



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

THIRTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
THIRD SESSION
1999

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 9 September 1999

Legislative Council

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THE PRESIDENT (Hon George Cash) took the Chair at 11.00 am, and read prayers.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES AND FUNDING COMMITMENTS

Motion

Resumed from 19 August on the following motion moved by Hon Tom Stephens (Leader of the Opposition) -

That this House -

- (a) condemns the Government for its misplaced priorities and funding commitments to projects such as the belltower and the convention centre at the expense of core areas of state government responsibility such as health, education, community safety and public transport; and
- (b) calls upon the Government to remedy its failure to deliver government services at affordable rates and give priority to hospitals, schools, police and public transport.

HON BOB THOMAS (South West) [11.03 am]: I indicated when I last spoke on this motion that I would raise, among a number of issues, the Government's wrong priorities in its actions relating to the Regional Forest Agreement, and the Government's failure to properly deliver services, particularly in country areas.

To recap, I indicated that the Government got it horribly wrong with the RFA principally because it tried to put a spin on the agreement. Many of the Government's claims about the RFA could not be substantiated, the truth of which is indicated because the Government did a backflip. The RFA is in its second version, but RFA mark II will suffer the same fate as RFA mark I because the Government did not come to the process genuinely. The Government made some claims about areas of old-growth forest which went into reserves, but on proper scrutiny we found that many of those areas were not what they were claimed to be. People will remember the Pardelup Prison Farm being listed as forest when it is a cleared area, and a rubbish dump at Mt Barker was listed as old-growth forest. At the same time, 49 000 hectares of interim-listed forest was taken out of the reserve system and put into the logging cycle. That was not mentioned in the glossy brochures which accompanied the RFA.

The most cynical aspect of the RFA was the misrepresentation of the financial package. The Government indicated in all the glossies and the spin put on the RFA for the media when it was signed that extensive scientific research and social and economic research had been done. However, the \$23.5m the Government put up as part of the industry adjustment package was not as grants, but loans. Worse still, the package had not been developed. After the RFA had been announced I asked officers of the Department of Conservation and Land Management about the criteria for businesses to obtain those funds to move into other industrial and manufacturing pursuits within the timber industry, and I was told that the package had not been developed. It was to be developed with the industry after the RFA had been signed. The RFA package was supposed to address the biodiversity and old-growth issues as well the impact that any change in forest management practices would have on timber communities. Also, it was supposed to put in place a package of financial assistance to ameliorate those affects. When I asked a week or two after the RFA was signed for information about how industry could access funds in the industry adjustment package, I was told it had not even been done. This Government got it wrong: Its priority was to put a spin on the RFA rather than do the hard work and identify means by which it could help industry develop value-adding processes and downstream processing, such as furniture manufacture, to replace jobs to be lost due to the changed forest management practices. It should have been done, but it was not. It shows that the Government gives the affected communities no priority.

Hon Barry House: Compared to yours, it's pretty good.

Hon BOB THOMAS: The only argument to come from the coalition is as follows: "If you think it is bad under us, it would be worse under Labor as they want to close the industry down." That is wrong; it is a fabrication. The Labor Party's proposal will end logging in old-growth forests, but it will develop a package of industry and worker assistance. Through these mechanisms Labor will work with the affected communities to enhance the opportunities that already exist and to create new job opportunities in the downstream processing and value-adding side of the timber industry.

Hon Ray Halligan: Over the next five to 10 years!

Hon BOB THOMAS: We will do that immediately we come into Government. It will not be an afterthought like it was with the present Government.

Hon Ray Halligan: Five to 10 years is a bit optimistic.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: At the rate the coalition Government is collapsing, the Labor Party will be in government in six months.

Hon Simon O'Brien: I thought the member was addressing the motion before the Chair. However, he seems to be addressing Order of the Day No 4, in which the member moved an amendment to the Address-in-Reply about the Regional Forest Agreement.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I thank the potential President, Hon Simon O'Brien, for that advice, but I am also listening. Hon Bob Thomas has the floor and at the moment he happens to be talking about this motion.

Hon BOB THOMAS: I thank the President. This Government is more intent on putting a spin on things rather than doing what it was elected to do. The last time the House addressed this issue I said that the role of State Governments is pretty simple; that is, to collect taxes.

Hon N.F. Moore: Why didn't you do it when you were in government?

Hon Nick Griffiths interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Will the Leader of the House and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition let Hon Bob Thomas continue. If the two members want to have a discussion, they should go outside. They are preventing others from hearing Hon Bob Thomas.

Hon BOB THOMAS: As I was saying, the role of a State Government is fairly simple when compared with the complex issues that Commonwealth Governments must deal with. State Governments do not determine monetary or fiscal policy. A State Government basically collects taxes and uses those to deliver services. About 60 per cent of the State Government's budget comes from the taxes it collects, which are usually based on economic activity such as payroll tax, stamp duty and so forth. The other 40 per cent of the budget comes from commonwealth government grants, both tied and untied grants. The services that State Governments deliver are those that people in the country are dependent on; that is, health, education, community safety and policing. The Government is suffering the most in the country because it is running down services in country areas to the point where the people are desperate.

Hon Kim Chance: Hear, hear!

Hon BOB THOMAS: That is why this Government is losing much of its support. Much of its support is being leached away by One Nation candidates. That is why the Labor Party will significantly improve its vote in country areas. The Government is not delivering the services that it is paid to deliver.

Hon Barry House: That also explains why you barely have any regional members.

Hon N.F. Moore: They lost one just last week.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon BOB THOMAS: I want to mention a couple of Bunbury-related issues, particularly the delivery of education and health services. However, I do not have much time to expand on those. It is a scandal that this Government has neglected the education requirements of the fast growing northern section of Bunbury, around Eaton and Australind. It was not until 200 angry parents confronted the Premier outside the member for Mitchell's office when he was in Bunbury last March that the Government got its act together and committed itself to building the East Eaton Primary School. There is a school there that was built about 20 years ago to house 400 children. At the moment it is housing over 700 - and pushing 800 - children. The school just cannot accommodate any more students. Eaton, like Australind, is one of the fastest growing areas in this State, if not Australia. This Government has sat on its hands and has not planned properly to deliver education services that are sorely needed. It has done nothing about high school places in that area and that is a disgrace.

Australind High School has nine or 10 demountable classrooms. The rate at which the school population is growing means there will probably be another two or three there next year. That is before the tertiary entrance examination students come down from Harvey. Harvey Agricultural High School will no longer provide tertiary entrance examination subjects after this year. The Australind school was built for about 950 students and there is now 1 300. By the end of next year there will be well over 1 400 students at that school. Nothing is being done by this Government to deliver high school places in that fast growing area of Western Australia, the Eaton-Australind corridor.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: What has happened about the proposal for a super high school in Bunbury? That was quite a contentious issue.

Hon BOB THOMAS: Fortunately that has not gone ahead. It is not a very popular proposal.

Hon Kim Chance: The concept works quite well in Geraldton.

Hon BOB THOMAS: That is under different circumstances. I do not support the super school concept.

Hon Barry House: I am with you.

Hon BOB THOMAS: I thank the member. Hon Barry House has changed his view. I recall reading a nasty letter that he wrote during the 1996 election campaign denigrating the Labor Party candidates in Bunbury and Mitchell, who were opposed to the super school concept in Bunbury. Welcome aboard. I hope the member sees the light about other government policies that are causing problems in the Bunbury area.

The other issue is the Bunbury hospital. This Government has a fixation with the collocation of regional and private hospitals. It spent a lot of money enticing the St John of God Health Care System to enter into a collocation arrangement with the Bunbury Regional Hospital. Now there is the South West Health Campus. The aesthetics of the place are lovely. If I were to be in hospital I would like to be there because it has beautiful gardens. It is a nice place to be.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: What about the quality of medical treatment?

Hon BOB THOMAS: There is a problem in the quality of treatment. It appears the Government is trying to do things on the cheap. There are major problems, notwithstanding the excellent care provided by all the staff and doctors. Some of

those problems result from the lack of general practitioners in Bunbury. Many people need to make a doctor's appointment three to five days, or even two weeks, in advance. There are no general practitioners who bulk-bill. People are not prepared to wait three to five days, and many cannot afford the \$14 or \$15 gap payment. Instead they use the hospital's emergency department. There has been a significant increase in the number of people going to the emergency department. It is causing enormous problems and the Government should be addressing that.

The other problem is that the Government, through under-funding, is trying to use the hospital as a sausage factory. It is trying to push people through the hospital quicker than it should. I refer to a letter that was sent to Bunbury Regional Hospital staff by Kym Boyds from CNM Maternity. The letter states that women can spend only three days in the hospital if they deliver a child by vaginal birth, or five days if it is a caesarean birth. Therefore, the restrictions are three days and five days. The letter which was sent to staff on 30 November 1998 states -

Once we have moved to the SWHC it will become crucial that bed space is not held up, as other options are limited eg. postnatal women in the Medical Unit (other Unit on second floor of SWHC).

Basically, that is saying that these people should be pushed through quickly. It is not just the maternity section in which this is happening; it is everywhere. That is a direct result of this government's misguided priorities. Other problems exist there which, if I had more time, I would address.

I recap by saying that this government has its priorities wrong. It seems to be more interested in putting a media spin on everything it does and misrepresenting what it is doing. It is also spending too much time worrying about leadership. I recall that a couple of weeks ago this House almost came to a standstill because Hon Colin Barnett was supposed to be flexing his muscles in a supposed challenge to the Premier. How did that come about? The Premier had been put on notice that he must lift his game. Hon Colin Barnett saw that as an opportunity to present his case. What did he do? He got one of the Independents in the other place to leak that to the Press. What happened then? The members on the other side were moribund.

HON N.F. MOORE (Mining and Pastoral - Leader of the House) [11.21 am]: I thank Hon Tom Stephens for moving the motion because it provides a good opportunity for members to reflect on the Government's performance in the past six years. I will demonstrate to the House that it is a proud record. Therefore, I thank Hon Tom Stephens for giving us a chance to debate the motion. Of course, the Government will not support it, but it provides us with an opportunity to talk about the issues that are contained within the motion.

I was astounded to hear the previous speaker talk about how simple it was to run a State Government. It is difficult to run a State Government.

Hon Bob Thomas: It is difficult for you guys, yes.

Hon N.F. MOORE: If the member spent some time talking to some of his colleagues who were former ministers in the Burke, Dowding and Lawrence Governments, he would realise that they found it very difficult indeed - so difficult that they left us with a \$1b debt. I will remind members of that every time I get to my feet, because if it is so simple and the Labor Party blew \$1b, I wonder what it would do if it was hard. One billion dollars went down the gurgler because of the Labor Party's total and absolute incompetence in doing what the member said is a simple task.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Kim Chance and Hon Bob Thomas have had an opportunity to speak on the motion. Hon Tom Helm will no doubt have an opportunity. Let me just hear from the Leader of the House.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Here we have a Labor Party member who claims that governing Western Australia is a simple issue, yet in 10 years that party incurred a debt of \$1b for the State. How did it do that? It did it by bailing out various organisations and making ridiculous decisions about a range of issues, to the point that it left for its successors a very difficult budgetary situation.

Let us examine the Labor Party's priorities for a moment because this motion talks about priorities. I was trying to work out what we would get for \$1b. For \$1b we would probably get about 200 primary schools at \$5m each. What the member fails to accept is that when this Government came into power it inherited the previous Government's financial circumstances, its budgetary situation and the State's financial crisis. This Government had to do something about it. The reason that some pretty hard decisions have been taken on a number of issues is to try to claw back the debt that the Labor Party left behind. With the \$1b that we had to find to pay for the losses incurred by the Labor Party, we could have had 200 primary schools, 50 secondary schools at about \$20m each, 50 hospitals at about \$20m each and, if we wanted, about 200 belltowers or 10 convention centres. That is what we could have had, all for the sort of dough that the guys on the other side blew in their term in office - and they said it was simple!

When examining the Labor Party's priorities, we must remember its mates, the four-on-the-floor entrepreneurs. They were in the business of making quids out of central business district properties and the Labor Party was in the business of bailing them out. We must remember all those sorts of people and the Labor Party's priorities. Remember the Rottnest Island priorities. If people wanted to go to Rottnest Island, they need only talk to the chairman and it was all okay and all free. They were the priorities.

Hon Barry House interjected.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Yes, blow up the reefs and so on. We will talk about that in more detail in due course. The Labor

Party's priorities were looking after its four-on-the-floor entrepreneurial mates. That is why it got into so much trouble, and members opposite know that as well as I do. Their friends were not there to help Western Australia or the Labor Party; they were there to help themselves, and they sure did that. That is why, when this Government came into office, it had to take some pretty hard decisions on spending priorities. It now has spending priorities.

Hon Tom Helm: Yes, belltowers.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I will talk about that in a minute, because I would prefer to spend \$5m on a belltower than spend \$1b in the way the Labor Party did. As I said, for that \$1b we could have had 200 primary schools or 200 belltowers. The Labor Party was an absolute disgrace as an organisation in government. We experienced 10 years of absolute mayhem, which virtually ruined this State's prospects. That is what members opposite did, and they reckon it was easy. If they ever get another go at government, I hope they work out that it is actually hard. Then they might make an effort to do something properly instead of acting in the manner they did during the 10 years when they thought it was easy. They got into bed with their four-on-the-floor mates and ended up losing countless millions of dollars of taxpayers' money in Western Australia. Members opposite will be reminded of that forever.

Hon Kim Chance: When do we get to talk about your losses?

Hon N.F. MOORE: I have unlimited time, and I will use every minute of it. I will make my speech exactly the way I want to make it.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Members, please do not interject. If the Leader of the House directs his comments to me and not to individual members, I guarantee that I will not interject.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I had not intended to spend any time talking about WA Inc until I heard how simple it was to be in government. When I heard that comment, it dawned on me that if it is so simple, how could these people make such a mess of it? They will be reminded of that forever. The interesting thing is that it was not just the Labor Party in Western Australia that did this. South Australia is still paying for what the Labor Party there did. Fortunately, the Kennett Government has straightened out what the Labor Party did in Victoria.

Hon Bob Thomas: Tell us about Greiner.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I do not think New South Wales has too many serious problems, other than the Government that is now in office. However, I think it is being run by the New South Wales right, is it not? At least the New South Wales Labor Party did not send the State broke, from what I can gather. However, the Queensland Labor Party made a big dent in the good financial situation that Joh Bjelke-Petersen left behind. Mr Goss and his mates did a good job in spending money. Members opposite know that as well. Tasmania is just a basket case, regardless of who is running the place.

Hon Kim Chance: Not any more. My mate Jim is fixing it.

