimates committee to get some detail from the minister of where on earth that comes from. I am glad that the minister does not have to rate his own performance this year. That we do not see ministers rating themselves is a worthwhile progression. However, if this is the way we are to measure the delivery of the coordinating role of the Office of Youth Affairs in this State, we really need to look at better ways to evaluate it and create more transparency for the people of Western Australia.

The Minister for Youth and I last week attended the opening of the Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia Conference which the Government sponsored. I was interested to see a media release in which the minister said -

You can go into certain areas of the State and find up to 12 different agencies or organisations working in the youth area who never meet to discuss common issues.

I agree with the minister. However, he went on to say -

Part of the solution simply requires people getting out of their boxes and coming together to break down the barriers. To do this, some will require additional support and resources.

This budget contains nothing for additional support and resources with the exception which I mentioned earlier of the two positions of youth development officers in the goldfields and the south west. I think the minister has also flagged one for the Kimberley. I urge the minister to consider one for the Pilbara and I have no doubt that the wheatbelt needs one as well. If the minister is serious about coordination across the State, that coordination must be resourced. In the provision of youth services in Western Australia, including the metropolitan area, some young people are missing out because they do not have youth workers or adults who can direct them to what is available in their communities. As I have said, Kalgoorlie-Boulder has the highest population of young people in Western Australia, but it has very few youth workers. The solution to these coordination difficulties should not be the job of the existing service providers, who may be very stressed because of their limited numbers, but the Office of Youth Affairs should be responsible for coordinating services to young people. Family and Children's Services does not do it. We know that when a young person reaches 12 to 14 years of age, that is it. Teenagers are not covered by Family and Children's Services. We have seen budget cuts to child protection services in that department. I suggest to the minister that this will be a challenge because we will continue to hear of cases where teenagers are missing out.

Last month was the tenth anniversary of the Burdekin report that looked at homelessness among young people. We know that many homeless youth attend school and some receive the youth allowance. However, from the report of the Office of the Auditor General it is apparent that those young people are missing out on services, which may or may not exist depending on the geographic location in which they live. The challenge for the Office of Youth Affairs will be to provide coordination, not to pick out some nice issues or some not so nice issues such as suicide, road traffic accidents and unemployment. I would like to see budget papers that reflect the Government's track record on those issues, including strategies for homelessness and more detail about the school retention rate. An Aboriginal in year 8 in my electorate has a less than 1 per cent chance of completing year 12. That is the challenge for the Office of Youth Affairs. The Government can increase the cadet budget but it must take its coordination obligations seriously or handball them. Nobody should accept responsibility if they have no intention of carrying out that responsibility. Family and Children's Services has received \$1m in the budget for a policy office, for heaven's sake, at a time when it is cutting back on the child protection budget. If this is to be the responsibility of that department let us be clear about it. Currently the rhetoric suggests it is the responsibility of the Minister for Youth.

**MR CARPENTER** (Willagee) [8.20 pm]: I will address a few points in relation to this budget, principally in areas that affect my shadow portfolio areas of Family and Children's Services and Disability Services and more generally in the policies for education, police, drugs and so on. I do so in the context of the impact that these issues have in my electorate and on the people I represent.

In general terms, unfortunately, this budget sets out to punish the poor in our society. It punishes them in a cruel way and in a way that they cannot escape. This budget has been framed by people who have no idea what it is like to be poor. They have never been poor; they never will be poor. They never deal with people who are poor, and they have no concept of what is it like to be poor.

Mr Court: Do you have all wisdom on that front?

Mr CARPENTER: I include the Treasurer, his deputy in the Liberal Party and the people who advise them. The Treasurer's view of being poor is not being able to trade in his BMW every three years. If the Treasurer had any idea of what it is like to be poor, he would not have delivered the sort of budget that he has. The member for Albany might have some idea. However, the Treasurer has no idea of my experience of being poor nor has he had a genuine experience of what it is to be poor. The Treasurer could not care less. He was born into wealth and was brought up in the western suburbs of Perth. This budget is evidence that the Treasurer could not give a toss about people who are poor. The budget papers are evidence of the Treasurer's lack of concern and understanding of the poor and the general community and what they deal with in their everyday lives. The Treasurer has no idea.

On the day the Treasurer's budget came out I had people coming into my office who wanted help to pay their weekly bills and to feed their children. I could not tell them that the budget had come out this week and it would be a big help, that the Treasurer was looking after them by giving them another \$50 or \$60 a year.

Mr Court: If the member for Willagee is so upset, why did he sit idle while the Labor Government blew away \$1b? Did that help the poor people in the State?

Mr CARPENTER: If the Treasurer wants to debate that issue, we can do that at a different time. I have a good memory. I have nothing to be ashamed of as a journalist during that period. However, I remember that the Treasurer had knowledge of what was going on in Rothwells and did nothing about it. The Treasurer sat and watched it happen. He knew what was going to happen and everybody knows that. I have nothing to be ashamed of.

Mr Bloffwitch: You wouldn't.

Mr CARPENTER: The member for Geraldton should put forward his accusations. I have no hesitation in condemning what happened in the WA Inc period.

The Treasurer is letting down people who need state government assistance and support. He does so because he does not understand people who come to him with a perspective on life that is different from his own. He does not understand them and he does not listen to them because it does not rub right with the way he thinks. The Treasurer turns and walks away.

Mr Court: If that is what you think, you have a problem.

Mr CARPENTER: That is what I think. If it is a problem, it is a problem. If the Treasurer wanted to demonstrate he was different, he had an opportunity with this budget and he did not do that.

Family and Children's Services is one example of what I am talking about. The Minister for Family and Children's Services knows that the department deals with people who are in dire circumstances. Most people who are relatively wealthy and who live in the sort of suburbs the Treasurer represents do not have much to do with Family and Children's Services.

Mr Court: Get the chip off your shoulder. There is more wealth on your side of politics than there will ever be on this side of politics.

Mr Osborne: The member for Willagee grew up in a flash area compared with where I grew up.

Mr CARPENTER: The member for Bunbury knows my old suburb is looking a lot better than it used to look.

Mr Court: That is because this Government rebuilt it.

Mr CARPENTER: It was improved under a program that was started when the member for Fremantle was Minister for Housing.



Let us look at the budget for Family and Children's Services. Let us see whether the statistics back up the Treasurer's claims. On page 507 of *Budget Statements* volume 1 one can compare the programs in the last financial year with those in the next financial year. Crisis support is one of the most significant activities, if not the most significant, that Family and Children's Services undertakes. The description of crisis support under output 6 reads -

Services in this output assist families and individuals to overcome the immediate circumstances of a crisis and gain knowledge and skills to prevent or better manage future crises. Services include accommodation for the victims of domestic violence and homeless people; financial assistance and counselling; and assistance to communities and their members to cope with the aftermath of natural or human made disasters.

What has happened to that budget? That area in the budget has been cut by 10 per cent. It could be done only because this minister is not capable of wielding any power around the table when these negotiations are taking place. The budget has been cut from \$25.7m to \$23.8m. The minister completely misunderstands her own budget papers. The minister's actual spending compared with what is intended to be spent this year has been cut by \$2m. This is a cut to the budget for people who are in crisis and who need support from the State Government. I do not know how the Minister for Family and Children's Services can sit in the Parliament without being embarrassed by that. That is not the only area of expenditure that is being cut in Family and Children's Services. It is hard to find an area in which the Government is increasing the budget of Family and Children's Services, but I will turn to the area in which there is an increase in a moment.

Community development and education have been cut minimally; children's services have been cut from \$5.8m to \$4.9m - that is generous; parent services have been cut by \$500 000; family, youth and individual support has been cut by \$2m. This is the Government that understands what it is like to be poor and to have one's hand out in the hope that somebody will give one a hand up! Family safety services have been cut by \$500 000; crisis support has been cut by \$2m; and child protection services have been cut by \$500 000. What did the minister say when these propositions were being floated to her during the negotiations over her budget, and when the Government told her that it wanted to cut child protection services by \$500 000? Did she bother to object and say, "Hang on. I do not think that is very good" or did she simply sit there and say, "Okay, no problem. We will get by with half a million dollars less." It is not a huge budget; it totals \$7.5m yet it has been cut by \$500 000 which is about a 12 or 13 per cent reduction in funds in that area. Care for children has been reduced from \$35.5m to \$35.3m; strategies that facilitate positive aging have been cut; initiatives to raise community awareness have been cut; advancing the status of women has also been cut; and domestic violence prevention has been cut. It is possible there is a program somewhere else that I have not been able to locate - there should be - because if this figure is all there is to it, it is an absolute disgrace. Domestic violence prevention has been cut from \$3.3m to \$1.9m; it has almost been cut by half. Drug abuse strategy has been cut from \$863 000 to \$821 000 and the drug abuse treatment service has been increased from \$12.3m to \$13.1m - I will refer to that later.

We have a Government that is really bending over backwards to help the people in greatest need! When inflation and population growth are taken into consideration, it can be seen this is a huge cut in this budget. I wonder what the minister did to stop it from happening other than stand up in the Chamber and make ridiculous statements about drug policies she knows little or understands nothing about. What did she do to try to stop this and to protect the quality of life of people who rely on these sorts of funds to help them out? Of course the Treasurer knows all about it because he understands the position in which people who are poor find themselves!

Mr Omodei: And you do?

Mr CARPENTER: The member for Warren-Blackwood would have a better idea. I will refer to his budget in a moment. He has done a much better job of protecting his funds.

I want to find the areas in the Family and Children's Services' budget which received increases. We have been through all the service delivery areas which have been slashed by 10 to 14 per cent. They included crisis support for people who do not have anywhere to live or anything to eat and protection of children which was cut by 14 or 15 per cent. Now let us find the areas into which the Government has put more money. They are all in the same list on page 507 for the public of Western Australia to see. Family and child policy coordination, \$159 000 becomes \$1.063m - there has been a \$1m increase in policy coordination. Policy coordination receives more money, but service delivery is cut. Is this all about making the minister look good through her community programs and the public perception based on the output from her media office? Has she been putting money into those programs at the expense of people who do not have anywhere to live and have insufficient to eat?

Mrs Parker: Absolutely not!

Mr CARPENTER: The minister should respond and explain why it is necessary to put \$1m into policy coordination while at the same time cutting \$2m out of crisis support because the people that I meet in the street probably find it a bit hard to believe, and the people who come into my office are certainly not consoled by the fact that her office is receiving an extra \$1m for policy coordination while they do not have enough money to pay the rent or feed the kids.

The budget for policy, advice, analysis and information increases from \$1.1m to \$1.2m. Policy officers and activities within the department receive the money while service delivery and funds for people who genuinely need help are slashed. That is indefensible. It would be acceptable to have a \$1m increase in policy coordination if, at the same time, increases were being made in the funds allocated to people who rely on these services, but these increases should not be at the expense of those people, which is what is apparent in this budget. If the Treasurer thinks that demonstrates he understands the circumstances of people who do not have enough to eat or do not have a place to live, he is sadly mistaken.

This is a real issue in electorates of the type that I represent. It is not a hypothetical issue one reads about in the newspaper

or hears other people talking about; this is the sort of issue people walk through the front door of a member's office and talk about. It is not something that can be dismissed as unimportant or that happens somewhere else. These people sit across the other side of the desk blubbing their eyes out because they do not have enough money to feed their children on the weekend. I had to go through this on Thursday and Friday. Family and Children's Services has its priorities wrong and so has the minister - or maybe the Government has the wrong minister. In this budget the minister has let down the constituency of that department in an unbelievable way.

A substantial increase has been made in the funding for drug abuse treatment and prevention services, and rightly so. However, the Government is addressing this issue in the wrong way. Today we had a discussion across the Chamber during question time and this issue has also been discussed in the media. There is a clear difference between the way the Government believes we should address drug related problems in our society and the way the Labor Party, the Democrats, the Greens and the non-parliamentary National Party believe we should be addressing them. The Government risks falling into the trap of throwing good money after bad. As I said here, I think last week, the Government has some good educational programs. However, all they do is arm people with knowledge with which we hope they will make the right decisions about drug use. Unfortunately, the real world operates differently. People with drug problems should be treated in a way that does not end with their being caught up in the criminal justice system.

Mr McGowan: The Government has its head in the sand.

Mr CARPENTER: Yes. Last week, when this issue came up for debate in this Parliament an assertion was made by, I think, the member for Joondalup that crime associated with drug use was on the decline. I draw members' attention to figures released in the last Police Union newsletter which show clearly what has occurred in this State in the past few years, as does the report compiled by the Select Committee on the Misuse of Drugs Act, chaired by the member for Joondalup. The evidence paints a clear picture. The weakness in the report was that it did not deal in any meaningful way with the evidence. The conclusions, which were blindingly obvious, would have been contrary to current government thinking and as a result the committee refused to make appropriate recommendations.

Apart from fiscal responsibility and accountability, one of the Government's planks during the last election campaign was law and order. In Western Australia, since 1993-1994, drug offences have increased by 131 per cent - an outstanding record of which the Government can be proud! In the same period robbery increased by 129 per cent - very close to the increase in drug related offences. Surely any person with a curious mind would ask whether there was a correlation in those figures. Everybody throughout the world, other than the Government front bench, can see that a relationship exists and something can be done about it. However, we need to take some bold steps and some legislative steps. In that same period, since 1993, assaults increased by 45 per cent; deprivation of liberty, 46 per cent; and total crime against the person, 41 per cent. Police numbers have increased by 12.6 per cent.