Hon N.F. MOORE: He is actually doing something that it is a pity his predecessors from our side did not do; that is, take on Hon Jim Scott's colleagues and start saying -

Hon Kim Chance: Jim didn't do that. The Tasmanians did that.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The Tasmanians did not ask for what they got. They got negative growth because of the policies of the Greens in Tasmania and the lack of intestinal fortitude of Governments on both sides to do anything about it, so the remainder of Australia is bailing them out. It appals me to think how much money is going from Western Australia from the royalties we receive from our minerals and energy products to bail out places like Tasmania, because no-one has the nerve to do anything about it. I met the Tasmanian Mines Minister the other day at a conference, and I was delighted to find that he has a very positive view about dealing with some of these issues, because he understands that jobs are created by economic activity.

Hon Tom Helm: Be positive! Tell us about your Government!

Hon N.F. MOORE: I have a long time, and I will use it all. I had no intention of talking about the Labor Party until I found out how easy it was to be in government! I remind members opposite that when we are talking about priorities - and this motion is critical of our priorities in respect of health and education - that for \$1b, we can build 200 new primary schools -

Hon Bob Thomas: How many hospital beds?

Hon N.F. MOORE: We could now actually have about 900 new schools for the money that the Labor Party lost when it was in government. We could get another 50 secondary schools, at about \$20m each. We could get another 50 hospitals, also at about \$20m each; and even if they cost \$40m each, we could get 25 of them. Members opposite should not talk about priorities. Their priorities led to this State losing \$1b, and I am saying what we could have done had we had that \$1b. Had we come into government without that sort of debt, we could have built 200 more primary schools, 50 more secondary schools and 50 more hospitals.

Hon Tom Helm: So why are you closing schools?

Hon N.F. MOORE: We are not closing schools.

Hon Tom Helm: You are not closing schools?

Hon N.F. MOORE: We closed some schools when I was Minister for Education because people agreed to it, and it was a very positive program.

Hon Tom Helm: They all agreed to close the school at Port Hedland, did they?

Hon N.F. MOORE: I think it was a good idea.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Tom Helm will get his opportunity at some stage.

Hon Greg Smith: We built a new school at Port Hedland!

Hon N.F. MOORE: Yes, a brand new school. I do not know what the member wants.

I want to outline some of the things we have done to deal with the difficult financial situation in which we found ourselves when we came into government in 1993 and some of the basic principles on which this Government has operated, and I also want to deal with some of the matters raised in the motion. Firstly, we have redirected financial resources from debt servicing to the provision of core public services. We have been able to reduce debt by a range of methods -

Hon Bob Thomas: By the sale of assets!

Hon N.F. MOORE: Those methods include the sale of assets. Of course the sale of assets has been used to reduce public debt. The Opposition would never have sold the public assets that we have sold. It would never have had those dollars to reduce debt. I was a bit surprised to hear the Leader of the Opposition, Dr Gallop, say that instead of spending \$100m to build a convention centre, that \$100m should be spent in the south west, and that is what he would do. He would not do it, because he would not have the money. That \$100m came from the sale of the gas pipeline. Dr Gallop would never have sold the gas pipeline, so he would not have had that \$100m to spend in the south west anyway. Dr Gallop has spent that \$100m several times over since the announcement about the convention centre was made.

Hon Greg Smith: Heaps of times!

Hon N.F. MOORE: Every time he opens his mouth, he says he wants to spend it in some other way, and I guess his colleagues are doing the same thing. However, he would never have had the money, because he does not support -

Hon Greg Smith: They cannot figure out the road funding. They do not know how to balance the ledger book.

Hon N.F. MOORE: That is another issue. If members opposite want to talk about road funding at some time, I will be delighted. I do not notice road funding on the motion. I wonder why!

Hon Tom Helm: Tell us about the \$50 levy!

Hon N.F. MOORE: I would love to! Does the member know why we did that? It goes back to WA Inc.

Hon Tom Helm: Why are we still paying it? WA Inc is finished.

Hon N.F. MOORE: WA Inc sent the then State Government Insurance Commission or State Government Insurance Office -

Hon Tom Helm: If you do not know, do not mention it! If you do not know what you are talking about, sit down!

Hon N.F. MOORE: I am sure the member does not want me to talk about it, even though he suggested I should. The SGIC was technically insolvent and could not pay the claims that were being made on it, because the Labor Government had used it as part of WA Inc. That is why we had to bring in legislation under the Public Sector Management Act to stop people like Hon Tom Helm, if ever he became a minister, from using government agencies to bail out his mates. We had a situation where the SGIC was technically bankrupt, and the only way it could be saved and pay the claims that people were making on it was to bring in a levy.

Hon Bob Thomas: That is not true.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The member would believe anything except what is true. That was the situation. I remember that at probably the second Cabinet meeting I attended, the Minister for Finance informed us of the circumstances in which he found the SGIC, and it was an absolute disgrace.

Hon Bob Thomas: You are wrong. Read the actuarial report.

Hon N.F. MOORE: It was an absolute disgrace.

The PRESIDENT: Order, Hon Bob Thomas!

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Who was the minister responsible?

Hon N.F. MOORE: I think it was Dr Gallop, the same person who is running the Labor Party now.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Who was the minister who would put us into debt? Dr Gallop!

Hon Tom Helm: Why are we still paying it?

Hon N.F. MOORE: We are not still paying it. It was brought in for a period of time to provide some resources for the SGIC so that it could pay the claims that people were making on it and to get it back into the black. Hon Tom Helm raised the issue of the \$50 levy. It was the Labor Party's fault!

Hon Kim Chance: What about the Teutonic wars and the crusades? Were they our fault?

Hon N.F. MOORE: Probably! The Labor Party tries to pretend that somehow or other, six or seven years ago is ancient history. It is not. The same people who were in the Cabinet that made those decisions are in the Labor Party today, and as Hon Derrick Tomlinson reminded me, the minister who ran the SGIC in the Lawrence Government, Dr Gallop, is now the Leader of the Opposition in the other place.

Hon Kim Chance: And a very good one!

Hon N.F. MOORE: He may be a great Leader of the Opposition, and he will get a lot of practice at it, but he was not a very good Minister for Finance, or whatever his job was in those days. He was hopeless! Hon Tom Stephens, the Leader of the Opposition in this place, was a minister in the Lawrence Government, albeit for a brief time, and I suspect that because it was for such a brief time, he is not prepared to accept any of the responsibility for the actions of that Government.

Hon Bob Thomas: Bring in the actuarial report and prove your claim that it was bankrupt.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Hon Bob Thomas should read the royal commission report.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members!

Hon N.F. MOORE: Hon Bob Thomas would need to have that tattooed on his forehead before he would believe it!

The PRESIDENT: Order, Leader of the House! If members read *Hansard* in due course, they will find that the last 10 minutes has been nothing but a jumble of interjections, so no-one has achieved anything. Hon Tom Helm will get his opportunity in due course, and Hon Bob Thomas has already spoken. Whether members like it or not, the Leader of the House now has unlimited time to put his side of the debate. I do not need to remind members of what the former President said, because they all know it, but if they do not like what is being said, they should leave the Chamber, or respond in due course. If the Leader of the House will address me instead of individual members, it will be helpful.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Thank you, Mr President. I was trying to make the point that the Labor Party will not get away with the proposition that somehow or other its term in office was ancient history, because the same people who were there then are here now. They have not gone away. In fact, the current leadership of the Labor Party comprises former ministers in the Lawrence Government. When we look around, there are also other people. One person who calls the shots in the Labor Party, Mr McGinty, who was a minister for quite some time in the Dowding and Lawrence Governments, is still there. I think he is the powerbroker, but perhaps I am wrong. I do not know who calls the shots in the Labor Party. If Dr Gallop is the powerbroker and has managed to reduce his numbers by one in the past couple of weeks, what will he do if we have an election? How many more will go out the door? The Labor Party will not get away with, and people will not forget, what it did when it was given the chequebook in Western Australia. There is no doubt that the Labor Party has learnt nothing since then. When Hon Bob Thomas says, "Prove it", as if it has not been proved 10 times over, it shows he will never learn. It must be tattooed on his forehead that they lost \$1b so he can see it in the mirror every morning. He might then say, "I helped lose \$1b because I am a member of the Labor Party which did that." Members of the Labor Party should not think that people will forget, because they will not.

I have indicated that we are directing resources from debt servicing, which was at record levels when we came to government, to spending money on core public services. I will go through some comparisons between the percentage of our budget which we are spending on health, education and other public services and that of the Labor Party when it was in office. We have also embarked on a significant capital works program because we have a fast growing economy and State. I will look at some items in the areas of health and education on which we have spent money - and which the Labor Party suggested we have ignored - to indicate to members just how much money we have spent and where it has been directed in a short period. It has been a significant capital works program in our six years in office.

Hon Bob Thomas: On average, how many schools per year did we build when we were in government and how many schools per year have you built?

Hon N.F. MOORE: I do not have the answer now, but I could have given it to the member when I was the Minister for Education. I spent a lot of time reading that information, and the Labor Party did not build too many schools.

Hon Bob Thomas: We built seven schools per year and you build five per year.

Hon N.F. MOORE: It actually varied from year to year. In some years quite a large number of schools were built, but in other years very few were built. I have looked through the Labor Party's record and there were years when it did not build any schools. I am pleased the member has reminded me of his maintenance budget. When we were previously in government, there was a time when every school was maintained whether or not it needed it. There was a repair and development program every seven years and every school was brought up to scratch. That was as much a preventive program as anything else, and everyone thought it was a good way to do it. The Labor Party came into office and wound maintenance down to virtually nothing. Do members know why it did that? It did that because it was paying for its mates. It was trying to get out of trouble.

Hon Kim Chance interjected.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Public assets must be maintained, otherwise they fall down and it costs a lot more to build them again. Hon Bob Thomas raised the question of school education and funding for schools. When we were in office before, as was the Labor Party with the Tonkin Government, there was a government philosophy and basic principle that the Government should maintain assets regularly. Every school had a repair and maintenance program every seven years. The Labor Party

got rid of that to the point where only about \$5m a year was being spent on maintenance in the whole school education system - yet its members complain about our priorities. The Labor Party had no priorities when it came to maintaining schools. I remember when I first got the job as Minister for Education looking at some schools and not believing the absolutely appalling state and condition they were in. We increased the budget for maintenance. When I left, it was \$50m a year, and I have no doubt it is being maintained now, not that I keep a close eye on it. That again demonstrates the question of priorities, and the question of financial management, which is so important when we debate who is better placed to manage Western Australia's finances - the Labor Party or the coalition.

Let us look at where we have spent money from the capital works budget. If we look at some of the general projects in education, so far \$80m has been spent on computers in schools. Where did that come from? It came from the sale of assets. Members opposite might not think it is worth spending money on computers. They would not have sold the asset, so they would not have had the money to spend on computers.

Hon Bob Thomas: That is one we would have allowed. We felt that there should have been a second pipeline.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Members opposite would sell it if a second one was built.

Hon Bob Thomas: We just thought there should have been competition.

Hon N.F. MOORE: It was a competitive arrangement to sell it. Some of the \$1b has been spent on computers in schools, and that is a good idea. We have spent about \$16m on the full-time program for five-year-olds in building the classrooms and the facilities that are necessary for that successful education program, which was started by my predecessor the year before the election when she said that one in every three five-year-old children would have a full-time place. She did not do the rest. She had the previous nine years to do something but she did not do anything about it. We now have a situation in which every five-year-old in Western Australia has access to pre-primary education and all the four-year-olds have access to 0.4 of a week. That program cost a lot of capital money.

Hon Tom Helm: Did you support that?

Hon N.F. MOORE: I started it. It is a significant achievement in pre-primary education by this Government. I would be happy to walk down the street carrying a flag which stated that we have done a very good job in respect of pre-primary education, and we have. However, the credit we have received for that has been virtually nil; it is certainly not in the motion.

Hon Tom Helm: Because your party did not agree with most of them.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Of course we agree. I do not know where the member got that idea from.

Hon Barry House: It is something we talked about.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Hon Barry House is exactly right. Hon Kay Hallahan talked about it, gave one in three children a spot and sent us further into debt to do it. We then had to resurrect our finances and find a place for the other two-thirds, which we have done. Now we have also provided a spot for four-year-olds. We have accomplished an enormous amount in pre-primary education, but it has cost a lot of money from a capital point of view to provide the classrooms and facilities they need. It has also cost a lot of money from the recurrent budget because of the large number of teachers and aides we have had to employ to provide those educational opportunities.

Hon Tom Helm: If I were you, I would sit down while I was ahead. There is a limit to what you can say.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I have a long way to go yet, and the member will hate every minute of it. There was a time when people in Parliament said, "Let us give credit where credit is due." The member is not one of them any longer; he used to be, but he has lost the plot. I told him last night that he should put his money where his mouth is.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members!

Hon N.F. MOORE: We have all next week to deal with this, so members should sit back, relax and enjoy the flight, as they say on Ansett. We made a decision that schools should have covered assembly areas. We spent \$25m on covered assembly areas. We put a program in place to make it work.

Hon Tom Helm: Mostly in Perth.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Rubbish, that is not the case at all. If members want to look at a good one, and if they are complaining about the belltower, they should look at the one built by Hon Tom Stephens in Exmouth. It is about 400 feet high. If the sun is not shining directly overhead, but is shining in from the side, the shade is about 200 metres away from the shade structure. It is an absolute architectural monstrosity. I have been told that Hon Tom Stephens built it or that he claimed credit for it. Members opposite should look at that covered assembly area at the Exmouth District High School.

We built a number of new high schools, including the Clarkson, Ballajura and Warnbro schools. The Warnbro school was started by the previous Government. Those high schools are costing \$13m to \$15m each; they are not cheap. The Clarkson high school is the latest one. I understand that decisions have been made to build an additional senior college in Kalgoorlie. Work is being done in Mandurah to complete the Halls Head senior high school. A lot of work is being done on capital works in education at the secondary level. I will go down the list of new primary schools so members get an idea of where they are and how many there are. The new Carey Park school has been built, and Hon Bob Thomas would enthusiastically support that decision because that previous school had been let go and was an absolute disgrace when I visited it very early in my term as Minister for Education. A decision was made to build a new one and that was a good decision. That is like the decision to build a school at Innaloo. Two worn-out primary schools were both closed and a new one was built. That

was the first new school built in that part of the metropolitan area for 40 years. That is a form of urban renewal - replacing the old with the new. In addition, new schools were built at Carey Park, Mindarie, South Port Kennedy, Atwell, Beeliar, Busselton, Cloverdale, Cooke Point, Ellenbrook, Landsdale, Ranford, Currabine, Little Grove, O'Connor, Picton, Port Kennedy, Singleton, Halls Head, Kinross, Merriwa, Teranca, Canning Vale, Clarkson, Koorana, Joondalup, Kalgoorlie, Australind, Ballajura, Armadale-Kelmscott and so on.