Under the present strategy if the Government increased police numbers by up to 1 000, it would probably not make much difference. It is using the same recipe to make the cake and the cake is full of crime. Crime is being driven by drug abuse. The Government tried to heap criticism on the Labor Party today for taking a couple of steps at its weekend conference to deal with drug related crime. One step was decriminalisation of cannabis, for which a very sound argument can be made. How the minister could argue the way she did today about organised crime in South Australia defeats me. As the Treasurer pointed out, I worked as a journalist for some time before coming here and I investigated many stories about organised crime in Australia. I also covered many stories about organised drug operations in Western Australia. The biggest drug growing operations in Australia at the time were occurring in Western Australia, where prohibition laws exist. The minister's arguments were ridiculous.

Mr Omodei: Is that while the Labor Party was in power?

Mr CARPENTER: No, it was in 1994. The Minister for Local Government will probably remember the stories; nonetheless, it is probably not worth dwelling on now. Heroin is a problem of a different dimension. The Select Committee on the Misuse of Drugs Act, chaired by the member for Joondalup, gathered evidence from all over the world, which is clear; it stares us in the face. Although I do not have the report in front of me, I have the statistics at my fingertips. In Switzerland a major drug crisis arose as a result of heroin use. Switzerland is a very conservative country. Business proprietors in its major centres became sick and tired of the effects of drug related crime on them so they decided something had to be done. The policy change was not driven by social workers, people working in drug centres or junkies. It was driven by business proprietors who wanted something done about the cost that the problem was inflicting on them and on the community. The Swiss Government agreed to establish a trial of approximately 1 146 heroin addicts in several centres over 18 months. Heroin was prescribed to the addicts so that they would not have to deal in the streets or conduct illicit activities.

The results of the trial were that crime among the 1 146 trial group fell by 60 per cent. None of those people died of an overdose. In Western Australia last year 70 young Western Australians died from a heroin overdose.

Mr McGowan: It was 79.

Mr CARPENTER: Thank you. The year before it was 90. We are on track for between 70 and 100 this year. In Switzerland, under the conditions of the trial, no-one died of an overdose. That is an achievement in itself. We stand around and blabber on about what that all means while teenagers are shooting up and dying in the streets of O'Connor, in my electorate. Their parents are asking: Why was not something done that could have kept them alive? I have been through these figures before. More than 1 000 young Australians died of a heroin overdose last year. It is a scandal that so many people died. That is twice as many as were lost in the Vietnam War.

Mr Thomas: In my electorate the week before last a 15 year old died from an overdose.

Mr CARPENTER: As politicians we will not win the argument in favour of a trial based on doing something for heroin addicts. However, we can win it on the basis of doing something for the community as a whole. The report of the Select Committee on the Misuse of Drugs Act also showed that in New South Wales 80 per cent of property crime is drug related. In Western Australia the figures on drug related crime are estimated to be between 70 per cent and 80 per cent. In the Swiss trial, crime fell by 60 per cent. Is there a rough correlation in the statistics? Any fool can see that there is.

The Government's policy rolls along while out in the community tens of thousands of people are having their homes robbed. They are being bashed on the way to the shops or their grandmothers are being knocked over and dragged along the streets by people who are after their cash to buy drugs. We think their behaviour is too difficult to solve and tell them that if they go to an education program everything will be all right. That will not happen.

The Swiss trial involved, I think, 1 146 people over 18 months. The estimate of funds saved for the Government in that program was \$45 per day, per person. That amounts to just under \$50 000 a day, \$350 000 a week and \$1.4m a month. Huge amounts of money were saved for the community in relation to the people in the program, let alone all the money saved because of the 60 per cent drop in crime. We should be doing something proactive in Western Australia about this problem. The Government can increase the Police budget, allocate more police, close little police stations, amalgamate stations and so on, but as long as we have the preconditions for crime it will continue to occur. The clean-up rate is still about 10 or 11 per cent.

The Police budget has been increased by about \$11m. When one takes into account population growth and inflation, the Opposition calculates that that is a real reduction. This Government is in a difficult budgetary position. It must decide where it will allow cuts. It has cut the Family and Children's Services budget, although it did not cut the Disability Services budget, and I congratulate it for that. It did have the five-year plan, which in some ways insulated it against some of the difficulties. However, the Minister for Disability Services is not keeping up with the growth in demand.

This Government has a problem with crime and the escalating cost of crime but cannot fix it. It cannot let the budget grow like Topsy. The Treasurer should be proactive and stop making inane comments about ideas which are put forward and which might have some positive impact. They are not being presented only by the Labor Party; the National Party was the first party to promote heroin trials. Just about everyone in the field dealing with the issues on the ground says that we should give it a try. The Government can continue until the next election with the same head-in-the-sand policy but it will only continue to exacerbate its law and order and policing problems. In the meantime, hundreds more young Western Australians will die needlessly.

The Treasurer was on radio this morning responding to what the Labor Party had decided on the weekend. He made the comment that heroin addicts do not want heroin or needles. I said that the Treasurer was out of touch in relation to poverty, and I also believe he is out of touch with his constituents on this issue. What he said this morning demonstrates that.

Mr Court: I spent yesterday -

Mr CARPENTER: The Treasurer has had his say.

Mr Court: - talking to 30 young heroin addicts who gave me their side of the story.

Mr Thomas: Did they tell you they did not want heroin?

Mr Court: You bet they did.

Mr CARPENTER: Of course, they want to get off it. They do not want to be found dead in some sleazy stairwell at the back of James Street.

Mr Court: They are getting treatment so they do not need heroin. Do you not think that is a good initiative?

Mr CARPENTER: Yes.

Mr Court: They are 30 people who are not part of a heroin trial - they are off heroin.

Mr CARPENTER: In that case they do not need a heroin trial. Anything the Government wants to put into place is worth a try.

Mr Court: What do you mean? It has an 85 per cent success rate.

Mr CARPENTER: The Treasurer should not reject every option put to him. He should also not make inane comments about these people not wanting heroin. They want to get off heroin and they want to be looked after. They do not want to die. As for their not wanting needles, how many needles does the Treasurer think have been distributed in Western Australia since 1987?

Mr Court: Your Government would not support the program I visited yesterday.

Mr CARPENTER: How many needles does the Treasurer think have been distributed in Western Australia?

Mr Court: Too many.

Mr CARPENTER: Since 1987, 10 million have been distributed. That is how much the Treasurer knows about the issue! In 1997, over 1.6 million were distributed.

Mr Shave: Has that fixed the problem?

Mr CARPENTER: It is the reality. If they were not distributed in the way they are, we would have an exploding AIDS problem. Everyone congratulates Australia for the way it has managed to contain that problem. That is what the needle exchange program was designed to do.

Government members cannot simply say that we should not provide clean needles. These people will use dirty needles. Members opposite should look at the prison population. We send people to jail and then read an article in *The West Australian* stating that heroin is readily available in prison. The worst place they can end up is prison using dirty needles and getting hepatitis C.

The Government should be more open minded about the options put to it to deal with the drug problem. This issue is not specific to drug users: It manifests itself in home invasions, breaking and entering and robberies. It is now affecting the whole community. There are ways we can deal with it, but government members are shutting their minds to some of those solutions and, in so doing, are making a terrible mistake.

This problem is causing immense pressure to be applied to the Police budget. The Minister for Police proudly boasts about the increased spending on police services in this State since this Government came to power. The fact remains that since 1993-94, the incidence of robberies is up by 129 per cent. If all that extra money has been made available, what has gone wrong? The problem is that this Government's legislative policy is incorrect.

I do not see this as some crazy left wing versus crazy right wing issue.

Mr McGowan interjected.

Mr CARPENTER: It is a commonsense issue. As the member for Rockingham said, the Premier of Victoria is prepared to support a trial. The Australian Capital Territory, which has a conservative Government, has been prepared to undertake a trial and it decriminalised the use of marijuana some time ago. The same is true in South Australia, which has had a succession of conservative Governments. I understand that the Northern Territory is also considering going down that track.

This approach is not tantamount to the Labor Party's pushing drugs; that is a ridiculous thing to say. It is the result of people trying to come up with ideas to deal with real problems. Those ideas have nothing to do with political philosophy, but the Treasurer bags them and tries to politicise the issue. That is puerile, inane claptrap. In the meantime, 100 or more people will be robbed tonight and someone else will be found dead from an overdose this month. Still, we will sit here and argue about it.

The Disability Services Commission budget has increased from \$141m to \$151m, and I congratulate the Government for that. It is a great shame that the Government was unable to extract more funds from the Commonwealth, because the Western Australian minister went to Canberra seeking about \$29m to \$30m extra, which is the amount we are short in this area to deal with immediate needs. The commonwealth minister gave him nothing. From what I saw in tonight's federal budget, again Disability Services will receive nothing. That is another demonstration of the lack of sensitivity shown to people who need real assistance from government.

Mr Omodei: I am confident that the Commonwealth Government will put something on the table at the next meeting.

Mr CARPENTER: In the history of this nation there has been one Commonwealth-State disability agreement. I believe it was signed in 1992 between the Keating Government and the State Government.

Mr Omodei: It was a Liberal Government and the second agreement has been signed.

Mr CARPENTER: The minister did not get what he wanted. He knew he was \$30m short and at the end it was a cynical -

Mr Court: There was no disability services strategy when the Labor Government was in power in this State.

Mr CARPENTER: The Treasurer must understand that there are two signatories to the agreement: The Commonwealth Government and the State Government. Both Governments must agree.

Mr Court: The Labor Government in this State neglected the disabilities area.

Mr CARPENTER: I should continually churn out my speeches because the Treasurer might learn something. When the Labor Party came to power in Western Australia in 1982, the previous Government had spent about 0.7 per cent of the budget on disability services. By the time the Labor Government exited office in 1992, that amount had increased to 1.4 per cent of the budget. In other words, the spending had doubled. There had been a huge change in community attitudes and perceptions about disabilities. We cannot compare the two periods from the early 1980s to the late 1990s. This Government has managed to increase spending on disabilities from 1.4 per cent of the budget to 1.7 per cent. It has not doubled it, which is what happened in the 10 years of the Labor Government. The Government should not come up with its rubbish that the Labor Government neglected disability services. The world was a different place then, and the world will continue to be a different place. The Minister for Disability Services knows he is not keeping up with the budget. I see from his figures on accommodation that he expects to be able to accommodate another 30-odd people this year. I do not how many people that leaves unaccommodated, because the minister will not tell me any more. The Government has changed the way it presents the figures -

Mr Omodei: No, we have not.

Mr CARPENTER: - in order to hide the crisis.

Mr Omodei: You always get honest answers from me.

Mr CARPENTER: I did not get an honest answer. I did not get the truth. I asked the minister how many people had applied for accommodation, and he gave me the figures for how many people had been supported. It is not the same thing. People who ask for a house to live in and are given an extra \$50 a week to help them live where they are living now are not being accommodated.

Mr Omodei: Sometimes they need a service-plus package.

Mr CARPENTER: The minister should give an honest presentation of the budget so that we know -

Mr Omodei: Get another briefing!

Mr CARPENTER: I have had a briefing. The minister should get a briefing. I get a briefing from the department and it tells me what is going on. It cannot keep up with the demand for accommodation.

Mr Omodei: And it never will.

Mr CARPENTER: Apart from that, I congratulate the Minister for Disability Services for getting an extra \$10m in the budget. Well done!

I now turn to education. There has been a debate in this place today about compulsory school fees. In an ideal world, everyone would pay their school fees. In the Treasurer's electorate, the people whose children go to government schools can probably afford to pay their school fees without much difficulty, and the same probably applies in the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party's electorate. However, in my electorate it is a completely different scenario. Many people cannot afford to pay those fees, and we can imagine how they must feel when they have to go to the school and provide the principal with what is basically an income statement to prove that they cannot afford to pay the school fees. Of course, people do not want to go through that. The Minister for Education asserted in this place today that people who can afford to pay will not pay. That is a disgrace. Is the minister saying that those people will bludge on the system? The minister has also asserted that the \$27m in the Education budget that comes from high school fees will disappear. That is claptrap. The vast majority of the people who can afford to pay will continue to pay. However, some people will not pay, just as some people will not pay their income tax. The challenge to the Government will be to properly fund schools in areas of low socioeconomic status. That includes some of the schools that I represent. The Government has a responsibility to provide equality of opportunity in education in all schools, and it is unrealistic to expect the parents of children in all of those schools to be able to supply the funds that the schools need.

I can fully understand why the principals have taken the position that they have taken. The Government has reduced principals to business managers. Thirty per cent of their school budgets is made up of fees, and of course they do not want anything to jeopardise the collection of fees and their school budgets. I have talked about disability services. I will now talk about a family in my electorate that will be affected by the changes in education policy that the Government is trying to enact. Ironically, the name of that family is the Poore family of Hilton. A story about that family appears in today's *The West Australian*. Alan and Venita Poore have two daughters at South Fremantle High School and need to pay school fees. Mrs Poore said in that article that she believed it was their responsibility as parents to contribute to their children's education at South Fremantle High School. Just about every family that I have ever come across in a working class suburb has that attitude. They do not want to get something for nothing. They want to pay their way if they can. They do not want to bludge off the Government. Mrs Poore said she was pleased with the Labor Party's weekend conference decision to vote against compulsory fees in the new School Education Bill because she believed the Government should be the primary funding body.

Mrs Poore displays great perspicacity when it comes to the Government's responsibilities. She understands better than the Government that it is the Government's responsibility to be the primary funder of schools and to provide equality of opportunity in education. The Minister for Education has said that if fees are not compulsory, schools in underprivileged areas will suffer because they will not have that money from school fees. That demonstrates that the minister is not fit to hold the job that he holds. An Education minister who takes that sort of attitude should get out of that job and we should get an Education minister who is prepared to do the right thing, because that is a shameful attitude. I congratulate the Poore family of Hilton for being prepared to put its case publicly, because they represent the attitude of the vast majority of the people whom we on this side of the Chamber represent: Honest, hard working people, who want to pay their way, who do not like being slagged by the Government, and who do not like being left to hang out to dry by a Government which expects them to pay beyond their means.