Several members interjected.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The Mt Magnet school upgrade was implemented by the previous Minister for Education, who has a long history of supporting that school.

Several members interjected.

Hon N.F. MOORE: At the same time that this Government embarked on a significant capital works program to build schools in Western Australia and to maintain existing schools it made a decision to establish which schools were underutilised. As Minister for Education, I put in place a school rationalisation program. That program led to the closure of about 20 to 30 schools with the support of the parents. They all put up their hands and agreed, and most are very pleased with what has happened.

The Port Hedland situation is a very good example. The Government closed a school that was suffering from concrete cancer and built a new school. As I said, two primary schools at Innaloo were closed and a new one was built. Those things have happened across Western Australia and that is sensible and proper management of the Government's assets. There is no point in keeping schools open if there are no students. I know the characters in "Yes, Minister" were pleased to have a hospital without patients, but it is silly to have schools without students. The Government must do something about that.

It takes Governments with intestinal fortitude to make these hard decisions. Hon Tom Helm raised school closures. I remind him that one of his colleagues - Hon John Halden - was commissioned by the Labor Government to come up with a strategy to close schools. He wrote a report entitled "School Renewal". Members opposite talk about spin doctors. In Labor Party terminology, "school renewal" meant school closures.

Hon Kim Chance: That was only one aspect of it.

Hon N.F. MOORE: That is what it was all about. The Government of the day should be congratulated for getting the member to work out how to deal with underutilised schools and how to better use the Government's assets rather than ignoring the situation or saying it is too hard.

Hon Bob Thomas: Were any schools closed?

Hon N.F. MOORE: No. I did some investigations and established that the report produced by Hon John Halden cost a fortune. People were flying all over the place. It is interesting how good the Labor Party is at using the services available to it when in government. People were carted around the State to look at various school buildings, and out of that came this glossy report. I thought the process was a good idea until I established that it meant school closures. I was happy at that stage in opposition to say that the issue needed to be addressed. Where did the report go? Like all of them, it ended up on the shelf. There are probably thousands of similar reports on shelves and covered in dust in the Education Department.

Hon Kim Chance: I can think of two schools in my own neighbourhood that closed as a result of that process.

Hon N.F. MOORE: That did not happen as a result of that process. It was probably because the policy in those days was that if a school had fewer than 11 students over a period it was closed automatically. The Bullfinch school was closed under that policy. My former school was also closed by the Labor Government, but members opposite did not hear me screaming about it. It just so happened that there were no students and that is a good reason to close a school.

Hon Bob Thomas: The parents decided at Shackleton.

Hon N.F. MOORE: That is fine; it is a good way to go about that process.

I will compare what this Government has done to what its predecessors did. Members on this side have had the determination and positive approach to address the problem. We have addressed it and it has caused me a great deal of grief and pain. However, Governments must make hard decisions at times. This Government has done that, and I believe it has been successful.

Members should contrast that with Labor's school renewal process. The Labor Government recognised the problem, commissioned a report and had a member of Parliament fly all over the countryside to investigate. He produced a glossy document and the problem was put on the shelf because it was all too hard. An election was looming and members opposite did not want to jeopardise their chances, even though they should have known that they had no chance of being re-elected. Given that, they should have made some hard decisions. The Education budget has done very well out of this Government from a capital and recurrent funding point of view. I will deal with recurrent funding later. I am talking now about the Government's capital works programs, which are significant.

Reference has been made to spending in the health area. New hospitals are being constructed in Armadale-Kelmscott, and hospitals are being upgraded at Bunbury, Broome, Dongara, Katanning, Narrogin, Kalbarri, Warren, Fremantle, Heathcote, Swan Districts, Graylands, Northam and so on. Of course, \$50m has been spent in Bunbury on a very significant building. Hon Bob Thomas said a few minutes ago that the Government had not spent enough money on that facility. I find it interesting that Labor members continually say the Government does not spend enough money. They never say from where it will come.

Hon Kim Chance: With all these tax breaks for your mates, you do not have any money to spend on these projects.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Which tax breaks?

Hon Kim Chance: The Minister for Finance announces a new one every week.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I have never heard the member complain about state taxes in this House, other than to say that he thinks we have too many. He then says that the Government should spend more money. He believes that we should have fewer taxes and spend more money. That is what the Labor Government did. It did not raise the SGIO premiums because it did not want to get itself into trouble before the election. It let the SGIO go bankrupt rather than do anything about the premiums. Members of the Labor Party are unbelievably bad managers. They think the money Governments spend grows on trees. They do not realise it must come from someone's pocket. Governments must raise money to spend it. Members opposite continually say that the Government should not raise more money - if they had their way we would have no taxes - but at the same time they say that it should spend more money. That is what they did and that is why we were in such a terrible debt situation. This Government is doing something about that.

Hon Kim Chance: I suggested you should not have wasted \$12m in Narrikup.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I know the member did, but I do not agree with him. That is a matter of judgment. I will argue in a minute that the belltower is very good for tourism. I will also argue at some length about the importance to employment of a new convention and exhibition centre in Western Australia. Members opposite talk about spending money on schools. That is all very well, and this Government has done that. However, schools are places in which people are educated. At some stage after they complete their education they will look for employment, and we must have jobs for them.

The tourism industry is a significant growth industry in Western Australia and it has enormous potential to provide jobs. As everyone knows, the number of jobs required in traditional industries is diminishing. We do not need as many people employed in mining and agriculture. However, we are creating more jobs in the service sector, which is closely related to tourism and hospitality. That is the future for many young people. If we do not provide the infrastructure that only Governments provide, they will not have those opportunities. I look forward with some interest to arguing about that next week.

I refer back to the capital works budget. I wholeheartedly support the decision to use \$100m of the proceeds of the pipeline sale for a capital works program involving a new convention and exhibition centre. I am very pleased that we have a capital works program that deals with Barrack Square. East metropolitan members who have the Swan Valley in their electorate should have a good look at Barrack Square to see how important it will be for tourism in the Swan Valley and the use of the river as a tourism attraction. All those aspects are spin-offs from the capital works budget which is about creating jobs, enterprise and circumstances where people can make money in the future.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

COMMITTEE REPORTS - CONSIDERATION

Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Hon J.A. Cowdell) in the Chair.

Standing Committee on Constitutional Affairs - A Petition Requesting the Legislative Council to Enquire into the City of Perth's Ownership of Lot 17 Mindarie/Tamala Park - Thirty-ninth Report

Resumed from 19 August on the following motion by Hon M.D. Nixon -

That the report be noted.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Last week when we were discussing this matter I was moving on to one of the other areas where I had a major problem with the report. I felt it had done an injustice to the chief executive officer of the Town of Cambridge. It relates to item 2.9 of the report which states -

The Committee notes that, contrary to Mr Partridge's statement quoted above, a share in the equity of Lot 17 was at no time vested in the three Towns. The equity in Lot 17 has at all times remained vested in the City of Perth.

If a member of the public read that statement without the benefit of being able to look at Mr Partridge's submission to the committee, I am fairly confident that the person would think that a CEO of a local government authority had made a statement to a committee that was a misrepresentation of the facts. We all know that CEOs of local government or government departments would see their integrity as important and would be very concerned at a parliamentary committee making that sort of assertion if it were true. I urge members to look at the submission that Mr Graham Partridge made to the committee. The committee has made that submission publicly available, so members are able to look at it. If they were to read that submission, they would see quite clearly that Mr Partridge did not say that the property was vested in the three towns. Even the statement by Mr Partridge that the committee quotes in paragraph 2.8 of its report does not use the words that the property at lot 17 was vested in the towns. It states -

. . . the ratepayers of the three Towns created as a result of the restructure of the City of Perth are severely aggrieved at the process in which their equitable share of Lot 17 has been removed.

To go further, if members take the time to read Mr Partridge's submission, they will see it is very detailed and goes through the processes of restructuring. What Mr Partridge is saying is very clear; that is, that when the property was purchased by

the City of Perth, the City of Perth at that time contained the ratepayers who now live in the Towns of Cambridge, Victoria Park and Vincent and that the property was purchased using their contribution by way of rates to the City of Perth. As ratepayers in the City of Perth at that time, they clearly had a share in that land. When the City of Perth was restructured by this Government, contrary to its promise prior to the election, the land was left with the ratepayers who remained in the area that became the City of Perth after that restructure. The ratepayers in the Towns of Cambridge, Victoria Park and Vincent, who had previously by way of being ratepayers in the City of Perth had a share in that land, lost their share in it. If one reads Mr Partridge's statements, it is very clear that is what he was intending to say and it is what he said. I find it extraordinary for the committee to come out with the statement that a share in the equity of lot 17 was at no time vested in the three towns, contrary to Mr Partridge's comments.

For that matter alone I suggest to committee members they should look at whether or not they want to take back the full report. They should look at whether they want to write to Mr Partridge and offer him an apology and to have it put on record in this Parliament. From all of my experience of Mr Partridge, he is a very competent and professional local government officer, but he has a comment like that made against him in a parliamentary report. I urge members of the committee to go away and have a long think about that. I also urge them to look at whether this report addressed the concerns raised by the petitioners through the way the committee went about compiling it, whether the committee has adequately addressed the question of why the decision was made and whether it has addressed how this error can be rectified.

I assure the House it is my intention to continue to pursue this matter by whatever means are available to me. If it requires a change in government to achieve that end, so be it. I suspect we will see a change in government if the Government allows these sorts of inequities to occur, particularly a Government that, prior to the 1993 election, promised the people of the Towns of Vincent, Victoria Park and Cambridge that it did not intend to split the City of Perth without a referendum and went further to allege that the Labor Party intended to do exactly that. It alleged that we would set up a central Perth governing authority that would not even be a local government. The Government alleged that the rates would go up. I remember at the time seeing a leaflet that showed houses on Walcott Street - one in the City of Perth and one in the City of Stirling - and that explained that the rates in the City of Stirling were twice the rates in the City of Perth and that if Labor were elected in the seat of Perth, the residents on the City of Perth side of the street could expect similar rates.

If this decision is not reversed, not only will the rates go up but also the rubbish charges in the Town of Cambridge will increase. The decision has left the people in the Towns of Cambridge, Victoria Park and Vincent exposed to massive increases in their rubbish charges, which will also go up by another 10 per cent as a result of the goods and services tax.

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: We have heard yet again a response from Hon Ken Travers.

Hon Tom Stephens: And a very good response it was too.

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: Of course Hon Ken Travers is entitled to his opinion.

Hon Tom Stephens: Particularly when there is such a compelling, reasoned argument behind it.

Hon N.F. Moore: It is a bit different from yesterday.

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: Yes I agree. There was no intention on the part of the committee to cast aspersions on the CEO of the Town of Cambridge. I am not sure that what has been written into this report does that. I believe it is purely the opinion of Hon Ken Travers. As this House knows, there have been occasions when the opinion of Hon Ken Travers has been well off the mark.

Hon Ken Travers: Name them.

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: In this instance, the committee was asked to undertake a number of tasks, one of which was to inquire into why a decision was made. The honourable member is well aware that the whole issue was looked into by consultants.

Hon Ken Travers: Who were those consultants?

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: Carr-Fardon.

Hon Ken Travers: What was Mr Fardon doing at the time he was writing that report? What was his other job?

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: I have absolutely no idea.

Hon Ken Travers: If you had investigated it, you would know.

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: That is fine. If the member believes it is particularly pertinent, why did he not bring it up in his contribution? If he believes there was some impropriety, why did he not mention it? If he believes there is an issue that this House should be aware of, why not make the House aware?

Hon Ken Travers: I intended to bring it up -

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: But the member did not.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member will have an opportunity, as suggested by Hon Ray Halligan, to raise this matter later in the debate.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: He has an obligation under the Act to raise it with the ACC.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, but he could not tell us about that.

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: The committee looked into this issue and, as was requested by part of the petition, found an answer about to how it might be progressed. That progression was to ask the Minister for Local Government to amend the restructuring Act if the minister felt it was the appropriate path to take. I do not think there is any purpose in debating this issue any further. Questions were asked via the petition, the committee investigated as far as it believed it had need to, it has analysed the data before it and reached a conclusion. That conclusion is in the report before this Committee.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I have spoken to Hon Ray Halligan about this matter and, as I know we share similar views, I do not want to get into too much of a slanging match following the previous debate on this matter. I hope we can resolve it. I appreciate the comments from a member of the committee that it was not the intention of the committee to imply anything about the chief executive officer of the Town of Cambridge. I welcome those comments in the Chamber to place them on the record. If that was not the intention of the committee, and it was just my interpretation of the report, I accept that. I appreciate that it was not intended to suggest that there was anything wrong with what Mr Partridge said to the committee. Certainly, when I read that quote, from the terms used, I came away with the view that he had said something to the committee that was not correct.

It certainly was not my intention at this stage to go down the path I am about to go down but, again, the issue of the consultants and the Carr-Fardon report arises. We always come back to that report. I apologise to members for holding this debate in the Chamber, rather than the committee having the opportunity to test these issues. Unfortunately, I feel this report is inadequate and it is necessary to test some of the claims in it. Whenever this issue is raised, the Government always goes back to the Carr-Fardon report. That report mentions that Mr Ralph Fardon was a former city manager and town clerk of the City of Stirling. There is another other position he held. I take the advice of Hon Derrick Tomlinson about the Anti-Corruption Commission. I say that because I am not necessarily alleging any impropriety by Mr Ralph Fardon on this matter. He may have been acting in the interests of the body for which he was working at the time. Certainly I see no way in which he would have made a personal gain from it.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: It does not have to be personal gain.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: At the time the Carr-Fardon report was written, Mr Ralph Fardon was the secretary/manager of the Mindarie Regional Council. To give members some understanding of the issues involved in this debate, I advise that the Mindarie Regional Council is tied up with this whole issue through a complex arrangement. The owners of the land are the City of Perth, the City of Stirling and the City of Wanneroo. The City of Joondalup is now added to that ownership as a result of the correct decision by the commissioners of the cities of Wanneroo and Joondalup. The Mindarie Regional Council leased the property from the owners. That is one of the reasons it becomes crucial. The towns of Victoria Park, Cambridge and Vincent are members of the Mindarie Regional Council, but they are not the owners of the land. There is a normal commercial arrangement within that process. The fact that Ralph Fardon was secretary of the Mindarie Regional Council at the time could have been relevant. Again, I do not know that it would have had a bearing, but I had hoped the committee would look into that.

I make it clear that I had not intended to raise it in the debate today, but then decided it was probably appropriate after the earlier comments, because I wanted to do more work. I wanted to look into the issue and the implications that role could potentially have had for the decision made. Also, it has been brought to my attention since the last time we debated this matter, and that is why I did not take it to the committee earlier. I am sure the people who brought it to my attention would have raised it with the committee had they had an opportunity to appear before the committee and make verbal submissions. It is an area that needs to be looked into because in a sense the towns of Cambridge, Vincent and Victoria Park are not interested in the value of that land. In this week's edition of the *News Chronicle* Community, there is a quote by Graham Partridge, the CEO of the Town of Cambridge. It sums up the issue that those three towns face as a result of this decision to deny their names being placed on the title deeds. Mr Partridge said in that article -

We only want our name on the title, we don't want cash.

That really sums up the issues with which those councils are faced, which concern the long-term potential impacts on their ability to properly, and at the lowest cost, manage their rubbish disposal problems. In that same article, Mr Partridge suggests that these councils could be facing rate increases in the order of 6 to 7 per cent purely for rubbish disposal. Another 10 per cent will be added to that as a result of the goods and services tax, because we all know that rubbish removal charges will be subject to the GST, along with a range of other charges. In the future, that will probably be a conservative estimate of the cost to those councils for rubbish disposal. Therefore, they will be left in a precarious commercial situation when, as members of the body which leases the land, they will have to deal with other councils which are both part of the body that leases the land and members of the body that owns the land. It will not be any skin off their noses if the charges under that lease arrangement go through the roof. They will be happy to see increased charges for the lease of the land, knowing that, as the owners of the land, any profits come straight back to them. The only three members of the Mindarie Regional Council which will be disadvantaged will be Vincent, Victoria Park and Cambridge. I am sure that the members who hold the state seats that cover those areas, such as Churchlands, Cottesloe, Nedlands, Perth, Yokine and Victoria Park, will be concerned about what that will mean to the costs their constituents will pay for rubbish disposal in the future. Therefore, it becomes important that we try to seek a resolution of this matter.

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: I will respond quickly. It is most unfortunate that Hon Ken Travers continues to raise issues such as the GST. That is clouding the issue.

Hon Ken Travers: I bet you do not want to talk about the GST.

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: If Hon Ken Travers has an issue about equity in respect of lot 17 Tamala Park, it is far more important that he concentrate on that issue. Talking about what is likely to happen in the future, without any figures whatsoever concerning this 8 per cent, is just a furphy. It sounds like a threat, and it sounds as though there is not a great deal of substance in his argument if he needs to make these veiled threats about what might happen to the ratepayers in the future and how the members in certain seats may be placed in an awkward position should that ever come to fruition.

Some people might call this situation sour grapes. The decision can be only one way or the other. According to Hon Ken Travers, it is not a matter of taking the umpire's decision; it is a matter of saying if he does not like what the umpire decides, he will try to put forward another argument. If he has a situation in which the umpire has ruled against him, he wants to ignore the starting point for the petition prior to the establishment of the three new towns and raise some emotive argument about what might have happened in the past or what might happen in the future, and ask the committee to bring these people before it so that it can hear all the subjective and emotional arguments. There is not a great deal of substance in that.

I understand what Hon Ken Travers said about the disposal of rubbish in the future. Exactly what might happen to the Mindarie Regional Council and its connection to the landowners in the future escapes me at this time. I have not looked into that matter in any detail. However, I understand the concern. It has been mentioned that a normal commercial transaction has taken place, which continues to take place and will take place in the future.

I repeat that the committee undertook its task in the only manner in which it could, and that the conclusions drawn are the only conclusions that could be drawn. I commend the report to the House.

Question put and passed.

Standing Committee on Constitutional Affairs - A Petition Opposing the Potential for Serious Road Accidents at the Bunbury Highways Junctions (Singleton, Golden Bay, Madora and Secret Harbour) - Fortieth Report

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: I move -

That the report be noted.

The committee was asked to examine this issue. As the chair of the committee is unfortunately on other parliamentary business and is not present in the Chamber, I will bring to the attention of the Chamber the work undertaken by the committee regarding the concerns of a number of residents in the townships of Singleton, Golden Bay, Madora and Secret Harbour. Those four townships are what could possibly be termed satellite townships, apparently established approximately 1 kilometre on the western side of the Bunbury highway. At this time no road connects the four townships, other than the Bunbury highway.

As members would be aware, the Bunbury highway is a major arterial road with an upper speed limit of 110 kilometres per hour. The concern of the residents of the four towns is that when they wish to travel between those towns or travel to other major townships, they must traverse this Bunbury highway, and they believe they do so often at their peril. They drew the attention of committee members to a number of motor vehicle crashes at those intersections.

This matter was first brought to the attention of the House in June 1998 by way of a petition. After the tabling of that petition, members received some information from the then Minister for Transport, Hon Eric Charlton. The response that they received suggested a number of things that could be done to alleviate the problems being experienced by the residents of those four townships. It was suggested that a driver education program be instituted, because it was believed that might be the most effective course of action to take. It was suggested also that Warnbro Sound Avenue be extended to give the residents of Singleton, Golden Bay, Madora and Secret Harbour an alternative access route to Rockingham city centre so that they did not need to mix with the Bunbury highway traffic. It was suggested also that should federal government funding be available to extend Kwinana Freeway further south to Pagononi Road, that would significantly reduce the amount of traffic on the adjacent sections of Bunbury highway and improve the situation at the intersections to those four townships. Main Roads mentioned at that time, through the then Minister for Transport, that it would continue to monitor those four intersections to ensure that a high level of safety was maintained. The committee, in conjunction with a number of people who were either signatories or respondents to the petition, visited those four intersections and spoke to the people involved, including employees of Main Roads, and the committee made a number of suggestions to Main Roads about what could be done to alleviate the problem. However, because of the major consequences of some of those recommendations - for example, to have acceleration and deceleration lanes, and to move public bus transport from Bunbury highway onto the feeder roads into the four townships - it was recognised that it would take some time to receive a response and that it was highly likely that a number of responses would be made to those recommendations.

The committee recommended also that high pressure sodium lamps be installed at those intersections to make it easier for motorists and pedestrians to see each other. That will not alleviate all of the problems, but it may assist in decreasing the potential for accidents to occur. A number of acceleration and deceleration lanes are already installed at some of those intersections, but the committee believes that more acceleration lanes should be installed to allow drivers from those townships to access Bunbury highway without having in some instances very heavy vehicles right behind them before they can reach the speed at which those vehicles are probably travelling on that highway, which is 110 kilometres per hour.

Hon Bob Thomas: The problem with acceleration lanes is that if the driver does not time it right, he may reach a speed of 110 kilometres per hour at the same time that another vehicle on the highway is coming past him, and that creates the potential for accidents when they merge. A bit further north in the Rockingham area, where there is an acceleration lane, the potential for accidents is much greater than in this area.

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: That will continue to happen, and it happens all the time on the Mitchell and Kwinana Freeways,

where people are supposed to drive at 100 kilometres per hour when they enter the freeway. I have no doubt that there is an art to driving in that way and it requires a bit of practice, but without the acceleration lanes it is far more likely that accidents will occur, because people need to turn into the freeway at right angles and accelerate very quickly, and if they are driving an older vehicle that does not have the power to reach a speed of 110 kilometres per hour in a reasonable time, it can create problems. I am not suggesting for one moment that acceleration lanes are the be all and end all, far from it. It is still up to drivers to utilise what is available to them at any given time.

Hon Bob Thomas: The biggest problem arises when people are turning right to go south on the freeway.

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: Main Roads has been asked to respond to a number of the suggestions made by the committee in its report, and it is hoped that responses will be received in the near future that will satisfy the proponents of the petition.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: The Committee of the Whole is considering the fortieth report of the Standing Committee on Constitutional Affairs on a petition about the potential for serious road accidents at the Bunbury highway junctions with Singleton, Golden Bay, Madora and Secret Harbour. As was said by Hon Ray Halligan, the representative of the committee present in this House, in June 1998 I tabled a petition on behalf of a large number of the residents of those four townships urging the Legislative Council to take steps to alleviate the hazardous situation which had been described by the petitioners and was canvassed by the Constitutional Affairs Committee in its fortieth report.

Before I outline the substance of the petitioners' request and the recommendations flowing from that request, I acknowledge the efforts of the Standing Committee on Constitutional Affairs under the chairmanship of Hon Murray Nixon. Hon Ray Halligan and Hon Tom Helm are the other committee members. I have previously commented that the committee is a vital organ of this House. It is important that there is a committee to which petitions are referred as a matter of course. Petitioners must know their petitions are looked at by Parliament. The Standing Committee on Constitutional Affairs reports to the Parliament on every petition. On this occasion the committee devoted an entire report to the issue raised by the petitioners, through myself.

The Standing Committee on Constitutional Affairs has obviously taken a lot of trouble to research, conduct interviews and undertake other inquiries that have resulted in the report before the Chamber. For that I thank the members. It is great that our colleagues took the trouble to visit the four townsites intersections. It is a long distance to drive in the context of the day's business, and the visit took up much time. The representatives who received the committee members onsite were also appreciative that the committee members - none of whom are from the area - gave up the best part of a day to look at the dangerous intersections. I record my thanks to the committee members for taking the petition so seriously.

The previous speaker outlined the substance of the problem. The report also summarises the problem. The petition refers to four townships that stretch south from Rockingham along Bunbury highway, and are located between the highway and the sea. The sites are south of Port Kennedy, which is now part of the southern outskirts of Rockingham. The towns referred to in the petition are Secret Harbour, Golden Bay, Singleton and Madora. Madora is, of course, outside my South Metropolitan Region, but it has much in common with the other three townsites.

Hon Bob Thomas: You just wanted to visit a good electorate!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: The Singleton residents were the prime movers of this petition and they invited the people of Madora to join them. They cooperated very well. As Hon Bob Thomas suggested, it was a great pleasure to be associated with the people of Madora when the member for Mandurah and I made the related submission to the then Minister for Transport, Hon Eric Charlton. The four townsites are each reached by an access road off Bunbury highway and are located about a kilometre from the highway. The towns are separate nodes of development and are offshoots of the central transport link. That link is Bunbury highway, which many people refer to as the Mandurah road. The townsites are experiencing varying levels of growth. Past visitors to Singleton, for example, would be interested to know that there is a second Singleton that has grown alongside the old Singleton. The new townsite was recently developed. Hon Bob Thomas will be delighted to know that it comes complete with a new primary school.

Hon Bob Thomas: That still does not obviate the fact that the Government is building only five schools a year. We built seven primary schools a year.

Hon N.F. Moore: We had better check that. Members opposite often get their figures wrong.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Singleton needed a primary school and it got one. It is a very good school. The townships as far south as Singleton will, in due course, be linked by access routes. People can now access Golden Bay from Singleton without going onto the main highway. Warnbro Sound Avenue has also been extended from Port Kennedy. I was delighted when Secret Harbour residents Mr and Mrs Oughton told me that Warnbro Sound Avenue has already been extended to Secret Harbour. This gives residents of Secret Harbour direct access to Rockingham without needing to go onto Bunbury highway. This is a great advance for those people. It reduces travelling time and residents do not need to negotiate the dangerous intersections that are the subject of this petition. Warnbro Sound Avenue is not the complete answer, but in an area of rapid growth it alleviates what would otherwise be congested traffic conditions. Warnbro Sound Avenue will eventually proceed south of Secret Harbour. That is to be applauded. It will further alleviate the traffic problems described by the petition and report. However, Warnbro Sound Avenue does not address the dangerous situation that exists on the many occasions when residents need to access Bunbury highway to proceed south to Mandurah or north to Rockingham and further areas. The situation described by the petition is still valid although the Government, in cooperation with the City of Rockingham, has pushed ahead with the schedule for Warnbro Sound Avenue. This is one of the positive outcomes from our recent cabinet meeting in the city of Rockingham.

The petitioners seek relief from perceived road traffic hazards at each of the four intersections onto Bunbury highway. A number of suggestions are put forward in paragraph 2.6 of the report. These include reducing speed limits, installing traffic lights and roundabouts and so on. The petitioners recognise there would be practical difficulties in implementing some, or indeed any, of these solutions. This is partly because Bunbury highway is virtually a freeway. It is a high volume, high speed, four lane highway with separation between north and southbound lanes.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: It has very few intersections.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Yes, it has very few intersections, which means it is an efficient way of proceeding to and from Mandurah and places beyond. It would be folly to try to introduce traffic lights and lower speed limits in individual spots.

Hon Kim Chance: Do you mean graduated speed limits?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I thank Hon Kim Chance. Graduated speed limits and traffic lights are not the solution in this situation; in fact, they would increase the hazards and the residents recognise that. Nonetheless, we still have the problem of people needing to turn right off the southbound highway or to join the highway in either direction when they are proceeding out of these four townships.

As I have already mentioned, the committee visited the site, and I will come to some of its recommendations shortly. In the meantime, the then Minister for Transport, Hon Eric Charlton, and, in due course, his successor, Hon Murray Criddle, gave sincere attention to applying minds from Main Roads Western Australia and the Department of Transport to find some solutions to the problems that were raised. I acknowledge the always friendly assistance provided by officers such as Mr Rob Harvey from Main Roads. As a result of all the considerations that took place, and in particular the on-site inspections by the committee and officers from Main Roads which I have already acknowledged, a greater appreciation of the problem was obtained. The committee's conclusions have gone a long way towards finding a solution. The committee recommendations at part 8 of the report have been welcomed most warmly by the resident's action group, which organised the petition in the first place. They are quite reasonable solutions which, hopefully, we can implement without breaking the budget of either Main Roads or the local authority which would be respectively responsible for various recommendations if they are adopted.

Firstly, the committee recommended that high pressure sodium lamps be installed at each of the four junctions. That is just commonsense. Members who have travelled along Mandurah Road know that they tend to approach each of these intersections, especially at night, quite often not aware that they are upon them as they are not very well lit. The high pressure sodium lamps, which are suggested for each of these junctions, can be clearly seen from a long way down the road and are the sort of safety device which is required to alert travellers, especially tired travellers, that they are coming up to a potential hazard; in other words, prevention is better than cure, and it does not interrupt the smooth flow of traffic.

Hon Kim Chance: The Brand Highway has them and it works very well. Where the trucks come onto Brand Highway, it works very well.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: They are just the shot. They are certainly a good answer when traffic lights are not the answer.