This budget and the philosophy which underpins this budget is a sad reflection on the people in this Government. I will say one thing, though: The silver lining is that this Government is now well into its last term, and the sooner that term comes to an end, the better.

[The member's time expired.]

**MR GRILL** (Eyre) [9.06 pm]: I wish to express considerable concern about the predicament of the people who live in regional and remote areas of Western Australia. My electorate of Eyre is representative of those types of people. Every time I receive a list of electors within my electorate, I find that the number has reduced, and I wonder why that is the case. On the surface the electorate appears to be strong economically, and it continues to produce a burgeoning amount of wealth for this State and nation. In fact, it produces wealth out of all proportion to the number of people who live in the electorate. However, month after month, every time I receive the figures, the number of people who live in my electorate has declined. I am told that efforts are made by the Electoral Office to recruit and put people on the roll; nonetheless the numbers keep declining.

It appears to me that the factor which is at work here is that people are being induced to live other than in my electorate and other than in electorates like mine. One of the major contributing factors is the decline in the services that are being delivered to my electors. One of those services is medicine. The doctor who has been practising in Kambalda for many years is leaving and has indicated that the partner whom he brought into the practice some months ago may leave also. The doctor who has been in Southern Cross for some time has left, and the two younger female doctors who are practising there now have discussed with me the problem of practising medicine in remote areas and are also threatening to leave.

There are chronic problems in keeping doctors in Leonora and Laverton despite the shire councils expending a fair amount of money to attract and keep doctors in those towns. Right across the electorate, and even in Kalgoorlie itself, there are looming problems with specialists and general practitioners. Why are people moving away? One reason they are doing so is to get decent medical treatment. If they cannot get it where they are, they will go where they can find it and they find it in the city. What about nurses? I have recently received information indicating that there is no longer a community nursing service in Leonora or Laverton. Some time ago a number of people were employed as community health nurses in those towns. However, it is increasingly difficult for the Health Department to attract qualified nurses to these places. The pay extended to nurses in those areas is comparable to that extended to similarly qualified nurses in the metropolitan area. These are harsh places to live in and it does not appear that any differential is extended in recognition of that harshness. The nurses at the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital have so far rejected the package of emoluments put to them by the Health Department because it contains the same emoluments received by similarly qualified nurses in the Perth metropolitan area. However, members and those nurses know that the level of amenities in the metropolitan area far exceeds the level of amenities and services available even in a place like Kalgoorlie, which is a fairly large regional centre. In their assessment there should be some differential which favours country nurses and attracts them to these isolated areas.

The lack of community nurses in Leonora concerns me. Through a number of ministers and the Treasurer himself this Government often expresses concern about the plight of our Aboriginal people. Hundreds of Aborigines live in Leonora, Laverton and other parts of my electorate. They need services. In many respects their welfare lags way behind the welfare of Europeans within the electorate. How do they progress without a community nursing service? It is lot harder for them. They are not trained in the care and treatment of their infant children; that service is denied to them. We have been told by a range of experts that early intervention is increasingly important in the welfare of indigenous families. Overseas and elsewhere good results have been achieved by early intervention but how can we have early intervention when the front line troops, the community nurses, do not exist in those communities? How can we have pre-emptive treatment under those circumstances? We are dealing with indigenous people with very rudimentary skills in this area. How can proper advice about diet for young or old people be provided? How can proper advice be given about health habits, hygiene, family support and things of that nature? State Governments and to some extent Federal Governments have made tragic mistakes in the past because they have endeavoured to swap parenting by parents for parenting by the State. They have put people into institutions when it would have been better to have qualified people go into the homes of indigenous people and teach them how to apply some of these basic skills. If one looks right across Australia, one will find tragic mistakes of this nature have been made in the past. Where we do not have these facilities - and we do not have them in Leonora and Laverton - those mistakes will be repeated again and again.

We have endeavoured to counter poverty simply by giving people more money. Through affirmative action programs indigenous people have been given more money than people of European descent. That extra money is not a bad thing but when it is simply applied to the Totalisator Agency Board, the hotel or to other forms of gambling and people are not taught how to budget, how to buy proper food -

Mr Bloffwitch: It just makes the problem worse.

Mr GRILL: It does. I am concerned that the focus of welfare has simply been to give people more money to overcome poverty. That is not always the answer. We need qualified people out there teaching people in straitened circumstances how best they can achieve welfare for themselves. They need skills. If they have the skills, they can look after their families and find jobs. That is not happening in those towns. To an increasing degree we find the youth of these communities listless, wandering around the streets, unproductive and without much motivation or hope for the future.

At the beginning of this year there was a deficiency of 30 teaching positions in the schools in my electorate and the Kalgoorlie electorate. This was despite the fact that we are told that there is a surfeit of about 500 teachers in the metropolitan area. The Education Department was not able to attract enough of those 500 unemployed teachers to places like Norseman, Southern Cross, Boulder, Laverton and Leonora - towns in my electorate. Why was it not able to do that? There is no doubt that living conditions in these areas are tougher and the cost of living is a lot higher. The basic commodities in these towns such as petrol, bottled gas, rent, the cost of building houses - things of that nature - are all higher. Are teachers paid significantly more to recompense them for these additional costs? I am afraid they are not. The same argument applies across the board. The nurses have rejected a pay package which does not include a differential to take these factors into account. The teachers are in the same situation. I know that the Education Department has put a remote area package in place in some of the indigenous schools. I argued for that year after year when we were in government and later when we went out of Government and it has finally been done. It works very well indeed, but it is anomalous to the degree that the generous packages which apply to those schools apply in a patchwork way.

If one takes the road north out of Kalgoorlie towards Leonora, one goes through Menzies. Menzies has a small, basically indigenous, remote area school, which does not have more than about 22-25 students, but the teacher is on a very good package, so the school is well staffed. If one goes even farther than Menzies and travels the extra 120 to 130 kilometres to Leonora, one finds a much bigger school with many more Aboriginal students, yet the remote area package does not apply there. I suggest that the standards of education there are lamentably low. There is adequate evidence that the standard of

education generally in country areas is at least 10 to 15 per cent lower than in city areas. In a place like Leonora, it is lamentably and embarrassingly low. That school cannot attract teachers. I said at the beginning of my speech that 30 positions in my electorate and the Kalgoorlie electorate were not filled. Some eight positions have still not been filled. In the Eastern Goldfields Senior High School at the beginning of this year, 200 or 300 students took the advice of the Education Department at the urging of the principal and other teachers at the school and took up Italian. There was no Italian teacher; the teacher simply was not there. What happened? The department had to apply to the eastern States for a suitable teacher. Ultimately, I think the school got a teacher from Adelaide. These things should not be happening.

It is very hard to attract good public servants to Kalgoorlie. A front page story in *The Miner Newspaper* a few weeks ago reported the Chamber of Commerce lamenting the fact that many senior positions for public servants in the town had not been filled, and in some cases had not been filled for months. Six months has been spent trying to fill the position of the Chief Executive Office of the Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission. An exhaustive process was gone through, and ultimately a recommendation was made to the minister which he rejected because he thought the calibre of the applicants was not high enough. Government is now back into the process and could take another six months. It means that the prime agency for decentralisation and regional development is without a CEO for up to a year or maybe longer.

What sort of money is being applied? In the current budget, \$1.3m is provided to the Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission and a similar amount of between \$1.3m and \$1.5m is being provided to the midwest and Gascoyne regions. If one asks the officers of the authority what they have been doing with the money and why they have been so slow in bringing about some development in the area, they say that the great majority of their funds are eaten up with salaries and they do not have funds to do much else. If we are serious about regional development, we must fund those agencies properly and we must think about paying differential rates to public servants so that they will be attracted to those remote areas.

About nine months ago, the Minister for Education announced a package which would apply to hard-to-staff schools. The State Schools Teachers Union has indicated it is not happy with the package because it is not generous enough. Frankly, I think it is right. In hard-to-staff schools, which are not hard to identify, a very generous package should be provided to attract experienced teachers, or in some cases any teacher at all. The union is correct in saying that the package presented to date falls well short of that. We must recognise the fact that there are areas of the State to which public servants, teachers and doctors do not want to go as a matter of priority and to which nurses are not attracted. In those circumstances, a differential to take into account the harsh living conditions and the fact that the cost of living is way higher than it is in the metropolitan area is not only logical but absolutely essential. I encourage the Government to think in those terms. When it takes a hard line in the negotiations with the Teachers Union and the Australian Nurses Federation, the Government should think about the general welfare of the people living in those remote areas. Quite frankly, those people are voting with their feet and moving to the metropolitan area.

I will talk about other incentives for generally attracting qualified people to more remote areas. One of the incentives is zone rebates not a state but federal budget matter. From time to time we must have some influence on our federal colleagues. The current system of taxation in Australia includes a built-in bias against regional employees. The bias is for this factor: It is not because various tax rates do not apply equally across Australia - they do, except for the zone rebates; it is because the amenities which one finds in the city are untaxed in the gross-pay packets of people who work there, but those amenities are taxed when they are quantified and compensation is paid in the pay packets of country employees. To attract good and competent staff to country areas, the private sector normally must pay some sort of a premium to compensate people for the harsh living conditions, higher living costs and lack of amenities. When that compensation goes into the pay packet it is taxed. That brings about an inequality between the city and the country. I do not suggest that we tax city people more because they live in the city and enjoy all of its amenities. However, I am suggesting that we take into account the fact that private and to some extent government employers must put premiums into the pay packets of their workers to compensate for the lack of those amenities. We should have proper zone rebates. The present zone rebates are extremely meagre. I was very pleased that the Regional Development Council of Western Australia put together some figures on this a little time ago.

Dr Turnbull: It did an extremely good job, didn't it?

Mr GRILL: Yes. I unashamedly borrowed from its figures. The fixed amount in zone A, which includes places like Broome, Carnarvon, Pannawonica and Wittenoom, is up a very paltry \$338, plus 50 per cent for base allowance if someone has dependants. The fixed amount in zone B, which takes in my electorate, is a really quite pathetic \$57, with an additional 20 per cent for people who qualify. A special area amount, which takes in part of my area, is for very remote areas like Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Leinster and Madura, and is up to \$1 173 with 50 per cent for someone with dependants. They are not large amounts. The zone B amounts are quite laughable. Over the past six years, these zone allowances have decreased in real terms by about 14 per cent. Once again I borrow from the paper prepared by the Regional Development Council of Western Australia. The council argues persuasively for the re-establishment of those zone allowances to their real value and for the doubling of those allowances. It has calculated that if the fixed cost components of zone allowances were doubled, it would cost the Federal Government only \$37m for regional Western Australia. That is not a big sum of money at all. The council also argues persuasively that those zone allowances should be indexed, so that they go up each year to reflect cost of living increases.

Another matter which has had a catastrophic effect on Western Australia, especially the remote mining areas, is the fringe benefits tax. This tax was introduced in 1986 because the Government, Treasury and taxation officials thought that big companies mainly, but some smaller companies, were defrauding the taxation system by paying benefits in lieu of salaries. That was true and, by and large, the people of Australia were prepared to embrace the fringe benefits tax on that basis. However, that is not the way that the fringe benefits tax is necessarily applied. The problem for most of remote and regional Western Australia is that fringe benefits tax does not apply to the sorts of luxuries that senior executives receive from big

companies in the city; it applies to necessities like electricity for air conditioning in remote area housing. What did that lead to?

Mr Bloffwitch: Fly-in fly-out arrangements.

Mr GRILL: Yes. In the past decade in my electorate fly-in fly-out operations have quadrupled. It equates almost exactly with the period since fringe benefits tax was introduced. Although there is no absolute proof that the fringe benefits tax caused fly-in fly-out arrangements to quadruple, it does not require a skilful mind to make the necessary deductions. Fly-in fly-out operations produce distortions in regional development.

I was recently in Laverton. A few kilometres out of Laverton is the Granny Smith mine. It is one of the biggest mining operations in Australia. It is a very rich mine that has a fairly long life ahead of it. That operation is almost completely isolated from Laverton. It has its own airstrip. It flies its workers in and flies them out from that airstrip. The company does not buy anything from the local town. It flies in all of its supplies and commodities from Perth. The young men and some young women who work at that mining operation live in good accommodation on site. They have a nice dining hall and tavern. They have no transport to drive the 30 kilometres into Laverton, so they do not even patronise the local hotel. They are completely isolated for all intents and purposes from the community that provides the other infrastructure for them. That distorts the multiplier effect. One cannot say in those circumstances that there is a three or four-multiplier effect from that mining operation in that community. It does not apply, because there is no interaction between Laverton and that mining community. That is the same with the other big mining operations in the area. If one talks to the mine manager and his staff, who are all well-educated, highly qualified, mainly young and eager, ambitious, and going places in this world, and asks them why they do not want to live in Laverton and bring their families there they will tell you: There are no amenities and they have concerns about the doctor, the hospital and education. They are the reasons they put forward. We need to do a better job, because regional development in Western Australia, especially in the remoter parts, will not go ahead in those circumstances.

The paper I mentioned a while ago from the Regional Development Council of Western Australia puts forward a very strong argument for fringe benefits tax to be rolled back in this State. It referred to figures compiled by the Bureau of Meteorology called the relative strain index. When the index for an area exceeds 0.3, it means that living on that day in that community is uncomfortable. That is an uncomfortable living conditions index that used to be used when children were sent home from school and workers on building and other sites were sent home because the weather was too inclement. How do these figures measure up in relative Australian standards? Sydney has two days a year on which that index is exceeded and Melbourne has six days a year. In the Pilbara that index is exceeded on 130 days a year, yet the Federal Government treats air conditioning as a luxury. If the company provides air conditioning or subsidises the electricity for air conditioning, that is part and parcel of the workers' income and they pay the fringe benefits tax. I do not see the logic of that. Air conditioning in those sorts of circumstances is not a luxury by any standards.