The committee also recommended that, if they are not already in place, acceleration and deceleration lanes be created at each of the four junctions. This recommendation has met with a varied response, some of it quite lukewarm. Main Roads pointed out that an acceleration lane for a 110 kilometre per hour highway would need to be 500 metres long. Its scale goes up to only 100 kilometres per hour traffic, which would require a 460 metre acceleration lane. Main Roads has taken a punt and thinks it should be at least 500 metres long. Clearly that would be hard to justify and, indeed, execute in some of these locations. As was pointed out during the on-site inspections, some acceleration lanes of perhaps even 100 metres would greatly assist cars which are trying to join rapid-moving and high volumes of traffic. The committee also recommended sensibly that large and/or illuminated signs be installed alerting drivers to the approaching intersections and warning them that traffic, including buses and heavy vehicles, may cross or merge with the main traffic flow ahead. Anyone who has experienced this part of Mandurah Road would agree that they are sensible suggestions which probably should have been implemented a long time ago. I hope the relevant authorities will be cognisant of that.

Another recommendation of the committee was dealt with at paragraph 8.4 and referred to installing bus loops, because pedestrians, some of whom may not be fleet of foot, rely on public transport on that main highway to get to Mandurah or Rockingham. Then when they are dropped off when returning, they may be dropped off on the other side of the highway from the township to which they must go. They can face many problems with the high volumes of fast traffic around these intersections. The recommendation of the committee is simply that the buses go round a loop and turn off into the four townships' "driveways". It is a good idea and is consistent with the sensible way this committee has approached the problem.

Once again I thank the committee for taking this matter so seriously. It is not the most earth-shattering moment of the day on the national scene, but such matters are important to the residents and townships that are affected. I thank the chairman and members of the committee, and I thank the House for paying attention to this serious matter.

Question put and passed.

Report

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

HON N.D. GRIFFITHS - ENTRY IN WA BAR ASSOCIATION DIRECTORY

Personal Explanation

HON N.D. GRIFFITHS (East Metropolitan) [12.57 pm]: Members will be aware of the article in *The Australian* which

refers to my entry in the Western Australian Bar Association directory of 1997. I am concerned that it may be thought that I have done something wrong. This is not the case. In relation to this I will make three points: First, it is true that while a member of Parliament I have done some legal work, the last occasion of which was in August 1996. Second, shortly after the directory was published in 1997, I was contacted by a journalist who referred me to the entry and inquired whether I was conducting a legal practice from my parliamentary or electorate office. I explained that this was not the case, and I have ensured that no subsequent entry has appeared in the directory. The issue having been raised, I was concerned that an entry of this nature could be considered inappropriate. It is worth noting that the journalist chose not to publish a story on the matter. Third, this morning I advised the Leader of the Opposition that this matter should be looked at by an independent person and, as a result, he has requested that the Clerk of the Legislative Council examine the matter. The Clerk has agreed to this course. Further, I have advised the Leader of the Opposition that I am standing aside from my formal positions pending the receipt of the Clerk's report. I have taken these steps because this matter touches on the reputation of members of Parliament and their standing in the community. In all other respects, the issue raised is trivial, historic and, I am confident, involves no wrongdoing of any kind on my part.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Amendment to Motion, as Amended

Resumed from 8 September on the following amendment moved by Hon Bob Thomas -

And further advises His Excellency of the Legislative Council's concern with the failure of the Liberal National Party coalition Government to properly handle the RFA process and, in particular, its failure to meet the needs of timber industry workers, their families and their communities who are adversely affected by the outcome.

HON CHRISTINE SHARP (South West) [2.00 pm]: I thank my colleague Hon Bob Thomas for moving this amendment and in so doing providing me with the opportunity to comment on this very important subject of the proper handling or otherwise of the regional forest agreement process. It has come home to me only relatively recently the pain and anxiety that has been caused by the way the original forest agreement was handled.

Several members interjected.

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: Members may laugh, but it did not really come home to me in an existential sense until the timber workers protested at Parliament House last sitting week and the week before that. When I spoke to those people on a one-to-one and group basis I realised the level of their feelings. They are, first and foremost, angry. Secondly, they are bitter, frustrated and anxious about what will happen next. Only then did it dawn on me the pain this process has caused. Ironically, I was one of the instigators of the campaign to persuade the Government to change the RFA outcome. Success in that campaign - the Government has improved the long-term RFA outcome - has led to a short-term change that has caused a greater level of anxiety and uncertainty about the future. It is an enormous tragedy that, although the opportunity was there, the Regional Forest Agreement signed on 4 May did not get it right in the first place.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Do you think the guerilla warfare that led up to that did not cause pain?

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: There has been a huge amount of pain on all sides.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Good!

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: I concede that if the original RFA had announced the changes that were subsequently included in the second agreement it would have been much less painful for the timber industry, and the timber workers in particular. Those affected would have had respect for the process and it would have included support mechanisms to help the industry to restructure. That could have been done after careful consideration. However, that has not happened, and that is a tragedy.

I acknowledge the enormous anxiety that the uncertainty has produced in the community. As an instigator of the environmental campaign, I hope there will be a very serious inquiry, perhaps even a royal commission, into the process leading up to the signing of the RFA. We must understand why the agreement was signed in a form that was so completely unacceptable to a large proportion of the Western Australian community. One day that story must be told and the history must be correct.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: I hope it is.

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: That is not the case at present; that story has not been told, but one day it will be.

Unlike my colleague Hon Barry House, who has been very impressed by the scientific methodology of the RFA, I fear that although many very capable and in some cases renowned scientists were involved, we do not have the correct outcome. It indicates a naivete about scientific methodology to assume that just because one imports a range of experts and adds a bit of politics one will necessarily come up with the best scientific outcome. It is also naive to underestimate the part played by vested interests in the timber industry. Those vested interests have been controlling the outcome of the RFA, which ironically has not been in the interests of the timber workers, although subsequently there has been an increase in the reservations.

It is extraordinary that as result of the second edition of the RFA we are finally, seriously and, perhaps more importantly, politically dealing with the adoption of a low-volume, high-value fine furniture industry. It is ironic that the original RFA

protected vested interests in the timber industry, which have enjoyed a position of privilege in the use of our natural resources, and that that has prevented this new industry from developing.

I will comment briefly on those vested interests. I do not accept that the timber industry has been run in past decades in the interests of the timber workers. I will quote Mr Peter Lane, a consultant from Margaret River. He has played a marvellous role. He is a thorn in the side of the Minister for the Environment because he has undertaken an excellent and continual critique of the statistics that have been produced during the regional forest agreement process, such as the 20 000 jobs, the over one million hectares of forest in reserve and so on. He sent me a copy of a letter that last week he sent to the Premier, with copies to various members of Parliament. In a delightful snippet he wrote, when doing a quick analysis of employment, that in 1970, 4 500 people were employed in the timber industry. Now 1 800 people are employed in that industry in the south west. He worked out therefore that the attrition rate in timber jobs since 1970 is approximately 100 a year. He went on to write that with the jobs that will effectively be lost by the Premier's additional Regional Forest Agreement announcement of the phasing out of old-growth logging and the logging of karri and tingle by 2003, which was claimed to cost 1 500 jobs, if one removes the multiplier effect, the losses will be around 200 jobs. Therefore, by 2003, jobs will be lost at a rate of 50 a year; that is to say, thanks to the Premier's addition to the RFA, the job loss rate in the timber industry will be half the number we have seen occur in a systematic way since 1970. Obviously one could stack the figures in other ways. I am sure that members may enjoy doing that, but that snippet makes the point that the issue of whether the type of timber industry that has enjoyed such an over-cut of our forest has been best for the timber workers is debateable.

To illustrate how the Government has failed to properly handle the RFA process and how it has not been in the best interests of the timber workers, I want to bring this debate more up to date by mentioning the failure to devise a serious plantation option as part of the RFA scenario and what a tragedy it has been. I draw members' attention to the fact that, under the Queensland RFA, consideration is being given to a largely plantation-based option with a very small quota from native forest logging. The Queensland Premier, Mr Beattie, is weighing in with support for that option. It is possible that up to \$50m will be spent in Queensland on facilitating that option, whereas in Western Australia nothing is being spent to facilitate such an option. It was not even an option; it was never discussed. So great was the vested interests in the profits from native forest logging that it did not suit certain persons and corporations to pursue that matter.

Hon Barry House: The Premier mentioned it as an option on 27 July.

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: I thank the member. If we seriously want a review of plantations and what those options provide for timber worker jobs, the first thing we need is an independent review of how much plantation resource is available. As members will be aware, the issue of the availability of softwood is quite controversial, particularly of *Pinus radiata*. Therefore, I welcome the commitment the minister made two weeks ago when he said that an independent review of these matters would be taking place. I want to stress that for the Government to handle this matter properly it needs to follow some very important criteria to ensure, first and foremost, that the review is independent. Clearly, there is a controversy about the availability of *Pinus radiata* and how much softwood can be logged currently. There have been accusations that a standing, living stockpile of pine trees of 1.2 million cubic metres exists. If there is an argument about pine inventories between Dr Judy Clark from the Australian National University on the one hand and the Department of Conservation and Land Management on the other hand, it is absolutely critical that any inventory to sort the matter out is made independent of the interests of either protagonist in the argument. Furthermore, if the job is to be done properly, it needs a mensuration audit stand by stand of the volume of standing softwood trees and also a calculation of the growth rates of those different stands. It seems that in this matter of determining whether such a living stockpile does exist, there are two possible explanations for this - and only two: One is that Dr Clark is right and that for whatever reasons - I will not even begin to speculate about those reasons right now - there has been a withholding of softwood. If she is right and CALM is wrong, that is a very serious matter. If, on the other hand, she is wrong, the inference is that the softwood plantations managed by CALM have not grown at growth rates that would be expected in comparable areas of Australia in similar soils and rainfall zones. That in itself is the subject of some concern as to whether the softwood resources have been properly managed. Either way there is an important question to answer.

It is also very important that this review look not only at the younger stands but all *Pinus radiata* pine stands of 30 years and older and at *Pinus pinasta* pine trees of 40 years and older, given that they have a slightly longer rotation length. It is also important that in such a review, the terms of reference include the availability of *Pinus radiata* pine stands from private sources. Members need to understand that one of the arguments has been whether there is enough softwood to meet the Wesply (Dardanup) Agreement Authorization Act. I understand that the Act is a little confusing because it assumes two sources of *Pinus radiata* to meet the provisions of the Act - one from private plantations, such as those managed under Bunnings share farm schemes, and the other from those managed by CALM. Therefore, to answer the question whether there is the full availability of the resource requirements under that Act requires an inventory of those private stands as well as the CALM stands.

It is really important that the terms of reference of the review be made public and of course that the results be made public. Ideally some office such as the Office of the Auditor General should be involved to ensure the total transparency and independence that the review must have to restore confidence in this very vexed issue and ensure that the results gain public confidence and can be used as the basis for very important capital investment decisions in the plantation sector.

Hon Barry House: It is also important that the parties, including the conservation movement, accept due process.

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: Absolutely, as long as it is due process. That is why this conservationist is going through a few bottom lines.

In supporting the amendment of Hon Bob Thomas, I wish to express my concerns over the past few weeks at the apparent

re-emergence of what I have somewhat jocularly - I do not know how funny it is - described as the old timber oligarchy. I am enormously concerned about the resurrection of the timber operation at the Whittakers' site at Greenbushes. The Forest Industry Advisory Committee gives the minister advice on matters relating to the restructure of the industry. The committee's constitution is that it is chaired by a former Managing Director of Bunnings, contains the current Managing Director of Bunnings and the director of one of the leading companies in the consortium seeking to make a proposal for Whittakers. One learns that other proposals have been roughly developed in this regard, but I will go into that in more detail in a moment. This matter raises serious questions about conflict of interest within the Forest Industry Advisory Committee. I ask the Government: Where are the small millers represented on the committee? It seems that the old oligarchy is alive and well and is supporting very important investment decisions.

Despite the new consensus which Hon Barry House and I enjoy that the furniture industry is the way to go - even the member for Warren-Blackwood in the other place holds similar views - the fine furniture association is not represented to provide any advice to government on the Forest Industry Advisory Committee. It is a significant and serious omission. Why not include such a representative? How do we intend to go about restructuring the industry when those providing advice to government are the same as the interests which have made enormous profits from the high volume throughput, low employment scenarios which have caused such destruction in our native forests for many decades?

I now read from a statement from the Western Timber Co-operative, which is one of the joint venturers involved in a failed proposal for the pine woodchipper at Whittakers. This proposal involved a plantation woodchip facility and later a sawmilling facility. These joint venturers made the following points -

A West Australian Joint Ventures formal contract to purchase Whittaker's chipping business and immediately re-employ five men was scuttled by Government when they cancelled the supply contract for 260,000 tonne of plantation Bluegum. The Bluegum contract with an export volume of \$20 million formed part of the business sold.

The Bluegum contract was advertised for sale by the Receivers with the Governments knowledge.

The contract contained a right of assignment.

The JV was invited by Government to seek assignment through the receiver.

The JV spent many thousands of dollars in due diligence and establishing a business to commence immediate operation.

The immediate start was required to meet a separate pine contract to Marubeni.

The Marubeni Pine contract had an export value of \$5 Million pa.

The Government cancelled the Bluegum contract after receiving a formal assignment request.

The sale of the business to the JV could not be completed by the Receiver without the Bluegum assignment.

Arising from the Governments unilateral decision, some two months after allowed the Receiver to advertise the contract for sale, the JV lost:

- The \$20 Million Bluegum contract
- The \$5 Million per year Pine contract
- The land plant and equipment
- The opportunity to employ five staff immediately
- The opportunity to double chipping staff within twelve months
- The opportunity to build a softwood sawmill on the land being acquired
- The costs and expenses in due diligence and gearing up for work to commence.

They go on to ask who made the decision to cancel the contract. Why was it cancelled? Who can benefit from this decision? They look at the established industry players currently attempting to source sufficient pine to pick up the contract and also seeking to purchase the Whittakers mill. They ask whether the interests are now in a stronger position to dominate the chipping market. Why did this take place? What was the Minister for the Environment's reason for turning down the joint venture's bid at the last minute after an enormous amount of effort was spent on it at the encouragement of the receiver and the Government? Is a better offer on the horizon about which we do not know the details at this stage? The minister is claiming that the soon-to-be disclosed proposal for the Whittakers' site will involve more job creation than the joint venturers offered. That was the basis of the decision.

I assure members that I will look carefully at what the successful new venturers come up with. Obviously, there is a suspicion that we could be looking at a conflict of interest here, which would seek to prevent a strong, new independent player in the plantation industry; that is, that this was definitely politically inspired to prevent the new joint venture, and possibly the Western Timber Co-operative, because of a political vendetta against a managing director, Jim Frith, who has been critical of the Government's policy in the past.

I am afraid that my suspicion that the timber oligarchy is alive and well is right, but I hope that the events over the next few weeks will prove I am wrong. I have great fears. Until we have an interest which is no longer dominated by the same old vested interests and is open to all players, including the small players, and which contains the ongoing true value-adding aspects of this industry - that is, fine furniture manufacturers - these problems will not go away. The industry must be open and competitive. Until we remove the corporate agenda of the government agencies responsible for its administration, with

the conflict of interest inherent in its structure, these problems will not go away. Furthermore, until the Government itself acts and sorts out the mess that it has created, the problem will not be resolved. It is absolutely essential that it continues with complete transparency. When transparency returns, trust will come with it.