Mining companies in Western Australia pay the highest incidence of fringe benefits tax in Australia. To minimise that fringe benefits tax I have no doubt that they resort to fly-in fly-out operations. The Regional Development Council recommends, and I will also recommend to this Government, that it takes up the matter with the Federal Government and supports the full exemption of housing benefits from fringe benefits tax on the mining industry as put forward in the latest tax package by the Federal Government. The council also recommends that that be extended to all industries. I cannot see any logical reason that it would apply to the mining industry in a place like Wiluna and not apply to other industries that might want to relocate there.

Mr Bloffwitch: Or the little business that is trying to attract custom.

Mr GRILL: It would be on any sort of business. It also suggests that things like electricity and air conditioning in areas where the relative Australian index exceeds the 0.3 limit for 100 days a year be exempt from fringe benefits tax. That seems fair and logical. I admit that my colleagues and I did not have a great deal of success in convincing our Labor Party colleagues in Canberra that that course should be adopted. Nonetheless, it should be adopted.

Dr Turnbull: Do you think we might be a bit more successful?

Mr GRILL: I hope members opposite will be more successful with their colleagues in Canberra.

I am terribly concerned about the drift in relativities in amenities between the city and the country. It is of grave concern to me that people are voting with their feet, simply moving out of my electorate and going to live in the city. The fact that mining and other companies pursue fly-in fly-out operations on the basis that they want to minimise fringe benefits tax is highly lamentable. We all have a duty to turn that situation around. The State Government has a direct responsibility - not one that it is discharging at present - to ensure remote areas attract well-qualified public servants, teachers, nurses and doctors. That is not happening.

Mr Court: There are two examples. First, I recall when Des Kelly retired recently, people spoke of his experience when he first came to the public sector and the work locations and the experiences he and others like him got from building things like the Broome jetty. Secondly, soon after Sir Arvi Parbo retired - I could not get to the dinner for him on that occasion - I read about his background and how he started in those sorts of communities you are talking about and the experience he got there. I appreciate what you are saying. It is also important for all people to get that sort of learning experience. Young, up-and-coming people are working in these operations and some of them will be the Sir Arvis of the future. I appreciate the point being made: You want to try to make it easier for the families, particularly, as these mines need skilled people to operate pretty expensive plant. There are a number of examples of very good public servants who have done their time, so to speak, going through the ranks.



Mr GRILL: It is happening less and less. The decision by the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity some time ago to cut off promotional opportunities between teachers working in the country and the city has not helped. Why the Government has not worked out a package to get around that, I do not know. There must be ways to incorporate within a package, criteria for promotion of teachers with country experience. Many things can be done. I want to see the forthcoming Arvi Parbos of this world in places like Learmonth and Leonora. By and large they are not there today; they fly in and out, and do not live there. Their families are not brought up there. It is not likely that will happen unless we turn the situation around quite dramatically. I support the budget.

**MR MCGINTY** (Fremantle) [9.43 pm]: I shall address the provision in the budget for the Health Department of Western Australia. The budget makes a total provision of a little less than \$1.8b, an increase of only \$46m on the expenditure made during the current financial year. I refer to that expenditure because we still have two months to go in this financial year. Although we have an estimated end of financial year out-turn from the Health Department, over the past three years the Health budget has been continually blowing out. It would not surprise me if over the next two months, particularly in the major teaching hospitals, those figures will be further revised to show that there has been negligible or no increase in the health allocation when taking into account the extent to which the budget is likely to blow out during that time.

Taking the figures on face value, there seems to be an increase of \$46m out of a total budget of nearly \$1.8b for Health. That is a very small increase. By the time we take into account the population growth in Western Australia as well as inflation, that represents a real per capita cut in the funding for health care in this State. I make this prediction: Before Christmas this year, the Health budget will be bailed out yet again. That will be the fourth year in a row in which the budgetary allocation made to Health has proved to be insufficient and the Government has had to come to the party and bail it out with a significant additional injection of funds. This current financial year is 10 months old. We have already seen a bailout in excess of \$100m so far this year. If I am correct in the signs I am picking up, particularly from the major teaching hospitals, I predict that we will see another bailout before Christmas because the financial pressure on them is such that the blow-out will extend even further. A real per capita cut in the funding of health care is inadequate. If hospitals are to maintain anything like their current level of services, we will see a budget blow-out.

One alternative - in my view this cannot be contemplated - is a reduction in the services that are provided. The hospitals are already operating at peak capacity. They would not have the sort of fat that I noticed the chief executive officer of Royal Perth Hospital, Gareth Goodier, spoke of when he was appointed to that hospital. He talked about some fat that could be pruned off the operations of that hospital. It is very interesting to note that he has not found it and has not made economies to that effect at the hospital in all the time he has been there, albeit a fairly brief period. The Health budget is vitally important because it deals with not only saving human life, but also the quality of the life enjoyed by those who are dependent on the health system for their medical care, operations and generally the state of their health.

Because it is such a crucial budget provision, to be playing games with the budgetary allocation to the hospitals does not become the Government of the day. When a bailout occurs four years in a row, if my prediction is right, it tends to suggest either mismanagement or the Government is trying to put the screws on hospitals in such a way that they cannot cope - in fact, they have not been able to do that - which jeopardises the quality of care that goes to the patients.

From the budget allocation to Health, we can look at the figures and do economic analyses; however, at the end of the day, the human dimension of the problem concerns me most. During the current financial year, the waiting lists for so-called elective surgery in this State have reached an astronomically high figure - in excess of 17 000 people. That figure was arrived at late last year. I am pleased to say that it has come down somewhat since then. I sincerely hope the trend continues because it translates into quality of life for an awful lot of people who in many cases, given the budget under which we are operating, had despaired under this Government of ever regaining or retaining any semblance of quality in their lives because they were placed in the never-never when it came to waiting for their elective surgery.

I relayed to this House on a previous occasion the case of a constituent of mine, the victim of a hit-and-run motor vehicle accident. That accident caused significant damage to his shoulder. He works in Fremantle in a business connected with the waterfront. Following the accident he could neither put his hand behind his back nor raise his right arm above shoulder height. He could not do those things because he was a victim of crime and of our hospital system. For four years he had waited for orthopaedic surgery to correct the problem in his right shoulder. Having waited so patiently for so long, believing that the Government and the health system would do the right thing by him, either late last year or early this year he received a letter from the Government asking whether he still wanted his operation. Of course he damn well wanted his operation; he had been waiting for it for years! That is why he had been making hospital appointments with his surgeon! He rang the hospital and said that if that was the best it could do, it could stick its operation. What did Fremantle Hospital do? It took him off the waiting list. The man was desperately in need of surgery. It was no way to achieve reductions by driving someone to desperation in a way that seriously impaired his quality of life and in a way that was negligent in the extreme.

When we can see thousands of people coming off the waiting list and we can get the waiting list down to the levels that existed when the Government first came to office and which it promised in the 1993 election it would halve - of course, we have seen the waiting list increase by 50 per cent during the life of the Government, in quite a blatant breach of its election promise - there will be real cause for celebration, not as we saw from the minister today when he trumpeted a reduction from an average waiting time of just over eight months to just under eight months. That is nothing to crow about. All we need to do is to look at how often people waited a year, three years, or five years 10 years ago. It has never been as high as it is today. I make those points purely to illustrate the human dimension of what we are talking about. I sincerely hope that the reduction in the waiting list is real and that every individual on the waiting list is treated as an individual in need of personalised care.

The budget has not really come to the party on several matters. The first is the waiting list and the second is the important matter of mental health. I shall mention an incident which I have mentioned on previous occasions because it was one of the saddest personal experiences I have had in my nine years in Parliament and certainly in my time in dealing with the Health portfolio. I refer to a day when I was in Fremantle and my mobile phone rang. The person on the other end was a gentleman in Derby who had a son with a mental health problem. Being a good parent and wanting to do the right thing by his son, that person had become involved in a local mental health action group in the town of Derby in the Kimberley region of the State. He had been on a delegation to speak to the Minister for Health about the need for accommodation to be provided in the town of Derby so that parents like him who had children with significant mental health problems could be accommodated in the town, be looked after there, maintain close family and familiar relationships and continue to live in a familiar environment rather than be required, as is often the case in remote parts of the State, to come down to the city, where they have no friends, no family and no support and ultimately end up, as that boy did, committing suicide. There was no capacity for him in Derby to be looked after or accommodated there.

The father was absolutely distraught. I can certainly sympathise with that point of view. He was trying to do the right thing and apply pressure to make sure that there was adequate provision of community support services for people who do not need to be institutionalised in a major mental health institution but who nonetheless have significant problems. Members will be aware also of the potential closure of the Whitby Falls Hostel in Byford. For several years that place had been home to a former member of the Maritime Union of Australia. The union worried that, with the Government's announcement of the impending closure of Whitby Falls, that gentleman would be brought down to the city, put in a dosshouse, most probably close to a liquor shop, and be dead within a year. That was its analysis and it was that gentleman's analysis as well. Why he could not be left there in what for many people in that situation is an ideal setting, where they work on the farm, work with the chooks, work as part of the local community and have a quality of life that they could not enjoy in the city, escapes me. Why that could not be allowed to continue and why the facilities at that place could not be upgraded quite frankly escapes me.

Nonetheless, we have a crisis care provision in the budget, if I may broaden the matter beyond the direct provision of health care. In the crisis care provision for Homeswest accommodation, there is a reduction in funding. That is the big gap in the provision of mental health services in the State. Every endeavour is being made to de-institutionalise those people who years ago would have been in the old Claremont Mental Hospital or, more recently, in Graylands, and place them out in the community, but the Western Australian Association for Mental Health, the peak council representing community-based, not-for-profit mental health organisations, has said in its criticism of the budget that that big gaping hole is still there and that we do not have enough community support services.

Just over the road from Fremantle Hospital there is an excellent cheap facility, the June O'Connor Centre - a drop-in place for mental health patients. When I visited it recently to have a bite to eat and a cup of coffee with the staff and patients who use the place on a voluntary basis, it was pointed out how cheap it was and that people from the northern suburbs have nowhere to go. People travelled from Joondalup to Fremantle just to spend a day with other people with mental health problems, play a game of pool, go on an outing or something of that nature. They said that there is nothing like it in Rockingham. There certainly was the odd drop-in place. I am aware of Watley House in Bayswater, although it was substantially shut down a few years ago and was perhaps a little more clinical in its nature. There should be more places like the June O'Connor Centre to offer community support. The staff told me a touching story. They open the centre on Christmas Day because far too many people who are put back into the community with significant mental health problems spend Christmas Day looking at the walls of their flats without necessary community support. A woman whom I know and admire, June O'Connor, has established the centre to offer that support and assistance. In the budget there is insufficient recognition of the need for crisis accommodation through Homeswest or what I regard as a top priority, and that is increased funding to expand the range of centres to offer a life or an improved quality of life to people who have the misfortune of having a severe mental illness. At the end of the road, people such as the young man from Derby end up taking their lives through a sense of desperation. In the budget, insufficient priority is given to mental health.

The other matters that I would like to touch on deal with women's health. I urge all members to visit King Edward Memorial Hospital and to do so in this context: The budget makes no provision whatsoever for any capital works expenditure by the five major metropolitan teaching hospitals in the State this year. Under this budget, not one cent will be spent on capital works at the King Edward Memorial Hospital, Princess Margaret Hospital for Children, Royal Perth Hospital, Fremantle Hospital and Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. Our major institutions cannot operate without receiving capital upgrades to keep pace with the community's needs. I urge members to visit King Edward Memorial Hospital which is unique in Australia. It is the only place in which a centre of excellence for not only birthing but also all the other expertise required for women's health is concentrated in one institution. In other States those facilities are fragmented. However, this centre of excellence in Western Australia is run down. I urge members to take the time to visit the antenatal clinic in Hensman Road. It is a disgrace.

Mr Prince: You are right; I have been there.

Mr McGINTY: Not one cent of capital works money has been allocated to it. As the Minister for Police knows, there is no privacy for women who must discuss the most intimate issues in their lives because 50 or 80 other people sitting outside can hear everything they say. The building is run down and decrepit; a bulldozer should be put through it. Surely something that is so important to so many people in Western Australia should receive capital funding for upgrading this year. Frankly, King Edward Memorial Hospital is now showing years of neglect in its equipment and structural areas. I will have more to say about it over the next few months in the hope that money can be found to provide a decent standard of care for women who give birth, which for many of them is the most important occasion in their lives, as well those who have significant health problems.

I refer now to the situation confronting BreastScreen WA. Over the past couple of years there has been an attempt to privatise the breast screening service for women in Western Australia. However, an announcement was made earlier this year that the service would remain in-house. Recently - I hope the minister will intervene to correct this - an announcement was made by BreastScreen that it will cut back its clinics from five days a week to three days a week. The reason given for this cutback is that it is temporary and the assessment centres cannot keep up with the tide of referrals coming from the screening centres.

A statement was made in March this year, only two months ago, by the minister that the breast screening services for Western Australian women would be improved and expanded following a review of the statewide program. He said that there would be no disruption to the screening services that are provided free of charge to Western Australian women. Two months later a significant disruption has occurred as a result of the service's operating only three days a week. The minister also said that women aged between 40 and 50 could participate in the mammogram program. Since then, I understand - I have not had this officially confirmed - that women under the age of 50 are now being excluded. That might be a temporary measure. Anyone touched by breast cancer would appreciate the importance of this matter. To have the breast screening services so mismanaged that they must shut up shop for two days a week and the staff asked to take leave in order to help out is a clear indication that the facility has been significantly mismanaged. I urge the minister to intervene as a matter of top priority to have these places operating fulltime again as soon as that can be done. The situation shows a measure of mismanagement which is inappropriate in such a sensitive and important area.

Part of the problem generally in our health system is a system unable to cope. I will refer to two matters, the first of which concerns a woman who came to my office today. For the purpose of this debate and in the light of the sensitivity of the matter I will refer to her as Mrs B. Her case involves the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. Mrs B underwent a subtotal colectomy - the partial removal of the large bowel - four years ago due to problems associated with a long-standing bowel disorder. Since then she has had unrelieved abdominal pain, rectal prolapse and recurrent haemorrhoids. She also needs regular iron and vitamin injections as her ability to absorb food value was affected by the surgery.

She also suffers chronic joint and back pain related to osteo-arthritis and liver complications due to the bowel disorder. She needs to take regular, strong medication for pain relief and her arthritic condition, but has multiple allergies to drugs, including codeine. She also has some difficulty going about her daily family and married life. She is taking the narcotics endone and digesic as well as her arthritis medication. Her doctor states that she may have to move on to morphine for the next stage of her pain management. It is a very serious case.

Her gastro-enterologist therefore referred her for complete pain management to the pain management clinic at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. Today Mrs B had her appointment at the clinic cancelled for the third time in a row. This time no arrangements were made for when she would be seen. She is extremely distressed about these circumstances. She is in constant pain and does not believe that the hospital is sympathetic to her situation. On each occasion when her appointment to the clinic was cancelled, the hospital contacted her only hours before her appointment was due and conveyed to her that it was overbooked and her appointment was cancelled. On each previous occasion it arranged another appointment, but not today. She is justifiably angry about that. Why cannot the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital provide this woman with a decent standard of health care and treatment as a human being, rather than as a number? I hope that the minister will intervene in this matter and ensure that it is corrected.

The final matter is my disappointment that in the crucial areas of timeliness and quality of service delivery, the Health Department is not predicting any change from what has occurred in the past 12 months. In the budget documents at page 672 under the heading of "Timeliness", no change is forecast from that which was targeted this year for the output measures in relation to the percentage of admitted category 1 elective surgery patients waiting longer than 30 days. The same applies to category 2 elective surgery patients waiting longer than 90 days - there is no improvement, and similarly for category 3 patients. It disappoints me that there is no ongoing commitment to improving the quality of patient care through our public health system. Perhaps, as the Treasurer described today, the current health system is unsustainable. If it is unsustainable, he should hand it over to someone who can make it work. He should not wash his hands of it or give up. It needs a strong minister to drive it and ensure that it is patient oriented, that cases such as Mrs B do not arise, and that closure of the breast screening service for two days a week due to mismanagement is avoided. It takes a commitment to drive the system to ensure that the best possible outcomes are achieved.

The Treasurer has trumpeted a number of supposed achievements by his Government over time. The first of those was that he has reduced state debt and has it under control. My response to that is: Who could not do that by flogging off the State's major assets and then converting the proceeds of those sales into debt reduction? At the end of the day the Government is left without its assets. Secondly, he said that he is proud of addressing the State's accumulated superannuation liability. Who could not do that by closing down the superannuation scheme? That is what he has done. The state employees - other than members of Parliament - are now left with Labor's superannuation guarantee as the only superannuation for public sector workers. It is therefore no great achievement for the Government to say that it is addressing the superannuation liability when in fact it has shut down the scheme.

In a similar vein, with the hospital crisis the Treasurer's suggestion is to destroy the very principles upon which our hospital system is erected; namely, the great Medicare principles of a free and universal service available to every citizen. The Treasurer made it clear that his priorities in this area lie with privatising. He has tried it in breast screening, at Armadale and at new hospitals at Joondalup and Peel which are privatised and are excellent buildings. I commented in question time today about the South West Health Campus, which I have visited twice since it transferred its operations and has been opened; it is an excellent facility. However, no priority is being given to our government hospitals, particularly in the metropolitan area. I return to my point about not one cent being made available this year for capital works on our five major

teaching hospitals in this State. If the Treasurer's answer to the hospital funding crisis is to destroy the principles of the health policy - namely the Medicare principles - and to advocate that compulsory private health insurance be taken out by everyone other than welfare recipients, and means test those who want government hospital treatment, he is simply walking away from the challenges and principles which underpin our health system.

Mr Osborne: I thought you believed that one of the problems with the new Joondalup Health Campus is that it is nowhere near Queensbury Street any more.

Mr McGINTY: My friends the nuns at St John of God Hospital in Bunbury have an excellent facility there. I spoke with one of the nuns from the St John of God Hospital in Geraldton who was extremely envious of the private hospital component of the facility that exists there. She was hoping that some of the largesse might extend to Geraldton, Mr Deputy Speaker. In my view the method by which people have put together the government component of that hospital is a tribute to everyone involved. Nonetheless, let us not have only two or three show pieces - Joondalup, Peel and Bunbury. The Joondalup show piece is not operating at full capacity because of cutbacks that have occurred there and action taken by the hospital which closed a number of its medical wards to reduce the number of elective surgery operations taking place there. Let us ensure that every hospital has the necessary services and facilities to be able to operate and I urge the Treasurer to rethink his position on the King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women. It is no answer to the problems at that hospital to destroy what is there and say that the problem has been fixed, as the Government has done with privatisation and debt reduction, as it has done with the superannuation liability by doing away with the state superannuation scheme, and as it proposes to do with Medicare and hospital funding by destroying Medicare.

I intend during the course of the estimates debate to take this matter further and hopefully probe the minister to ensure that there is a better allocation of health dollars. We will certainly be probing the Government to ensure that there is adequate funding to enable our hospitals to operate on the correct basis.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Cunningham.

**APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (No 4)**

*Returned*

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

*House adjourned at 10.14 pm*

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### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

#### SCHOOLS, TRUANCY

1972. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What plans does the Government have to reduce the level of truancy in Western Australia?
- (2) What resources does the Government intend to commit to reducing the level of truanting?
- (3) Have any additional resources been allocated for this purpose?
- (4) What additional resources?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (1) The Education Department has developed, and is implementing a strategy that targets students at educational risk. This strategy, known as "Making the Difference", includes a focus on Retention and Participation and Behaviour Management in Schools which includes programs that specifically target the issues of truancy and non-attendance through early intervention, identification and prevention. Schools have commenced the implementation of these programs, which have been established in response to the local context and modelled on successful practice. In addition, many education districts are working closely with their local Police Service to target truants. Children on the streets who are absent from school without an acceptable cause are returned to school. This collaborative approach is recognition of the shared benefits of educating youth at risk.
- (2) District education offices and schools have been allocated \$2.2 million to support the implementation of Retention and Participation Plans and the development of Behaviour Management Policies in Schools.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) Retention and Participation funding is guaranteed until 2001. This includes an additional \$3.1 million over four years to target alienated youth. An additional \$390 000 has been committed for Behaviour Management in Schools.

#### SCHOOLS, TRUANCY

1973. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What plans does the Government have to reduce the level of truancy in Western Australia?
- (2) What resources does the Government intend to commit to reducing the level of truanting?
- (3) Have any additional resources been allocated for this purpose?
- (4) What additional resources?

Mr BARNETT replied:

Please refer to question on notice No. 1972 for answer.

#### BATTERY HENS, LEGISLATION

2127. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Primary Industry:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of correspondence from the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) to all members of Parliament concerning the RSPCA campaign to get hens out of restrictive cages?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that the RSPCA is calling for legislation to be passed in every State and Territory to ban the keeping of hens in unacceptably restrictive conditions?
- (3) Does the Government support the RSPCA request?
- (4) If not, why not?

Mr HOUSE replied:

- (1)-(2) Yes.
- (3)-(4) This matter will be discussed by ARMCANZ Ministers at their next meeting.

#### STATE TRAINING BOARD, MEETINGS

2175. Mr KOBELKE to the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) On how many occasions did the State Training Board meet in 1998?

- (2) What was the date of each meeting of the State Training Board?
- (3) Has the State Training Board met in 1999 and if so, what were the dates of each meeting of the State Training Board?

Mr KIERATH replied:

As at 9 March 1999

- (1) 12
- (2) 6 February 1998  
6 March 1998  
23 March 1998  
30 March 1998  
3 April 1998  
7 May 1998  
5 June 1998  
3 July 1998  
7 August 1998  
3 September 1998  
16 October 1998  
4 December 1998
- (3) 11 January 1999  
12 February 1999

#### MINISTERS OF THE CROWN, FREE TICKETS TO SPORTING EVENTS

2325. Mr GRAHAM to the Minister representing the Minister for Finance:

- (1) Has any sporting club or organisation provided the Minister with free tickets to any major sporting events in Western Australia?
- (2) If so -
  - (a) to which events were the tickets provided; and
  - (b) on how many occasions have tickets been provided?

Mr COURT replied:

The Minister for Finance has provided the following response:

- (1)-(2) I refer the member to the answer to Question 2327.

#### MINISTERS OF THE CROWN, FREE TICKETS TO SPORTING EVENTS

2327. Mr GRAHAM to the Minister representing the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

- (1) Has any sporting club or organisation provided the Minister with free tickets to any major sporting events in Western Australia?
- (2) If so -
  - (a) to which events were the tickets provided; and
  - (b) on how many occasions have tickets been provided?

Mr COWAN replied:

The Minister for Racing and Gaming has provided the following response:

- (1)-(2) As Minister for Racing and Gaming, I receive many invitations from the W A Turf Club, the W A Trotting Association and the W A Greyhound Authority to attend country and provincial racing and trotting events. I am expected to attend these functions, accompanied by my wife, as an official guest often to present trophies with my wife participating in the ceremonies. Mrs Diana Warnock also attends most of these events, representing the Labor Party, accompanied by her husband. I am also required to attend Festival of Perth functions such as ballet, opera and theatre events which are part of the Festival, as the Lotteries Commission is the main sponsor. It is always appreciated by the Festival Board and the Lotteries Commission that a Minister is present at their events, and the Opposition spokesperson for the Arts, Mrs Sheila McHale, also attends these functions.

#### GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, CREDIT CARD USE

2415. Mr CARPENTER to the Minister for Lands; Fair Trading; Parliamentary and Electoral Affairs:

In relation to the use of Government credit cards -

- (a) have any credit cardholders either working in the Ministerial office or with a Department/Agency for which the Minister has responsibility used their cards -
  - (i) for personal use; or
  - (ii) to gain frequent flyer points; fly buys or similar benefits;

- (b) if yes, will the Minister provide details of this use;
- (c) if not, why not?

Mr SHAVE replied:

- (a)-(c) I refer the member to the answer to Assembly Question Without Notice 627 asked on 16 March 1999.

#### KINGSTREAM PROJECT

2496. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Resources Development:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of an article that appeared in *The Australian Financial Review* on 17 March 1999 which reported An Feng had a disastrous \$664M loss for the full year ended 31 December 1998?
- (2) Does the Minister have any knowledge of what steps Kingstream is taking or intends to take to rejuvenate the mining project?
- (3) When does the Minister expect work on the project to commence in earnest?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (1) Yes. The loss referred to was incurred by the An Feng operations in Taiwan. An Feng Kingstream Steel has since arranged a financial restructure of the Company. The Australian company progressing the Mid West Iron and Steel project is now named Kingstream Steel.
- (2) Kingstream Steel has advised that it is proceeding to raise funds for the Mid West Iron and Steel project. The Company is working to set in place marketing arrangements and to complete the outstanding issues related to the contracts with major suppliers.
- (3) Kingstream Steel expects that the major contracts will be finalised before the end of the year. The remaining site earthworks and commencement of construction will follow the signing of the project contracts.

#### WESTERN POWER, BELGRAVIA STREET, BELMONT

2529. Mr CARPENTER to the Minister for Energy:

- (1) Have PCBs ever been disposed of at Western Power's Belgravia Street, Belmont, site?
- (2) If so, when and how?
- (3) Is Western Power preparing to sell the Belgravia Street site?
- (4) If so, when and how?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) Western Power has a target for selling the site in the Year 2000. The site would be sold by private treaty or by public auction.

#### TAFE INTERNATIONAL, ENROLMENTS

2558. Mr KOBELKE to the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) How many international students have enrolled in Western Australian Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges through TAFE International in semester one 1999?
- (2) At which TAFE colleges are these students enrolled?
- (3) How many international students are enrolled at each college?
- (4) (a) What proportion of the fee paid by an international student is paid to the TAFE college at which the student is enrolled; and  
(b) how much is this in dollar terms?
- (5) On what basis is the fee payable by international students determined?
- (6) How does this compare with the fees and charges paid by Australian students enrolled in the same course of study?

Mr KIERATH replied:

- (1) 1206.

(2)-(3)	Central Metropolitan College of TAFE	626
	South Metropolitan College of TAFE	168
	South East Metropolitan College of TAFE	308
	West Coast College of TAFE	90
	Midland College of TAFE	4
	South West Regional College of TAFE	3
	Hedland College	2
	Kalgoorlie College	1
	CY O'Connor	4

- (4)-(6) The proportion of the fees paid to a college at which an overseas student is enrolled varies from 73% to 75% of the relevant fees collected. The fees paid by Australian residents depend on the kind of course but are heavily subsidised by Australian governments as a matter of social policy both as to the fees actually charged and as to the concessions available.

#### GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, YEAR 2000 COMPLIANT

2690. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister representing the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

- (1) Is the Minister confident that all organisations under his portfolio are "Year 2000" compliant?
- (2) What evidence does the Minister have that this is the case?

Mr COWAN replied:

The Minister for Racing and Gaming has provided the following response:

Office of Racing, Gaming and Liquor  
Totalisator Agency Board  
Burswood Park Board  
Western Australian Greyhound Racing Authority

- (1) I am confident the agencies will be Year 2000 compliant
- (2) Strategies that the agencies have put in place to be Year 2000 compliant.