I give one topical example: Last week the Minister for the Environment announced that 37 new jobs will be created in the bush through the thinning of jarrah forests. This is a new job creation scheme for retrenched Whittakers Limited workers. It is a good initiative, and I am pleased that it is taking place. However, many people in the Green movement are suspicious of this, and they are suspicious because they are not sure whether we are really talking about the thinning of jarrah pole stands, which have been long overdue for thinning for many decades, and the thinning of the regeneration stands after jarrah gap creation - that is, for bona fide non-commercial silvicultural work - or whether this is not a kind of plot to somehow log more jarrah forest. Maybe this sounds cynical, but one can understand why people are cynical, because we have seen enormous over-cutting in these same forests for a decade, and that has been government driven. Therefore, how unfortunate, when making a good initiative, that the minister did not do it in an open and transparent way which provided the public with a silvicultural management plan of how this would proceed so that the public and those with the interests of the jarrah forests uppermost in their minds could be assured that this was to do that kind of bona fide silvicultural work and that, at a time of restriction of jarrah logging quotas, it was not a way of upping jarrah quotas.

Again, dealing with the decisions about the forthcoming restructuring of the Department of Conservation and Land Management, what a pity we do not see a draft Bill going out for public consultation so that people are allowed to have their say. We begged the Government to produce a draft Regional Forest Agreement. If only it had done that, listened to the public and got the final RFA right, what a different story we would be telling. If that draft had come out and those comments had been taken on board, all this mess would have been avoided. Therefore, with the review of the Conservation and Land Management Act and the amendments that will be put before this place, I encourage the Government to seek public comment and to put a draft Bill out for public comment so that we can have those arguments first and not have them in this place in the acrimonious manner that has been characteristic of this entire debate.

Until those things happen, we will not be acting in the long-term interests of a sustainable industry, and therefore we will not be acting in the long-term interests of the timber industry workers of the south west, their families and the communities which have been so adversely affected by this matter.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon Max Evans (Minister for Finance).

SCHOOL EDUCATION BILL

Assembly's Message

Message from the Assembly notifying that it had agreed to amendments Nos 5; 6; 7; 8; 11; 14; 16; 17; 21; 22; 26; 32; 36; 37; 50; 51; 53; 54; 55; 57; 60; 61; 62; 63; 64; 76; 77; 78; 80; 83; 93; 94, and had disagreed to amendments Nos 1; 2; 3; 4; 13; 18; 19; 23; 24; 25; 27; 28; 29; 30; 31; 38; 42; 43; 44; 45; 46; 47; 48; 49; 79; 81; 82; 84; 85; 87; 88; 89; 90; 91; 92; 98; 100; 102 for the reasons set forth in Schedule B, and had disagreed to and substituted new amendments for amendments Nos 9; 10; 12; 15; 20; 33 to 35; 39; 40; 41; 52; 56; 58; 59; 65 to 74 and 99; 75; 86; 95; 96; 97; 101; 103; 104 as set forth in Schedule A for the reasons set forth in Schedule B, further considered. [See page 9199 of 17 June 1999.]

Committee

Resumed from 17 June. The Chairman of Committees (Hon J.A. Cowdell) in the Chair; Hon N.F. Moore (Leader of the House) in charge of the Bill.

Progress was reported after the question that amendments Nos 47, 48 and 49 be not insisted on, after Hon N.F. Moore had moved the following motion -

That amendments Nos 1, 2, 3, 4, 13, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 38, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 79, 81, 82, 84, 85, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 98, 100, and 102 made by the Council be not insisted on.

The CHAIRMAN: Members will recall that last time we had noted that the Assembly had agreed to 32 amendments proposed by the Council. We had commenced consideration of the 38 amendments in which the Assembly is insisting upon the original Bill. The question before us is that amendments Nos 47, 48 and 49 not be insisted upon.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Amendments Nos 47, 48 and 49 relate to local intake areas. Members will recall that amendments were moved in this place. The original government clause stated that boundaries would be removed; however, some schools would be bounded. This is one area that was considered by the committee, and there was unanimity in our insistence that school boundaries should be preserved. I understand that amendments Nos 33, 34 and 35 are the substitute amendments. The Australian Labor Party, in signalling its intention to support those proposed alternatives, will therefore not be insisting upon the amendments currently under consideration, and therefore will accept their rejection. However, having said that, when we deal with amendments 33, 34 and 35, we will be insisting that provisions be made for siblings and that that be given attention at the point of drafting of the regulations.

Hon HELEN HODGSON: When parents were making comments to us on the School Education Bill, the provisions to ensure that local children would get priority at their local school was one of the core issues raised. I understand that the Education Department and the minister's advisers feel the need to address issues of administrative overload. However, many parents think that local access is such an important provision that they would prefer to see things exist under a regulated system which makes sure that children get access to, and priority at, the closest school to their home. I make these comments in the knowledge that because the ALP supports the Government's amendments, they will be accepted. However, they do

not go as far as they should. I signal also that these amendments came from the work of the committee and were agreed to by all members of the committee, who canvassed these issues thoroughly and spent a lot of time on trying to balance the competing issues in this matter. It is, therefore, disappointing that after these amendments went through the committee with unanimous support, although they did engender some debate in this place, the minister will not accept them. I acknowledge that the Government's amendments will go through and that with the substitutions they are better than originally drafted. However, they still not go far enough to satisfy parents.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendments not insisted on.

The CHAIRMAN: The question now is that amendment No 79 be not insisted on.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: This amendment relates to a transitional provision which is provided for at clause 140 of the Bill. The Bill requires that parents and citizens associations be incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act 1987. We argued strongly on behalf of P & Cs that given that P & Cs do a great deal of worthwhile work in Western Australian primary and secondary schools and that many P & Cs find it difficult to meet their financial obligations, the Government should reciprocate goodwill towards these voluntary bodies by waiving the costs of association. The Government's explanation for rejecting our proposed amendment to clause 140 to add new clauses 7 and 8 was that charges for incorporation are made pursuant to the Associations Incorporation Act and it is not appropriate to interfere with those provisions in this Bill. I am sure that is a matter of opinion and that had the Government had the will to make some adjustment so that those fees could be waived, that would have happened. Unfortunately, that was not the case and the Government rejected our amendment. I am disappointed that goodwill has not been shown towards P & Cs, but we will accept the Government's rejection of our amendment and do not intend to let the Bill collapse on account of this transitional provision clause.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not insisted on.

The CHAIRMAN: The question now is that amendments Nos 81 and 82 be not insisted on.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: These amendments relate to clause 178 and to accountability in the non-government school sector. This matter was also discussed by the committee, which was of the view that because non-government schools are receiving an increasing amount of public funding, they should become more accountable for the expenditure of those moneys. Therefore, we moved an amendment that each year, the governing body of a non-government school shall furnish to the minister a report, as prescribed by regulations, with regard to the application of moneys provided under this division in the preceding year. It is unfortunate that the Government will not accept this amendment. The Government has argued in rejecting this amendment that the funds that are provided to non-government schools from state revenue are used for recurrent expenditure, typically salaries. Is any public funding for the non-government school sector used for any purpose other than salaries; and, if so, for what purpose?

Hon N.F. MOORE: To the best of my knowledge, it is used for salaries and other recurrent expenditures in running the school. I cannot think of any other purpose for which it is used. The member may have some examples that she wants to raise. I do not think there is anything sinister about this. It is government money provided to non-government schools.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Given that the non-government school sector is getting an increasing amount of money from the Commonwealth that is topped up by the State, the community will expect increased accountability from that sector. The Government has argued that the current compliance requirements are satisfactory. I do not know what those requirements are. This was a pretty good amendment that was put forward and agreed to by the committee. However, we will not let the Bill fail on account of it, and the Australian Labor Party will accept the Government's rejection of this amendment.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendments not insisted on.

The CHAIRMAN: The question now is that amendments Nos 84 and 85 be not insisted on.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: A number of amendments were moved with regard to school sponsorship. The Labor Party moved the original amendment to clause 209 at page 139, line 3, which provided that there shall be no naming of any educational activity in schools with regard to such advertising or sponsorship, and it also moved a subsequent amendment to clause 209 at page 140, after line 11, which defined "educational activity". This is an important issue because commercialisation is creeping into government schools. I am disappointed that not enough work has been done on the impact of that creeping commercialisation, nor has an evaluation been made of the real costs on the quality of education in Western Australian schools. I do not believe for a moment that it is all positive. Certainly there is a financial benefit, but some educational costs may emerge as a result of this creeping trend.

We also have concerns about equity and the way in which the sponsorship arrangements are put in place; that is, certain sponsors may be attracted to certain schools and areas as opposed to others. Many questions must be resolved in respect of that. I understand that substitute amendment No 97 enables the preparation of regulations to deal with advertising and sponsorship issues. Naming issues are identified as a specific matter for inclusion in such regulations, so it does not exactly do what our amendment to clause 209 intended. However, the Australian Labor Party and the minor parties have had some success on this because substitute amendment 97 has caused a tightening of the provisions, although it probably does not go as far as we would like. Nevertheless, it is an example of where we have improved this Bill for the betterment of the education system as a whole. We have substantially improved the legislation. In view of the fact that a substitute amendment is provided and that the Australian Labor Party intends to support the substitute amendment, we signal our intent to accept this rejection.

Hon HELEN HODGSON: This was part of a package which, when it was originally inserted, basically stated that we

accepted that regulations could govern the degree of advertising in sponsorship, but there was a line beyond which even the regulations should not go. At the time we felt that it was more appropriate to have that in the head legislation rather than in subsidiary legislation by way of regulations. That is why there were two elements to these amendments: The first one dealt with the proposal by Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich to provide that there should be no naming of any educational activity. That was further refined by an amendment I moved to ensure that an educational activity allowed the sorts of interschool events and large events which need sponsorship in order to get up and running. Examples which were given included the Shell music concert and similar events where there is no question that sponsorship enables kids to participate in these activities. However, everyone acknowledges that there is a limit, and we made that point very strongly in debate at an early stage, which is why these amendments were passed. We will be watching the regulations very carefully when they are promulgated to make sure they do not go beyond what we think is acceptable. We will have to rely on that even though we would much rather see the power in the legislation limiting what advertising could be authorised.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendments not insisted on.

The CHAIRMAN: We will now consider amendments Nos 87, 88, 89, 90, 91 and 92, which are a substantive amendment and minor amendments pertaining to the review by the minister or a delegate.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Once again this suite of amendments was part of a package to give members of the community and parents the right to address any matters in the education of their children with which they were concerned. The committee examined this issue and came to the determination that when parents have problems with the quality of education or incidents that occur within the education system, they are not particularly well provided for as to where they can take their case. It was felt that the office of an education ombudsman should be established. Unfortunately, the committee was advised that because of the financial implications of establishing such an office and because the Legislative Council is not in a position to move amendments which have an appropriation attached to them, we were denied the opportunity to go down that path. Nevertheless, there is a need for an education ombudsman or a reviewer. To say that if parents have concerns or difficulties they can go to the Ombudsman or the minister is not good enough. One does not need to be too smart to work out that the ombudsman is under major pressure within Western Australia across a whole range of issues - not just education issues. The perception of the people in the community is: What is the point? They think that by the time he gets to their issue, it will probably be too late. At the end of the day, they feel a sense of helplessness, and I can sympathise with them. The argument that they can go to the minister leads to a similar result. Ministers are busy people. If they get a complaint, they shove it onto the department. The bureaucrats deal with it and they are the people with whom the parents have the problem in the first place. Although there is a substitution for amendments Nos 87, 88, 89 and 90, that substitution does not go far enough. It is a Clayton's model; it is the sort of review one has when one is not having a review.

Hon N.F. Moore: That is a bit cruel.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: It is not being cruel. I am being very honest. I have worked in the education system, as has the minister. We know how the education system works. We know how parents get caught out and how they often do not get a fair hearing because sometimes bringing a problem to the attention of the Education Department just causes a huge flap. It is a bit like pass the parcel, with the parcel being a bomb. No-one wants to handle it, and at the end of the day, the agency might cover up unfair processes or whatever. The bottom line is that for a long time people in this State have been saying, "We need an alternative to what exists." The committee was firmly of that view. We had a good look at the issue of a reviewer or an ombudsman. However, at the end of the day the functions would be the same.

One of the explanations that was given for the rejection is that the policy underpinning the Bill is that decisions about students should be made at the appropriate level of the bureaucracy - school, district or central office - or, in the case of non-government schools, by the school. Leaving non-government schools to one side, I must say that I am not confident that either district offices or the schools are well equipped with resources to deal with problems that people might encounter within the education system.

I do not believe that the substitute proposal put forward by the Government goes anywhere near what the committee recommended. I am disappointed about that. Nevertheless, the Australian Labor Party will not sacrifice this Bill because amendments 87 to 90 have been rejected. The Australian Labor Party will accept the Government's rejection of the amendments.

Hon CHRISTINE SHARP: I concur with Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich. We have missed an important opportunity for one of the fundamental principles and mechanisms of modern government to be included in the School Education Act. That principle is the independent regulation of government administration. I am not really surprised by this significant omission. One of the Bill's characteristics is the consistent pattern of the Government steadfastly evading the provision of educational standards for the people of Western Australia. Perhaps the Government feared these would be too costly; nevertheless, it is a pattern of inadequacy. The principle of independent regulation is fundamental to modern government. The idea of an education ombudsman had great support across the board in the community. The Standing Committee on Public Administration wholeheartedly supported the proposal and introduced amendments to put such a scheme into place. I am very disappointed the amendments will not be taking place and that we will sail forth into the next century without such a fundamental aspect of a state education system. I will be opposing this amendment and wish that my colleagues were joining me. It is one of the three core areas where this Bill is still inadequate.

Hon HELEN HODGSON: I also think this is a fundamental area that will be forsaken if these amendments are passed. The position of an "education ombudsman" that ended up being inserted into the Bill was developed after much discussion in the Standing Committee on Public Administration. Parents not only need to know that justice is done but also they need to see that it is being done. Many issues in the Education Department could be resolved if people felt that they were getting

an independent hearing. For some time, the term "education ombudsman" has been bandied around. The committee agonised over whether this concept had been adequately or appropriately described by parents. The committee returned to the Chamber with a dilution of the original position. The reviewer position was attached to the department and was not as independent as the original proposals. However, we believed the department could live with the proposal. Now the position is being discarded and the proposed substitute is not adequate. It is a fundamental area in which parents need to feel that justice is being done. We know this because of the number of occasions when parents come to us as members of Parliament and say that something has happened in a particular school or that they have received certain correspondence. Parents go to the Education Department but do not receive a response that they see as adequate. This does not in any way impugn the people within the department, because often they are simply acting within their parameters. They are not acting ultra vires but are fulfilling their duties. However, there needs to be the perception of independence that is simply not available when dealing with people within a department.