Lotteries Commission

- (1) The Lotteries Commission is confident of being Year 2000 ready for its essential systems by the end of June 1999. The formal comprehensive Year 2000 program has been in progress since May 1997. This covers many areas, including such items as computer systems, technology, suppliers and business partners, buildings and equipment, risk management, purchasing policies and guidelines, staff awareness, and contingency planning.
- (2) The Board of Commissioners receives a monthly progress report for the Year 2000 project, and the overall Year 2000 project is audited by PricewaterhouseCoopers. The last audit was completed in February 1999, and indicated that the work in progress was adequate for the Year 2000 project. The next audit is scheduled for mid June to verify the completion of the majority of the project.

#### THEATRE VENUES, MANAGEMENT

2695. Ms McHALE to the Minister representing the Minister for Arts:

I refer to the Request for Expressions of Interest for the Management of theatre venues and ask -

- (a) which contract model outlined in the Expression of Interest document (page 5-6) was adopted in the final agreement with Ogden IFC;
- (b) what arrangement is in place to control the use of a venue by Ogden IFC for a performance or function organised by Ogden as an Entertainment entrepreneur;
- (c) who is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the venues;
- (d) what is the current Perth Theatre Trust Budget for 1998-99; and
- (e) what is the projected budget for the Perth Theatre Trust for 1999-2000?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

The Minister for the Arts has provided the following response:

- (a) Model B is the closest contract model to the one adopted in the Management Agreement with Ogden IFC.
- (b) Programming is the responsibility of the Perth Theatre Trust. Approvals for programming submissions (through Ogden IFC) are given by the Programming Committee and the Finance Committee which are both subcommittees of the Perth Theatre Trust Board.
- (c) The Perth Theatre Trust. However, Ogden IFC is managing the maintenance of the venues on behalf of the Perth Theatre Trust.
- (d) Budget for 1998-1999 is \$2,419,000.
- (e) Projected Budget for 1999-2000 is \$2,442,000.



## GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, LEVEL TWO EMPLOYEES

2763. Mr RIEBELING to the Minister for Lands; Fair Trading; Parliamentary and Electoral Affairs:

In relation to the employment status of Level Two employees of the agencies falling within the Minister's responsibility -

- (a) what was the total number of Level Two employees at each agency as at 20 April 1999; and
- (b) of these employees, how many were -
  - (i) permanent full time;
  - (ii) permanent part time; and
  - (iii) on short term contract?

Mr SHAVE replied:

## Department of Land Administration

- (a) 151
- (b)
  - (i) 130
  - (ii) 15
  - (iii) 6

## LandCorp

- (a) 7
- (b)
  - (i) 5
  - (ii) 0
  - (iii) 2

## Ministry of Fair Trading

- (a) 48
- (b)
  - (i) 31
  - (ii) 11
  - (iii) 6

## Western Australian Electoral Commission

- (a) 7
- (b)
  - (i) 5
  - (ii) 2
  - (iii) 0

## GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, LEVEL TWO EMPLOYEES

2769. Mr RIEBELING to the Minister representing the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

In relation to the employment status of Level Two employees of the agencies falling within the Minister's responsibility -

- (a) what was the total number of Level Two employees at each agency as at 20 April 1999; and
- (b) of these employees, how many were -
  - (i) permanent full time;
  - (ii) permanent part time; and
  - (iii) on short term contract?

Mr COWAN replied:

The Minister for Racing and Gaming has provided the following response:

## Office of Racing, Gaming and Liquor

- (a) 13
- (b)
  - (i) 13
  - (ii)-(iii) Nil.

## Totalisator Agency Board

- (a) 26
- (b)
  - (i) 21
  - (ii) 4
  - (iii) 1

## Burswood Park Board

- (a) One
- (b)
  - (i) One
  - (ii)-(iii) Nil.

## Western Australian Greyhound Racing Authority

- (a) 11
- (b)
  - (i) 8
  - (ii) 3
  - (iii) Nil.

## Lotteries Commission

- (a) 30

- (b) (i) 24
- (ii) 5
- (iii) 1

PARKERVILLE AMPHITHEATRE CAR PARK, FORFEITURE OF LEASE

2777. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Did the former Minister for Lands write to the Member for Swan Hills on 14 August 1995 regarding the Parking and Access lease which adjoined the property owned by Mr John Jones and Mrs Derrice Jones?
- (2) In that letter did the Minister advise, among other things, that the Department of Land Administration (DOLA) intended to call a meeting of all affected parties in an effort to overcome the then impasse?
- (3) Was the meeting called?
- (4) If so -
  - (a) where, and
  - (b) when?
- (5) If not, why not?
- (6) If so, who attended the meeting?
- (7) Was Mr Jones invited to attend?
- (8) If not why not?
- (9) Did Mr Barrie Dimond of DOLA write to Mr Jones on 18 August 1995, and inform him that Parkerville Lot 404 Special Lease 3116/10644 was forfeited under Section 23(1) of the Land Act 1933?
- (10) Was 18 August 1995 an anniversary date of the then current lease?
- (11) On which date did the former Minister for Lands, determine that Parkerville Lot 404 Special Lease 3116/10644 should be forfeited?
- (12) On which date did the Minister for Lands agree with the Shire of Mundaring that the forfeiture should proceed?

Mr SHAVE replied:

- (1)-(12) The following response is provided in reply to the 72 queries contained in Parliamentary Questions 2777, 2778, 2779, 2780, 2781 and 2782 regarding Mr Jones' lease over Lot 404. This matter has been the subject of numerous enquiries over 5 years to the Office of the Minister for Lands, the Department of Land Administration (DOLA) and was also unsuccessfully appealed to the Governor. Consequently, I am not prepared to have staff at DOLA spend any further time researching these matters. However I am prepared to have a member of my staff arrange for Mr Brown to meet with DOLA staff who can respond directly to his questions.

PARKERVILLE AMPHITHEATRE CAR PARK, FORFEITURE OF LEASE

2778. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) When a notice of forfeiture is to be issued to a Crown lessee is it the usual practice to warn the lessee?
- (2) Is it the Department of Land Administration's (DOLA) practice to offer an opportunity to a Crown lessee to discuss any problem which may lead to forfeiture and allow the lessee to remedy the position?
- (3) On what evidence did the former Minister for Lands base his decision to forfeit Parkerville Lot 404 Special Lease 3116/10644?
- (4) (a) What evidence was provided;
- (b) when; and
- (c) by whom was it provided?
- (5) If evidence was provided will the Minister make it available to the former lessee, John Jones, for scrutiny?
- (6) Were negotiations conducted between the Shire of Mundaring, DOLA and/or the Minister about a licence for Mr Jones?
- (7) If so, was Mr Jones, the lessee at the time, included in the negotiations?
- (8) If not why not?
- (9) Did the Acting Minister for Lands write to Mr Jones on 31 July 1996, stating that the Minister for Lands authorised forfeiture only after the Shire of Mundaring had provided an unconditional guarantee that Mr Jones would be able to continue to utilise the land for client parking?
- (10) Did the Shire of Mundaring advise the Minister/Government that it would provide Mr Jones with such a guarantee?
- (11) If so, when?

- (12) What was the nature of the commitment/agreement made/given by the Shire?
- (13) Were there any meetings between the Shire and the Government to discuss this matter?
- (14) If so -
- (a) when;
  - (b) where;
  - (c) who attended;
  - (d) what was discussed; and
  - (e) what was the outcome?
- (15) If there were no meetings between the Minister/Government and the Shire, what was the nature of the communication between the two?
- (16) Did the agreement involve the land forfeited described as Special Lease 3116/1064, being granted as a C class Reserve to the Shire of Mundaring?
- (17) Did the then Minister by his forfeiture divest the legally registered lessee of the Special Lease of all of his entitlements?
- (18) Is the Minister aware that forfeiture of the car park lease effectively closed the operations of the Parkerville Amphitheatre?
- (19) Did Mr Barrie Dimond, Regional Manager, DOLA, on 17 July 1995 write to Mr John Stevenson, Manager, Engineering Services, Shire of Mundaring, and ask him -
- "to forward at his earliest convenience, a written undertaking that the Shire of Mundaring would allow, unconditionally, parking by Mr Jones clients on the area presently the subject of the Parking and Access Lease, if it were to become a reserve for Recreation and Parking with vesting in the Shire."?
- (20) If so, what was the Shire's answer?
- (21) Did the Minister/Government suggest or promote a licence before the Special Appeal before the Governor was determined?
- (22) Did the Minister/Government advise the Governor of proposals or options about a licence?
- (23) If so, why did the Minister/Government advise the Governor of such proposals or options when -
- (a) the Appeal was on foot;
  - (b) the Appeal had still not been dealt with; and
  - (c) the advice was contrary to the express wishes of Mr Jones to let the Appeal run its course before other options/alternatives were considered?
- (24) Was the Minister advised by letter from Mr Jones after the forfeiture, that he would not consider a licence proposal until all avenues of his rights of Appeal under the Land Act 1933 were exhausted?
- (25) If so, did the Minister for Lands continue to present the licence proposal to Mr Jones?
- (26) Was the Special Appeal made by Mr Jones to the Governor decided at the time of any licence proposal being made?

Mr SHAVE replied:

- (1)-(26) The following response is provided in reply to the 72 queries contained in Parliamentary Questions 2777, 2778, 2779, 2780, 2781 and 2782 regarding Mr Jones' lease over Lot 404. This matter has been the subject of numerous enquiries over 5 years to the Office of the Minister for Lands, the Department of Land Administration (DOLA) and was also unsuccessfully appealed to the Governor. Consequently, I am not prepared to have staff at DOLA spend any further time researching these matters. However I am prepared to have a member of my staff arrange for Mr Brown to meet with DOLA staff who can respond directly to his questions.

#### PARKERVILLE AMPHITHEATRE CAR PARK, FORFEITURE OF LEASE

2779. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the letter sent by Mr Jones to the Governor on 10 January 1996 in which Mr Jones advised -
- "I have now been sent a copy of the proposed Licence by the courtesy of The Right Honourable George Cash MLC. I have said in my letter of reply to him (enclosed) that I believe its publication is improper and pre-emptive of His Excellency's right of impartial consideration of my request and I have therefore declined to comment on the Licence proposals until His Excellency's determination is made known to me."?
- (2) In a letter dated 31 July 1996 by the Hon Paul Omodei MLA to Mr Jones, did the then acting Minister say -
- "The licence would seem to address all of your concerns for the area in that it allows for you unhindered use of the land for client parking during times of performances at the Parkerville Amphitheatre and the retention of your

existing improvements. Public liability requirements over the land and improvements are covered by the Shire's insurers under the terms of the licence."?

- (3) Did the Minister receive a letter from Mr Jones dated 6 June 1997?
- (4) If so, did the letter inform the Minister that the Shire of Mundaring had refused to insert a public liability clause in keeping with the insurance arrangements outlined by both the former Minister and acting Minister?
- (5) In the same letter, was the Minister advised, that the Shire of Mundaring had instead, inserted without notice, a new clause in a new licence presented to Mr. Jones for his signature?
- (6) Did the new clause require Mr Jones to execute a public liability policy for five million dollars minimum, covering all liability created by the Shire on the proposed licensed area and indemnifying the Shire as well as himself?
- (7) Did Mr Jones in his letter to the Minister request the Minister to intercede?
- (8) If so, what was the Minister's answer?
- (9) Did Mr Jones request the Minister to direct the Shire of Mundaring to give effect in the licence to the requirement that the Shire of Mundaring carry all public liability for the car park?

Mr SHAVE replied:

- (1)-(9) The following response is provided in reply to the 72 queries contained in Parliamentary Questions 2777, 2778, 2779, 2780, 2781 and 2782 regarding Mr Jones' lease over Lot 404. This matter has been the subject of numerous enquiries over 5 years to the Office of the Minister for Lands, the Department of Land Administration (DOLA) and was also unsuccessfully appealed to the Governor. Consequently, I am not prepared to have staff at DOLA spend any further time researching these matters. However I am prepared to have a member of my staff arrange for Mr Brown to meet with DOLA staff who can respond directly to his questions.

#### PARKERVILLE AMPHITHEATRE CAR PARK, FORFEITURE OF LEASE

2780. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) On 27 September 1996, did the then Minister write to Mr Jones and reply to his complaint that six weeks had passed and negotiations had not commenced?
- (2) If so, did the Minister say in that letter that negotiations had been delayed because DOLA was revising the draft licence?
- (3) From the same letter of lessee, is the following quotation a correct statement of the former Minister -  

"The amendments to the licence suggested by the Department of Land Administration (DOLA) were to allow the concurrent transfer of the licence with the Amphitheatre freehold, and to ensure that the licence could be renewed following expiration of the initial licence term. I am sure that you will recognise these amendments as being to your advantage."?
- (4) If the quotation is a correct statement of the former Minister, why has the Minister refused to ensure that it is written into the licence offered to Mr Jones by the Shire of Mundaring?
- (5) Is the Minister aware that the Chief Executive Officer of the Shire of Mundaring, Mr Max Williams, refused to accept the conditions of the offer made by the former Minister in the matter of transfer of the licence, and against Mr Jones' strongest objection has inserted a clause (5.2) in the draft dated 29 April 1997 which reads -  

"This Agreement is personal to the Licensee only and is not assignable unless to any person who becomes registered proprietor of Lot 87 and then subject only to the consent of the Shire which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld."?
- (6) Will the Minister for Lands now ensure that the clause as intended by the former Minister, the Hon Graham Kierath is expressly written into the Licence offered to Mr Jones?
- (7) Is the Minister aware that Mr Jones is being unjustly penalised because the Shire of Mundaring has not complied with the insurance arrangements referred to in earlier correspondence which indicated the Shire would be responsible for public liability insurance on the car park?
- (8) Will the Minister take steps to immediately rectify the situation?
- (9) If not, why not?

Mr SHAVE replied:

- (1)-(9) The following response is provided in reply to the 72 queries contained in Parliamentary Questions 2777, 2778, 2779, 2780, 2781 and 2782 regarding Mr Jones' lease over Lot 404. This matter has been the subject of numerous enquiries over 5 years to the Office of the Minister for Lands, the Department of Land Administration (DOLA) and was also unsuccessfully appealed to the Governor. Consequently, I am not prepared to have staff at DOLA spend any further time researching these matters. However I am prepared to have a member of my staff arrange for Mr Brown to meet with DOLA staff who can respond directly to his questions.

## PARKERVILLE AMPHITHEATRE CAR PARK, FORFEITURE OF LEASE

2781. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that the operation of Parkerville Amphitheatre is dependent on large audience shows?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that the absolute availability of the car park is essential to performances at the Parkerville Amphitheatre?
- (3) Is the Minister aware that there is no other site available to replace the proposed licence area for car parking for the Parkerville Amphitheatre?
- (4) Is the Minister aware that the whole cost of design, construction and maintenance of the former lease as a 200 vehicle car park was undertaken by Mr Jones?
- (5) Has the land formerly included in Special Lease 3116/1064 been vested as a "C" class Reserve in the Shire of Mundaring?
- (6) If so, when?
- (7) If the vesting has occurred, why has the stipulation been ignored that -  
"vesting would take place only after a Licence had been agreed to by the parties and endorsed by the Minister for Lands."?
- (8) Is the Minister aware that in answer to question on notice No. 2739 of 1998, item (2), the Minister for Lands advised that -  
"In 1992 negotiations for public access through the former lease area had included a request to the Shire of Mundaring from DOLA in which the Shire was asked to provide a written undertaking that it would allow the continued use of the land for car parking purposes during performances at the Amphitheatre. These negotiations broke down in 1994 as Mr Jones refused to allow public access."?

Mr SHAVE replied:

- (1)-(8) The following response is provided in reply to the 72 queries contained in Parliamentary Questions 2777, 2778, 2779, 2780, 2781 and 2782 regarding Mr Jones' lease over Lot 404. This matter has been the subject of numerous enquiries over 5 years to the Office of the Minister for Lands, the Department of Land Administration (DOLA) and was also unsuccessfully appealed to the Governor. Consequently, I am not prepared to have staff at DOLA spend any further time researching these matters. However I am prepared to have a member of my staff arrange for Mr Brown to meet with DOLA staff who can respond directly to his questions.

## PARKERVILLE AMPHITHEATRE CAR PARK, FORFEITURE OF LEASE

2782. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the following statement made by the Shire of Mundaring's Engineering Manager, John Stevenson, contained in the full Mundaring Shire Council minutes of 12 December 1998 -  
"The route along the top of the embankment can be installed without removing major trees and will avoid possible boundary disputes or later problems of public liability arising out of a route adjacent to the parking area. The route is quite pleasant and gives interesting views across the reserve. It is suggested that the route shown on Drawing C 675 is the best which can be achieved and should therefore be proceeded with."?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that the other option would have cost \$19,500 including an assessed compensation to Mr Jones for lost car park spaces?
- (3) Is the Minister aware that this option was not taken but was left open by Mr Jones?
- (4) Is the Minister aware that in the event of Mr Jones' Special Appeal to His Excellency the Governor, having been successful and the lease re-instated, Mr Jones again offered a through route to be marked out, compensated and public liability to be taken by the Shire of Mundaring?
- (5) Does the Minister adhere to his statement -  
"... that Mr Jones refused to allow public access."?
- (6) Is the Minister aware that Mr Jones' letter to Mr Barrie Dimond, Regional Manager, DOLA, of 12 July 1994, said in part -  
"... I emphasise my mounting concern at the Mundaring Shire's wilful neglect of the demisal agreement in refusing to make and erect signs informing Heritage Walk Trail users of its designated purpose and warning them of crossing traffic. I make now a formal request to DOLA that it requires Mundaring Shire Council to repair the neglect of its duty of care and concern to users of the Heritage Walk Trail and to Parkerville Amphitheatre patrons and to forthwith erect the signs."  
"I have a real fear that the substantial investment which I have made in money, time, effort and artistic imagination and enterprise is now completely at risk."?

- (7) Is the Minister aware that the Shire of Mundaring's Manager for Engineering Services Mr John Stevenson, in a letter to DOLA for the attention of Mr N. Schoeffler, dated 11 December 1995, wrote -

"I enclose a copy of the draft licence together with a copy of the Council's resolution. Council do (*sic*) not intend to enter into further negotiations with Mr Jones in respect to the terms and conditions of the licence as it is considered that the licence represents an appropriate mechanism to allow Mr Jones to continue to use the reserve for parking in conjunction with Amphitheatre performances in much the same way as he did in the past..."?

Mr SHAVE replied:

- (1)-(7) The following response is provided in reply to the 72 queries contained in Parliamentary Questions 2777, 2778, 2779, 2780, 2781 and 2782 regarding Mr Jones' lease over Lot 404. This matter has been the subject of numerous enquiries over 5 years to the Office of the Minister for Lands, the Department of Land Administration (DOLA) and was also unsuccessfully appealed to the Governor. Consequently, I am not prepared to have staff at DOLA spend any further time researching these matters. However I am prepared to have a member of my staff arrange for Mr Brown to meet with DOLA staff who can respond directly to his questions.

#### HOME DETENTION, REVIEW

2786. Mr PENDAL to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Justice:

- (1) I refer to the article in *The West Australian* on 12 March 1999 in which it is reported that one of Western Australia's most notorious criminals allegedly committed 16 crimes, including five violent sexual assaults, while on home detention bail last year and ask has the review of this scheme referred to in the article been completed?
- (2) If the answer to (1) above is yes, will the Minister table the review so the public can make its own assessment of the appropriateness of home bail being awarded to a person of such violent, criminal background?
- (3) Has the person since been dealt with in the courts for the alleged crimes committed while on home detention?
- (4) If the answer to (3) above is yes, what was the result?
- (5) Will the Minister bring about changes to prevent home detention being made available to people who have shown a clear inability to abide by its conditions?
- (6) If the answer to (5) above is no, why not?

Mrs van de KLASHORST replied:

The Minister for Justice has provided the following reply.

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) No.
- (4) Not applicable.
- (5)-(6) Matters relating to eligibility for home detention as a condition of bail will be considered when the current review report is received. Home detention as a condition of release from prison will be abolished, subject to passage of the Sentencing Legislation Amendment and Repeal Bill 1998.

#### SUPERANNUATION, SALARY SACRIFICE

2851. Mr PENDAL to the Minister representing the Minister for Finance:

- (1) What is the status of the legislation to allow State pension scheme members to make personal superannuation contribution by means of salary sacrifice?
- (2) Has it progressed to the stage, with other superannuation legislative amendments, where a firm time frame can be envisaged for its introduction into Parliament this year?
- (3) What approximate date for its introduction is expected?

Mr COURT replied:

The Minister for Finance has provided the following response:

- (1)-(3) Cabinet has approved a drafting priority for the relevant Bill with a view to it being introduced in the current parliamentary session. The first draft of the Bill is expected to be completed this week.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE****STATE BUDGET, DEFICIT****794. Dr GALLOP to the Treasurer:**

Will the Treasurer confirm that his 1999-2000 budget forecasts a general government deficit of \$640m and a consolidated fund deficit of \$338m?

**Mr COURT replied:**

I have made this very clear, and I do not understand where the Leader of the Opposition is coming from. It does not matter whether we use cash accounting or accrual accounting practices, the budget runs an operating surplus for its current expenditure.

Dr Gallop: We are talking about the budget. The Treasurer is a vehicle of misinformation in the community. The Treasurer would not know the truth if he fell over it.

Mr COURT: Misinformation is the Leader of the Opposition going to the election in 1993 saying that he can cut 520 000 cubic metres of jarrah a year and provide a sustainable jarrah timber industry.

It is interesting that in six budgets - except for its first budget - the Government has funded all its capital works program out of surpluses. This year, right across government, three-quarters of the capital expenditure of \$3.3b has been funded out of surpluses. That is something the former Labor Government could only dream of. In every year the Labor Party was in government, it borrowed to fund the small component of capital works in the consolidated fund sector. One of the great achievements of this Government is its record levels of capital works expenditure.

Mr Kobelke: Doublespeak.

Mr COURT: This is not doublespeak. Virtually all of that expenditure has been funded with surpluses. That is something the Labor Party can only dream of.

**MR MIKE NAHAN, COMMENT ON BUDGET****795. Dr GALLOP to the Treasurer:**

Is Mike Nahan, of the conservative Institute of Public Affairs, correct when he states that the Treasurer has arranged the books to show a surplus when it is not there?

**Mr COURT replied:**

That cannot be done with the accrual presentations that are in place. The days when the Labor Government used to pull funds out of a capital works account and put them into recurrent expenditure and say that it had a balanced budget were a joke. We present the budget right across government and everything is exposed. The Labor Government had to borrow even when it had the opportunity to present only one part of a budget. The capital works program that this Government has run for six years is one of its great achievements and it has been able to fund almost all of those capital works out of surpluses, not out of borrowings.

**SCHOOLS, COMPULSORY FEES****796. Mrs HOLMES to the Minister for Education:**

I refer to the extraordinary decision made at the Australian Labor Party's State Conference on the weekend to insist that school charges not be compulsory. What effect will this decision have on schools in lower socioeconomic areas, such as some schools in my electorate, if the School Education Bill is amended to reflect this decision?

**Mr BARNETT replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question. Many schools within the member's electorate have many parents who would fit into the relatively low socioeconomic category. I am extremely disappointed that the Labor Party did this backflip on policy at its conference. It is a policy that may, in an immediate sense, appear to be popular to some people. However, it will adversely affect people who are on low incomes, and schools in areas which contain a high proportion of people of low socioeconomic status. The Labor Government of 1984 introduced compulsory charges for secondary schools, and it did it for the right reason; that is, because of the recommendations of the report of the former member, Pamela Beggs, which was not the first report. The lack of compulsory fees meant that schools were adding items onto the booklist. It was not fair and was out of control. The implication of this is that people, perhaps in schools in my electorate, will probably pay all the amount as they always have, while in some other areas where people have lower incomes, people may not pay because the Bill now stipulates that it must be made clear to parents that the fee is voluntary. Many parents will take that as a signal that they no longer have a responsibility to contribute, not to education, but to consumable items. All the costs of education, of the curriculum experienced by attending school and participating in the education program are free. The vast majority of consumable items are government funded. The voluntary fee paid for the extras; the extra bit of vitality and flair that added to the education program. It will adversely affect people in low-income areas and low-income families.

I point to two technical issues. What was about to happen under this new Bill was that by making the fee compulsory, and then enforcing it as a matter of policy at a school level, the parents were expected to and required to pay for consumable items used by their child. At least then the Government would have had a secondary and primary assistance scheme that

would have provided that funding for low-income families; that is, those families with health card status. That has been the current policy at secondary level. I conceded that we would not have that compulsory fee at a primary level and that we would look at compensation. I cannot tell the House now what is the future of the secondary assistance scheme. It may not be applicable anymore. That will affect low income schools. The scheme will probably fall apart if the Labor Party moves that amendment in the other House. The advice we received, and which was made public in this Parliament six months ago, is that the Commissioner of Taxation will deem a compulsory charge for schools to be zero-rated for GST provisions. If, as the Labor Party proposes, charges are deemed to be voluntary, they will attract the 10 per cent goods and services tax. Schools will lose 10 per cent. It is worse than that: Because there will be no compulsory charges, the book list will explode, as it did in the 1980s. Parents will have to buy those materials personally at retail outlets and also pay the goods and services tax. Those opposite have damaged schools. It is no coincidence that all primary and secondary school principals have condemned the position adopted by the Labor Party.

#### KEYSTART PROGRAM, FUNDING

##### **797. Dr GALLOP to the Treasurer:**

- (1) Will the 1999-2000 Keystart program receive \$499m, \$11m less than the expected expenditure on this year's program?
- (2) If so, how does he explain the Treasurer statement that funding for Keystart has been boosted by \$199m next year?

##### **Mr COURT replied:**

- (1)-(2) We published in the estimates that we will spend \$300m on Keystart. We will spend \$500m; that is, \$500m of new money will go into a program that has been an outstanding success. What are those opposite concerned about?

#### DEPARTMENT OF LAND ADMINISTRATION, AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH TECHNOLOGY

##### **798. Mr OSBORNE to the Minister for Lands:**

- (1) Has the Department of Land Administration recently acquired access to new technology that provides better aerial photographs?
- (2) How much did this new technology cost the Government?
- (3) What are the benefits to this State?

##### **Mr SHAVE replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) Yes. The Department of Land Administration recently entered into a contract with DEMS Pty Ltd, which provides access to leading-edge technology and digital scanning of aerial photographs.
- (2) The scanner is valued at about \$400 000 and was purchased by DEMS, not the Government.
- (3) The images by this new technology provide 10 times the detail of standard aerial photographs. They have already proved to have significant safety and security benefits for the community. These versatile images are being produced on demand for use by police to obtain information about crime scenes and other emergencies and as an aid to planning and effective response. I am pleased to advise that DOLA and the Western Australia Police Service recently received a prestigious national government productivity award for this initiative. This is confirmation that Western Australia is a leader in developing applications for technology. The new scanner will also produce benefits in terms of mapping, planning, resource management and environmental monitoring.

#### DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, FUNDING REDUCTION

##### **799. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for the Environment:**

- (1) Why has recurrent funding for the Department of Environmental Protection been slashed by \$5m, or 21 per cent, in the state budget handed down last Thursday?
- (2) What services will be affected by such a massive cut in funding?
- (3) Does this, once again, demonstrate the Government's lack of commitment to protect environment?