If an independent person comes back to the parent and says the correct decision has been made, the parent will often accept that decision. The parent will say that he or she did what he or she could but the appropriate response was made. If a departmental figure says the department will not change the decision, parents think they have been sidelined and their concerns have not been addressed. They then go to other sources, such as members of Parliament. By implementing a proper internal review mechanism the number of complaints will be reduced in the medium to long term. Cost saving will be achieved by setting it up this way. For that reason I too will be opposing the amendment.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I am perturbed at members' attitudes about the sort of justice that one receives through the education system, and the view that an independent person is needed for a person to appeal any function of school education concerning an individual student. The whole strategy of the management of schools in Western Australia is to allow problems to be sorted out as close to the origin as possible; that is, at the school or home level. If necessary the problem is referred to the district office level and then to the department itself. If it reaches that stage, people are not trying hard enough. After that the problem is referred to the Minister for Education. What the Council proposed and the Assembly rejected was an independent person who could operate outside of that to look at these issues. That point of view does not take into account the fact that the vast majority of people who work in the education system are caring people who want to sort out problems. Although I made a flippant remark that I still do not know how it works after 30 or 40 years, it works pretty well most of the time. I am pleased that the Labor Party will not insist on the position the Council previously took. We believe the substitution that will be provided for later on will deal with most of the problems that have been raised.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I am amazed at what I heard the minister say, asking how the Opposition could dare imply that there was something wrong with justice in the Education Department. One does not have to be too smart to realise that sometimes justice is simply not there.

Hon N.F. Moore: There is not always justice in the courts.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: My point is that the due processes that should be there are not necessarily there. We cannot take for granted they are there. Just this week the Commissioner for Public Service Standards tabled a report about his investigations of nine cases involving the treatment of senior personnel within the Education Department. His report showed they had not been given fair and due process.

Hon N.F. Moore: That is under the current Act.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: The point I make is that if that fair and due process cannot be afforded to the senior people in the system, I have grave concerns about the system's ability in affording fair and due process to parents who have concerns with the system.

Hon N.F. Moore: Those problems will be resolved under the new Act. The new Act will strengthen the ability of people to take action in respect of grievances. That is what we are trying to put into the Act. The grievances arose about the 1928 Act.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: That may well be so. However, if the Government were trying to strengthen the fair and due processes, it would have agreed with the amendments passed by the committee and with the amendments we sent from this place to the other place. The Government has not done that. The bottom line is that the minister cannot have it both ways. The Labor Party has ongoing concerns about the lack of due process and the lack of resources for parents with concerns about their child's education.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendments not insisted on.

The CHAIRMAN: We will now consider amendment No 98, which is an amendment dealing with a review of decisions to cancel enrolment.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Amendment 98 deals with a new clause that was once again drafted by the committee. It relates to the review of decisions under clauses 20 and 21 of the Bill. Clause 20 deals with the cancellation of enrolment for providing false or misleading information; clause 21 deals with the removal of students from the register. The committee was firmly of the view that a person who was aggrieved by a decision by a government school principal could go through a process which would give that person an opportunity to have the matter redressed. The committee intended by that amendment to signify a requirement for a review and it made a recommendation on the review procedure, hence new clause 22.

The committee wanted to ensure that in a case where false or misleading information had been provided or where a student was to be removed from a register, sufficient checks and balances were in place in the system to ensure people receive

procedural fairness, had the opportunity to be heard and were in a position to put forward their cases. The Government, in its response to our new clause 22, has basically stated that the incidence of events under clause 20 is expected to be small, and clause 21 is written to enable the efficient management of school registers and to discourage principals from removing names without appropriate checks. I am not satisfied that clause 22 in fact does that anywhere nearly as efficiently as it should. The Government in its proposed substitution of clause 21 has in fact watered down the provision for, for example, across agency involvement in checking on the whereabouts of students. The Government has argued that it has provided a mechanism for an independent review at clause 216 and that should be a sufficient avenue for dealing with the relatively small number of grievances that might arise. Can the minister advise me how many instances of cancellations of enrolments or removals from the register there are currently in Western Australia?

Hon N.F. Moore: Under the current legislation it is not a requirement to provide that information; therefore there is none. Under the new arrangements there will be.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: The point I make is that in response to the reason for the rejection of this amendment, the minister's advisers have indicated that the instances of events under clause 20 are likely to be small. They must be able to put a finger on that number, because if we throw out this amendment we want to know that we are doing the right thing. How much is small?

Hon N.F. MOORE: As I understand the member's question - and she may tell me if I am right - it is how we know that the number of children involved is relatively small.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: How does the minister know it is currently small? I was just trying to seek clarification of the number of cancellations of enrolments for providing false or misleading information to schools. It is clear the Government does not know. Its major argument for not supporting this new clause 22 falls flat on its face as the Government does not have a clue how many students we are talking about. Nevertheless, the Labor Party is not totally satisfied with the mechanism for the independent review at clause 216 but we do appreciate that it is a little better than the Government's original proposal. The effort that has been put in by the Australian Labor Party, the Greens (WA) and the Australian Democrats on this matter has improved the situation for Western Australian parents but nowhere near as much as it should have been. Therefore the Australian Labor Party will accept this rejection.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Clause 20 deals with the cancellation of enrolments when an enrolment was obtained by giving false or misleading information. Anecdotal evidence suggests there are very few of those cancellations.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: But you don't collect any statistics.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I have no statistics; however, anecdotal evidence suggests there are very few cancellations. The words in clause 20(1)(b), "section 17 has not been complied with", relate to a change in place of residence and other related issues. Again, anecdotal evidence suggests that there are not many students involved in that category either. The list of students' whereabouts is unknown but used to be published on a regular basis. The figure may be about 200 at a particular point in time which, out of 300 000 or 400 000 students in the system, is not a large proportion.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not insisted on.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that amendment No 100 be not insisted upon.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: The Australian Labor Party had proposed to insert new clause 119 on corporal punishment. We wanted to enshrine in legislation that a teacher or principal shall not discipline any student by administering any punishment. Under section 257 of the Criminal Code it is lawful for a school master, by way of correction towards a pupil, child or apprentice under his care, to use such force as is reasonable under the circumstances. We wanted to make sure that was not the case. The explanation provided by the Government is that the current Act contains no direct reference to corporal punishment, but regulation 32 provides that discipline shall be mild but firm and any degrading or injurious punishment shall be avoided. "Mild and firm" discipline is open to interpretation. The Opposition wanted to make clear that teachers or principals should not be able to administer corporal punishment. People understand the meaning of corporal punishment, and our amendment would have clarified that situation. We are disappointed that has not been included in the Bill.

The Government has argued it is an administrative Act. However, where the Bill refers to the administration of discipline, the amendment we moved would have fitted well into this legislation. The Government has not seen fit to do that. By way of explanation, the Government has claimed that it is sufficient for the matter of corporal punishment to be dealt with in the regulations to support the School Education Bill. The Opposition will look carefully at the regulations, which are being prepared at the moment. I am particularly concerned about the lack of consultation on those regulations. The Opposition will follow the progress of those regulations carefully and will have the opportunity to impact on those regulations and to review those regulations when they come into this place. The Australian Labor Party will not hold up the Bill on this amendment, and will accept the rejection of its amendment on the understanding we will keep a close watching brief over the development of those regulations. Obviously, the contents of those regulations will need to be satisfactory to the Australian Labor Party and other members of this Chamber before their endorsement.

Hon HELEN HODGSON: This matter is too important to be left to regulations. For that reason the Australian Democrats supported its inclusion in the Bill in the first instance. A newspaper clipping of March 1998 indicates that the British Parliament voted to ban corporal punishment in all schools, whether private or government regulated. We were merely trying to cover the government sector. This article indicates corporal punishment was outlawed in state schools in 1986 in Britain, and that no other country in Europe allows the corporal punishment of children. This shows that Western Australia

is way behind the times. It is time we made sure that these principles were enshrined in legislation. In the vote in London last year the ban was approved by 212 to 15. That shows how strongly the community feels about corporal punishment in schools. We should cover the matter in the principal legislation and not in the subsidiary legislation.

Hon N.F. MOORE: As Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich pointed out, the Government intends that corporal punishment be dealt with in the regulations. The words in the regulation will be to the effect -

In government schools no physical contact or touch may be used as a form of punishment of a child.

I am happy for the Government's intention to be on the record at this point. There is a view that the words "corporal punishment" are not defined in law and there is a variation of views about what it means from a legal perspective. That regulation, which is specific, will avoid any argument about what corporal punishment might mean. I was interested in Hon Helen Hodgson's view on the vote on corporal punishment. It might be overwhelming in the minds of politicians. I suspect if we had a vote in Western Australia, it would be the reverse. Many people think that corporal punishment is not such a bad thing at all, although legislators have decided that it is a bad thing. The Government's proposal is that it has a better way to deal with the issue; that is, by regulation, such as that which I read out, which avoids any argument about the term. As it has been pointed out, if the Legislative Council does not agree with that, it can always reject it.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not insisted on.

The CHAIRMAN: We are now considering amendment No 102, which is a new clause recognising the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Amendment No 102 deals with a new clause 144 which proposed to enshrine the importance and the role of WACSSO in legislation in recognition of the outstanding contribution which it has made to public education in this State. I did not think that we asked too much to meet that objective. The new clause would have clarified the arrangement between the Education Department and WACSSO and it would have enabled WACSSO to formally and officially operate as a representative body to the Western Australian Education Department and the Government. It would have formalised what WACSSO already does in large part, which is to provide guidance, support and training for its affiliated members and parents in general. One of the things that disappoints me is that on one side of the equation the Government argues that parents and community membership become more involved in education and recognises the importance of that involvement and the need for these individuals to have certain skills and abilities in order to be able to participate in a full and meaningful way. On the other side of the equation the Government does not want to give any formal recognition to these bodies, because it is probably a bit scared that there will be a financial implication as a result of going down that path. Parents will play an increasing role in the education sector, which is clearly demonstrated in the provisions of the legislation before the Chamber. On behalf of the parents who make a major contribution to the State's education system, I am very disappointed that the Government has not been in a position to show goodwill to a long standing and highly regarded organisation within this State. I do not want to go over the same ground we covered when we debated this in the Chamber last time, but I want to place the ALP's disappointment on record, and say however that Labor will certainly not risk the passage of the Bill because of this provision. The ALP will accept this rejection, but begrudgingly.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I support the comments made by Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich in this matter. The concept that organisations should lose, or not be granted, the as-of-right representation in bodies such as this is one on which the Government has at least been consistent. It has, for example, effectively taken out all the as-of-right representation that used to exist for peak bodies in primary industry. As-of-right representation did not exist in this case, but the ALP certainly has held the view that the peak body should be represented as of right. There is good reason for that. I understand the Government's philosophy in not wanting peak bodies represented by their own right. It is a defensible position and I certainly understand it; that is, it believes the people serving on these bodies should serve the interests of the body and not the body they represent. The Government has held that position consistently. Unfortunately, when that is done, the value of the input is lost and so is the accountability to the peak body of the person representing that group of people on that body. I certainly support the comments of Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich. The Western Australian Council of State School Organisations' huge efforts, as the representative of those parents who have made such a huge contribution to schools, should be recognised as of right.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I am interested to hear the comments of members opposite that WACSSO should be an as-of-right organisation with respect to representing peak bodies. The proposed amendment is that -

The chief executive officer shall within 6 months from the day on which this section commences enter into an agreement with WACSSO to enable WACSSO to -

- (a) operate as a representative body to the Western Australian Education Department and the government;

I did not know that WACSSO had carte blanche to represent any issue it wished. Paragraph (a) is independent of paragraphs (b) to (d), so this proposal would give it status as a representative body, and not as a representative body of parents. The amendment also states that the agreement needs to provide for guidance, support and training for its affiliated members and parents in general, and to enable WACSSO to participate effectively in panels, committees and councils constituted under this Act, and do such things as are necessary generally to pursue WACSSO's objectives.

I wonder why the Opposition feels it appropriate that WACSSO be included in the Education Act. Of course, the name of the organisation could change and that would mean a change to the legislation. The Opposition has not argued for the inclusion of the State School Teachers Union, the Science Teachers Association or Jenny Grayson's parent advocate group. I cannot work out the rationale behind a strategy under which WACSSO, as an organisation, would have a preferential position within the legislation. It is ironical that when we discuss devolution in the education system and the view that

parents should have a far greater role in the education system, the people arguing against it are members of the Teachers Union and members opposite. Yet, they are suggesting that WACSSO, a parent organisation, should have preferential treatment in the context of this legislation.

It is the Government's view that an as-of-right organisation, such as WACSSO, should not be included in the legislation, because it recognises that from time to time different organisations will spring up to represent different points of view. There is an ideological argument, and those who support unionism, for example, say that unions shall represent employees and they shall be the only people to do so. It is my view that if anyone wants to set up an organisation to represent a particular group of parents, that is his business. However, it is totally unnecessary to suggest that WACSSO should have some pre-eminent position.

In recent times WACSSO is providing me, but not necessarily the minister, with all the reasons that it should not be given preferential treatment. The President of WACSSO, with whom I thought I had a reasonably good relationship as Minister for Education, is now very clearly in a political role. Anybody who is a Labor Party candidate, works for a Labor Party member of Parliament, and professes to speak only for parents, tends to stretch the imagination somewhat. I think Dianne Guise should resign as President of WACSSO and allow someone to take over her job who is not seen to be aligned. Of course, she may not be speaking on behalf of the Labor Party when she speaks.

Hon Bob Thomas: I have not heard her speak on behalf of the Labor Party.

Hon N.F. MOORE: She may not speak on behalf of the Labor Party and it may be her own point of view which is quite different from that of the Labor Party. However, the perception in the community is that this person is speaking on behalf of a political organisation.

Hon Kim Chance: Surely that is a matter for the WACSSO executive to worry about.

Hon N.F. MOORE: No, it is for me to worry about because she has a role to play in representing the interests of parents. Under the Opposition's proposal, between now and the end of her term she would be spokesperson for an organisation which is entrenched in legislation, as the representative body of parents. My argument against the amendment has nothing to do with Dianne Guise, but the effect of this proposal is that WACSSO, which currently has a president who is seen to be aligned with the Labor Party -

Hon Bob Thomas: In your view.

Hon N.F. MOORE: All I can give is my view, which is very strongly held.