##### **Mrs EDWARDES replied:**

- (1)-(3) Like most other government departments, the Department of Environmental Protection is doing its bit to maintain a close watch on expenditure. There will be no loss of services. Members will remember a one-off payment of \$6.9m for the contaminated Omex site last year. I stress: There will be no diminution of services. After the Labor Party conference last weekend, we know that those opposite have a lack of commitment to the workers in this State, particularly those in the communities in the south west. All that those opposite offer are the three Rs - redundancy, retraining and relocation.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am trying to get on with question time.



## ELECTIVE SURGERY, AVAILABILITY

**800. Mr MASTERS to the Minister for Health:**

What progress has been made in fulfilling the Government's commitment of last August to provide elective surgery to those who need it?

**Mr DAY replied:**

Members will be aware of the commitment the Premier made in August last year that anybody waiting for joint replacement or cataract surgery at that time would be treated within 12 months. I am pleased to advise -

Ms MacTiernan: You have to wait 12 months to get on the list.

Mr DAY: The member for Armadale should wait for the new hospital in Armadale before she comments. I am delighted to report that excellent progress is being made in fulfilling that commitment. In August last year, 471 people were waiting for hip replacement operations. As at 3 May this year, only 143 of those people were still waiting; 70 per cent no longer required treatment. Seven hundred and forty people were waiting for knee reconstructions in August last year and only 252 were still waiting last week which means that 66 per cent no longer require treatment. Only 346 of the 2 059 people waiting for cataract operations in August last year were still waiting last week which means that 83 per cent no longer require treatment.

Ms MacTiernan: How many are waiting to get on the waiting list, minister? Do you know that?

Mr DAY: How long was the waiting list when the Opposition was in Government? Did the Labor Government have a waiting list? I am interested in providing information, not listening to that sort of shrieking. Together with the rest of the Cabinet, I was in Esperance yesterday and had the pleasure of visiting the Esperance District Hospital. I met with one of the beneficiaries of a government program through which 50 patients from the Esperance area who were on waiting lists for cataract operations in the metropolitan area are having their operations performed at the Esperance District Hospital. About 30 of those 50 people have been treated and I understand that the rest will be treated by the end of next month. That is an example of a good program of moving resources around the State to ensure that people receive their operations closer to home and sooner than would otherwise have been the case.

Dr Gallop interjected.

Mr DAY: It will not be easy. I am also delighted to inform the House that the median waiting time for elective surgery at our teaching hospitals has continued to decline. In January this year the median waiting time was 8.1 months and it had fallen to 7.3 months in April. That is the lowest it has been for seven months. It is a good indication that we are moving in the right direction in increasing the amount of elective surgery which can be performed and reducing the time people need to wait. I encourage anybody who is waiting for elective surgery to contact the Central Wait List Bureau. The staff there are doing an excellent job of ensuring people have their surgery performed at the earliest possible opportunity. People should ring 1800 654 807. I congratulate the staff at the Central Wait List Bureau, the hospitals and the Metropolitan Health Service Board who have helped bring about this pleasing situation.

## STATE BUDGET, HEALTH FUNDING

**801. Mr McGINTY to the Premier:**

I refer to the \$46m in total Health funding announced in last week's budget.

- (1) Does this allocation represent a real per capita funding cut for Health when official consumer price index and population growth figures are used?
- (2) Why has the Government not provided a single cent for capital works at the five major metropolitan teaching hospitals?

**Mr COURT replied:**

(1)-(2) As the member knows, the Government has significantly increased funding for Health for the current financial year.

Mr McGinty: An amount of \$46m is not significant, Premier.

Mr COURT: If the member listened, he would know I said in the current financial year. In relation to the question of the funding for Health -

Mr McGinty: That was because he had to bail out.

Mr COURT: Does the member for Fremantle want an answer to the question? One area of demand which the Government does not control is that on our public hospital system. I have spelled out clearly that it is not sustainable to have 70 per cent of the population in the public health system expecting immediate access to elective surgery without waiting times or their being required to pay anything. I do not care on which side of Parliament members sit. The Medicare system, as it is structured currently, has no hope of funding the level of health service Western Australia will require with an ageing population. A public hospital system should provide health services for people who are in need, and it is right that taxpayers assist in providing those services. People in our community who are reasonably well-off should pay into a private insurance fund and, as I have said publicly, they should pay into the fund throughout their working lives. The Government has run a significant capital works program to ensure that new hospitals are built. As the member for Fremantle knows, three major

new hospitals have opened within six years. Does the member believe we should build a new hospital at Armadale-Kelmscott, or should we further upgrade the existing teaching hospitals in Perth?

Mr McGinty: What will happen to the major hospitals? The Premier should look at the disgrace at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women, over which he presides. That is where the capital works are needed.

Mr COURT: I travel around this State and when I was in Broome last week, I saw the magnificent new extensions to the Broome District Hospital, the cost of which amounted to about \$15m. I went, as did the member, to the opening of the South West Health Campus. Does the member for Fremantle think that is a good facility?

Mr McGinty: Of course it is. You should look at the disgrace at King Edward.

Mr COURT: The Labor Party had 10 years in government and not one new hospital was built. We have been in government for six years and three new hospitals have been built, and shortly a fourth will be built.

#### STATE BUDGET, HEALTH SYSTEM BAILOUT

##### **802. Mr McGINTY to the Premier:**

As a supplementary question, can the Premier guarantee that there will not be another bailout of the State's public health system as a result of the budget?

##### **Mr COURT replied:**

The member should have listened to my answer. Of course I cannot guarantee that. I made it clear that we do not control the demand in our public hospitals.

#### CANNABIS, AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY POLICY

##### **803. Mr BAKER to the Minister for Family and Children's Services:**

I refer to the reported policy on cannabis adopted by the Western Australian Labor Party at its weekend conference, which, if implemented, would see the introduction in Western Australia of the most liberal cannabis laws in the country by decriminalising the cultivation of up to five plants of any size; decriminalising the possession of up to 100 grams of cannabis; and decriminalising the use of drugs on private property, irrespective of whether that private property is situated near schools or kindergartens. What will be the impact on the Western Australian community should such a policy be implemented?

Mr Carpenter: You just stand there and do nothing while they all die outside; that is all right.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Willagee interjects while I am on my feet, he will find himself outside. I indicate to members that when they phrase their questions, there should be enough argument in it so the minister can understand the question, but not too much argument, otherwise they exceed what they should be doing.

##### **Mrs PARKER replied:**

I begin my response by quoting something that Kim Beazley said about four weeks ago when he launched the ALP policy on drugs. He spoke about the decriminalisation of presently illicit drugs. The policy stated -

The Australian Labor Party does not support the legalisation of illicit drugs.  
There is no evidence that such a radical social change would produce better outcomes for the Australian community.

The Federal Leader of the Opposition went on to say -

In fact, there is considerable concern -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members are entitled to ask their questions and they are entitled also to hear the answers. If members start interjecting too much and bring in other matters that have nothing to do with the question, that is unacceptable.

Mrs PARKER: Kim Beazley went on to say -

In fact, there is considerable concern that if the use of illicit drugs were to reach levels similar to those for legal drugs then the problems for Australia would be magnified considerably.

I would like to know what the Australian Labor Party in Western Australia thinks of what Kim Beazley said. He said -

The Australian Labor Party does not support the legalisation of illicit drugs.

Is he right or is he wrong? The ALP and its policy position -

Several members interjected.

Ms Anwyl: You have presided over the relaxation of cannabis laws.

Several members interjected.

Ms Anwyl: What a hypocrite you are!

*Withdrawal of Remark*

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Kalgoorlie to withdraw that. She cannot impugn members. To some extent, the minister invited some interjections when she posed a general question. Several members seem to know what was in Mr Beazley's mind. I intend to allow the minister to give her answer so that we can hear it. Perhaps the member for Kalgoorlie will withdraw.

Ms Anwyl: I withdraw the comment in relation to hypocrisy.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

Mrs PARKER: It is an important issue. Kim Beazley was right: Increased availability means increased use, abuse and harm. Let me explain to the House what happened in South Australia when the South Australian Government allowed people to have 10 plants for private use. The express purpose of the policy was to break the link between organised crime and cannabis use. Experience in South Australia has been that people have not paid fines and the courts have been clogged. More importantly, crime syndicates have moved into the suburbs and enlisted backyard growers and those 10 plants. Police in South Australia inform me that a backyard grower in the suburbs can earn between \$50 000 and \$80 000 by joining a crime syndicate and contributing the harvest from his backyard garden or shed.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have not had to speak to the member for Cockburn for weeks - he has broken out again. I would like to get beyond this question. Perhaps -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I do not have to; I can just declare it closed. Perhaps we can bring the answer to a close and perhaps also members can refrain from making too many interjections.

Mrs PARKER: The result of -

Ms MacTiernan interjected.

The SPEAKER: I warn the member for Armadale. If she wants to ignore me, I will formally call her to order very quickly.

Mrs PARKER: The experience in South Australia has been a disaster; organised crime has moved into the suburbs and into the distribution of cannabis in a way that is unprecedented. I am informed by authorities in Melbourne that growers in South Australia are not only supplying their domestic market but also providing high-quality cannabis to centres such as Melbourne. The impact of that policy would be a disaster in Western Australia. It is a drug pusher's policy and it is not a family policy; it is every parent's nightmare.

**OLD GROWTH KARRI FOREST HELD IN FORMAL AND INFORMAL RESERVES****804. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for the Environment:**

- (1) Under the Regional Forest Agreement, will more than 400 hectares of old growth karri forest, which were previously protected in formal and informal reserves, be handed back to timber companies for logging and chipping?
- (2) Why will less old growth karri forest be protected under the RFA than before it was signed?

**Mrs EDWARDES replied:**

- (1)-(2) The member has her facts wrong again concerning those areas. I will be pleased to bring the details of those reserves back to Parliament. The area formerly set aside for reserves and which will remain as state forests has been determined based on new scientific information and criteria that have been developed as part of the regional forest assessment. A greater scientific base than has been used for previous south west forest management plans was used to identify the areas that we should include in the reserve system. It is interesting that Charley block, to which the Opposition referred as critical for inclusion in state forest, but about which Dr Beth Schultz said in her submission to the Standing Committee on Ecologically Sustainable Development was not worth reservation, has been redesignated state forest.

**BUSHPLAN****805. Mr MacLEAN to the Minister for Planning:**

- (1) How are the landowners in the Wanneroo electorate affected by Bushplan?
- (2) What proposals will ensure that private landowners are not disadvantaged by Bushplan, especially rural landowners?

**Mr KIERATH replied:**

- (1)-(2) I thank the member for Wanneroo for this question and the member for Swan Hills, who raised a similar issue. We are giving consideration to the Planning Commission's proposal to draft the statement of planning policy regarding Bushplan. Bushplan identifies approximately 52 200 hectares of regionally significant vegetation of which 4 700

ha is in private ownership. Of that, approximately 400 ha is in Wanneroo among 65 different ownerships. This does not include multiple owners; for example, one lot that is owned by five family members. Approximately 1 000 people or commercial landowners are identified in Bushplan in the metropolitan region.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Rockingham will come to order.

Mr KIERATH: Only 400 of those are directly affected. In other words, 500 are indirectly affected; for example, small fringing vegetation areas along creek lines.

Mr McGowan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I formally call to order the member for Rockingham for the first time.

Mr KIERATH: Perth's Bushplan is not seeking to impinge on the rights of rural landowners, but it will allow them to continue to use their land in accordance with all their existing approvals. To ensure private landowners are not disadvantaged, Bushplan recommends financial incentives to encourage private land management activities. In other words, incentives will be developed through the Department of Conservation and Land Management and the National Trust. These could result in local land tax reductions. Another option is that the acquisition be available only where the lands are reserved under the metropolitan region scheme. Reservation is recommended on sites which have high conservation value or in cases of severe hardship. That will allow them to have their land acquired by the State. Negotiations will occur for future development proposals on Bushplan sites. In this way we will ensure the balance between the needs of conservation and the needs of development. History will judge that Bushplan is one of the greatest conservation initiatives a State Government has ever undertaken.

#### GOLDMINING INDUSTRY, TAX RELIEF

##### **806. Mr GRILL to the Premier:**

- (1) Is the Premier aware of the call by senior stockbroker David Reed of CIBC Eyres Reed Ltd for some taxation relief for the goldmining industry?
- (2) In view of the impact of a number of new and increased state and commonwealth taxes in the mining sector, including the savage hike in the latest budget of stamp duty on new four-wheel drive vehicles, will the Premier consider some tax relief for goldminers, perhaps by way of suspension of the gold royalty?

##### **Mr COURT replied:**

- (1)-(2) Yes, I am aware of the proposals put forward by Mr David Reed. He has made a presentation to the Federal Government relating to a scheme to enable it to attract more exploration activity to the gold industry. The member knows that the second component of the gold royalty kicks in only when the gold price goes above \$450 an ounce. That is an industry safeguard. I appreciate the member's interest in this matter. However, members of the Labor Party sit there fiddling away while an industry is facing a very serious problem that they can fix.

Several members interjected.

Mr COURT: Members opposite held a party conference last weekend at which it was made clear that about half the State's geologists are unemployed, underemployed or working overseas. Drilling companies have made huge investments in equipment but have no work because of the actions of members opposite. They cannot get access to land for exploration. I know that the member for Eyre has an interest in these matters, but members opposite are sitting there twiddling their thumbs while this industry is going through enormous pain.

Several members interjected.

Mr COURT: The member for Eyre can ask questions about what this Government is doing for the gold industry, but members opposite know only too well that it is the position taken by the Labor Party that is destroying the exploration industry of this State.