Hon Bob Thomas: In the Liberal Party caucus.

Hon N.F. MOORE: No, people in the street have that view.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: This is your contribution to the debate.

Hon N.F. MOORE: This is a very important issue.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: We have gone through 50 clauses and you have said nothing. This is your great contribution to the debate on the School Education Bill - what Dianne Guise is doing. You must be kidding me.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I have not argued with the member opposite because I have agreed with everything Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich has said so far, but now I do not agree and I am entitled to say why I do not agree with her. She wants an organisation to have a pre-eminent role - an as-of-right role within the Education Act - when that organisation at present has a president who is perceived to be politically aligned. I do not care if Dianne Guise comes from the Communist Party, so long as we do not provide that the only organisation that can represent the interests of parents is the one she is heading. If the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations wants to become a branch of the Labor Party, that is its business. However, it should not be incorporated in the legislation as the body that provides information and advice on parent issues.

Hon Kim Chance: How many times was the CCI included in government bodies?

Hon N.F. MOORE: I have no idea, but I would not support that either. In my ministerial career I have sought to get rid of organisations that believe they represent the interests of everybody involved in that activity.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: The Chamber of Commerce and Industry is on the board of the new Cannington Senior High School.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I did not put it there and it is not by way of legislation.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Your Government did.

Hon N.F. MOORE: We are discussing legislation; that is why I am arguing the point. Ever since the coalition has been in office, it has acknowledged the role of WACSSO in representing parents. The Minister for Education speaks constantly with the president of WACSSO irrespective of her political affiliations and beliefs, in the same way that I would talk to Jenny Grayson's parents' advocacy group if I were the minister. That is how it should be. Ministers should talk to anybody and Governments should respond to anybody and give equal cognisance to their points of view.

To say that the Act should contain a clause referring to WACSSO as a representative body that has a special role under the Act suggests that that organisation is more special and has more clout than any other body. That would be the wrong way to go. I give an assurance that WACSSO is the organisation this Government generally regards as the body that represents parents. However, it may be different next week or the week after. If it were in legislation we would be stuck with it whether

it was good, bad or indifferent. Perhaps a Labor education minister in the future would become upset if WACSSO were taken over and became a branch of the Liberal Party, although that may be a silly statement to make.

Hon Kim Chance: In government we used to appoint Liberal Party members to boards.

Hon N.F. MOORE: That was to ensure that things were done properly!

Hon Tom Stephens: I appointed them all, but the National Party took control of my portfolio and sacked them all.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I must interrupt the interjections and conclude by saying that the Government strongly believes that to entrench WACSSO in the Act would give it a role to which it is not entitled. It is accepted by the Government as a body that represents parent interests, but it should not be "the" body.

We have not been asked to include in the legislation that the Western Australian State School Teachers Union should represent teachers. That is just as well or there would be blood on the floor! The argument is no different. It is generally accepted by this and previous Governments that the organisation representing teachers is the teachers' union. Even though there are times when we cannot stand the approach of the teachers' union - I have had more experience of that than most - that is beside the point. It is still recognised as the body representing teachers, although not the only body. The member opposite is not asking for that any more than for Jenny Grayson's parent advocacy body to be enshrined in legislation. Jenny Grayson has a strong point of view that is often at odds with the view of WACSSO.

For the sake of consistency we should ensure that the Act does not contain one body representing one set of interests. We should take that out and we will ensure, as will future Governments, that every organisation with a point of view is given access to the minister and to the Education Department to ensure its point of view is taken into account.

Hon HELEN HODGSON: First, this clause begins by providing that an association or council may affiliate. Associations and councils are specifically recognised in other parts of this legislation as being parent-driven associations. Councils have a special role. It is saying that they may affiliate; it is not saying that they must affiliate. That gives WACSSO its peak body status rather than its referral in the second clause. Secondly, it provides that it may operate as "a" representative body; it does not say "the" representative body.

Thirdly, it is not appropriate to comment on a person who is acting as the president of an apolitical body in that way in this Chamber. I was present at the WACSSO conference a couple of weeks ago. Although the Minister for Education was there for a period, nobody else in the Chamber was able to attend. The views I heard expressed by parents were accurately reflected by the president of WACSSO.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.00 pm

Hon N.F. MOORE: I refer to my comments regarding Dianne Guise. I said she should resign from the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations. That is my view and not that of the Minister for Education. I have never discussed the matter with him. It is incorrect for anybody to suggest that it is the Government's or the minister's view. It is my personal view and I stand by that. We should not give priority over all of the others to one organisation involved with education. All organisations have an equal right in consideration of educational issues. Therefore, new clause 144 should not be included in the School Education Bill. I reiterate that WACSSO will always be recognised by Governments of all persuasions as a very significant body representing the interests of many parents.

Hon KIM CHANCE: When I spoke to the Opposition's point of view on this amendment I recognised that there was a legitimate argument for excluding as-of-right representation on behalf of certain bodies. Unfortunately, the minister did not identify that legitimate argument. He simply launched into a somewhat surprising attack on the current president of the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations. I find it inappropriate, at the very least, to act in that way. There is a legitimate reason for not having as-of-right representation. That legitimate reason is, as I have said, that the person who is on that board or committee ought to be representative of the board's or committee's function. That person should not be directly representative of a third party; that is, the umbrella body which has as-of-right representation in other circumstances. It is a legitimate defence, but it does not outweigh the benefits which accrue from as-of-right representation because there are legitimate reasons for the Opposition's arguments. Those reasons outweigh those on the other side. It is disappointing that the minister has justified his point of view by using the wrong reason, because that reason revolves around personality.

Hon N.F. Moore: Be fair, I did not say that.

Hon KIM CHANCE: The minister went dangerously close to it. I would rather believe he had not said it, but it seemed like that.

Hon N.F. Moore: I took advantage of this opportunity to give my opinion on Dianne Guise. It was nothing personal. I said afterwards that if WACSSO were in the hands of the Liberal Party, it would be just as bad.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I accept that. Certainly, I am happier to believe that is the case, but still it is the wrong reason. The appropriate body to deal with that issue if it has an inappropriate outcome is surely the executive of the umbrella body so named. The responsibility should rest with it. If it believes the person representing its members' interests in a committee, where that organisation has as-of-right representation, is doing so in an inappropriate way, surely it is the function of the organisation itself to deal with it. Otherwise, it would act as a negative quality in terms of the organisation's representation. That is the only reason we have raised this. I understand that our points of view may differ, and we may have legitimate and understandable differences, but we need at least to disagree for the right reason.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not insisted on.

[Questions without notice taken.]

Hon N.F. MOORE: I seek leave to further amend the Legislative Assembly's substituted amendments Nos 65 to 74 inclusive and 99, as indicated in the paper circulated to members.

Leave granted.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I move -

That the Assembly's substituted amendments Nos 65 to 74 inclusive and 99 be further amended as follows -

Clauses 97 to 103

Page 71, lines 18 to 23; page 72, lines 1 to 29; page 73, lines 1 to 26; and page 74, lines 1 to 22 — To delete the lines and insert the following —

“ Subdivision 1 — Fees for instruction, charges, contributions and costs

97. Definitions

In this Subdivision —

“**adult student**” means a person who enrolls at a government school in a year and whose post-compulsory education period has ended before January in that year;

“**contribution**” means voluntary contribution;

“**extra cost optional component**” means an optional component of a government school's educational programme having a cost that is not incorporated into the determination of the school's charges or contributions under section 99 —

- (a) because of the high cost associated with the provision of that optional component before the end of a child's compulsory education period; or
- (b) because the component is in respect of a person's post-compulsory education period;

“**first charges payment year**”, in relation to a student —

- (a) until 31 December 2010, means the first calendar year in which the student had reached 12 years of age by the beginning of the year; and
- (b) on and from January 2011, means the first calendar year in which the student had reached 12 years and 6 months of age by the beginning of the year;

“**overseas student**” means a person who enrolls at a government school and who

- (a) is not entitled to reside permanently in Australia; and
- (b) satisfies the criteria (if any) prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this Subdivision.

98. Limitation on matters for which fees for instruction and charges may be imposed

- (1) No fee for instruction may be imposed in respect of a student for the provision of —
 - (a) a non-optional component of an educational programme at a government school; or
 - (b) an optional component of an educational programme at a government school if the instruction is provided by a member of the teaching staff,
 unless the student is an overseas student or an adult student.
- (2) A contribution must not be sought towards a fee referred to in subsection (1) and any agreement entered into for the payment of a fee referred to in subsection (1) has no effect.
- (3) No charge may be imposed in respect of a student for —
 - (a) materials provided in a non-optional component of an educational programme of a government school; or
 - (b) services or facilities for use in, or associated with the provision of, a non-optional component of an educational programme of a government school,
 before the student's first charges payment year unless the student is an overseas student.

- (4) A contribution determined in accordance with section 99 may be sought for the costs of the materials, services or facilities referred to in subsection (3).

99. Charges and contributions for the provision of certain materials, services and facilities

- (1) Subject to subsection (2), regulations may be made providing for charges or contributions that may be made for —
- (a) materials provided in —
 - (i) a non-optional component of an educational programme of a government school; or
 - (ii) an optional component of an educational programme of a government school that is not an extra cost optional component; or
 - (b) services or facilities for use in, or associated with the provision of —
 - (i) a non-optional component of an educational programme of a government school; or
 - (ii) an optional component of an educational programme of a government school that is not an extra cost optional component.
- (2) Regulations cannot be made providing for charges or contributions for the purchase, maintenance or replacement of equipment, furniture and fittings provided for the purposes of a government school.
- (3) The principal of a government school may from time to time determine a charge or contribution —
- (a) if the charge or contribution is of a kind prescribed by the regulations as able to be charged or be a contribution for the purposes of this section; and
 - (b) not exceeding any limit prescribed by the regulations.
- (4) If the school has a Council a determination under subsection (23) does not have effect unless it has been approved by the Council.
- (5) All charges or contributions for a school year must be determined under subsection (3) and approved under subsection (4) not later than 2 months before the beginning of the school year.
- (6) The principal is to take reasonable steps to notify the persons —
- (a) from whom may be recovered under section 106(1) the charges that are payable under this section for a school year, of those charges; and
 - (b) from whom a contribution may be sought, of the amount to be sought by way of contribution.
- (7) Notification under subsection (6) must be given not later than 2 months before the beginning of the school year but the validity of a determination is not affected by the failure of a person to receive notice.
- (8) When notifying a person for the purposes of subsection (6), it is sufficient for the principal to notify the person —
- (a) of the total charges that are payable, or the total contribution to be sought, (as the case requires) for the school year in respect of the student, itemizing each component of those charges or the contribution and the charge or contribution for each component; or
 - (b) of the scale of charges or contribution for each —
 - (i) non-optional component of the school's educational programme; or
 - (ii) optional component of the school's educational programme that is not an extra cost optional component,
 that will be available to the student in the school year.

100. Extra cost optional components of educational programmes

- (1) The principal of a government school may from time to time determine the costs to be

paid for participation in an extra cost optional component of the school's educational programme.

- (2) The costs of an extra cost optional component must not include a fee for instruction if the instruction is provided by a member of the teaching staff.
- (3) If the school has a Council a determination under subsection (1) does not have effect unless it has been approved by the Council.
- (4) The costs of the extra cost optional components to be provided in a school year must be determined under subsection (1) and approved under subsection (3) not later than 2 months before the beginning of the school year.
- (5) If an extra cost optional component may be participated in by a particular student, the principal is to take reasonable steps to notify —
 - (a) a parent of the student; or
 - (b) in the case of a student who has turned 18 or who is a prescribed child, the student,
 of the costs of an extra cost optional component of those costs not later than 2 months before the beginning of the school year.
- (6) When notifying a person for the purposes of subsection (5), it is sufficient for the principal to notify the person —
 - (a) by itemizing each component of those costs and the cost for each component; or
 - (b) of the scale of costs for each extra cost optional component that will be available to the student in the school year.
- (7) The participation of a student in an extra cost optional component is conditional on payment of the costs of that component.

101. Optional components that are not extra cost optional components to be available to certain students

The principal of a government school is to ensure that optional components of the school's educational programme that are not extra cost optional components are available to students at the school —

- (a) who are of compulsory school age; and
- (b) who have reached their first charges payment year.

102. Principal to collect charges, contributions and costs

- (1) The following are payable to the principal of a government school —
 - (a) charges determined and approved under section 99 in relation to the school; and
 - (b) costs of the extra cost optional components of the school's educational programme.
- (2) If a person wishes to make a contribution that has been determined and approved under section 99, the contribution is to be collected by the school's principal for the purposes of the school.

103. Overseas students and adult students

A person who is an overseas student or an adult student is to pay such fees for instruction as may be prescribed and in accordance with the regulations.

104. Financial hardship

Regulations may be made providing for —

- (a) the reduction, waiver or refund, in whole or in part, of any fee, charge or cost provided for by this Subdivision;
- (b) deferred payment, payment by instalments or other forms of assistance for the payment of any fee, charge or cost provided for by this Subdivision.

105. Students (other than overseas or adult students) cannot be excluded for non-payment of charges

A principal of a government school must not exclude a student, other than an overseas student or an adult student, from participating in an educational programme of the school for the non-payment of a charge payable under section 99.

106. Recovery

- (1) Any fee or charge that is payable under this Subdivision in respect of a student may be recovered as a debt, if necessary in a court of competent jurisdiction —
 - (a) from a parent of the student; or
 - (b) in the case of a student who has turned 18 or who is a prescribed child, from the student.
- (2) The chief executive officer is to ensure that before any administrative or legal action is taken to recover a debt under subsection (1) —
 - (a) enquiries have been made into the reasons for the failure to pay the fee or charge;
 - (b) all reasonably practicable steps have been taken to recover the fee or charge; and
 - (c) the circumstances of the person against whom the action is proposed to be taken and the person's capacity to pay have been taken into account.

107. Agreements to pay costs not affected

Nothing in this Subdivision prevents a person —

- (a) subject to section 98(2) from agreeing to pay money for or towards the cost of providing an educational programme for a student;
- (b) from agreeing to pay money for or towards the cost of a school based activity beyond the school's educational programme; or
- (c) from enforcing an agreement referred to in paragraph (a) or (b).

108. Items for personal use in educational programme

- (1) The principal of a government school may from time to time determine the items that are to be supplied by a student for the student's personal use in the school's educational programme.
- (2) If the school has a Council a determination under subsection (1) does not have effect unless it has been approved by the Council.
- (3) All items to be supplied by a student for a school year must be determined under subsection (1) and approved under subsection (2) not later than 2 months before the beginning of the school year.
- (4) If a particular student is to supply any item under this section, the principal is to take reasonable steps to notify —
 - (a) a parent of the student; or
 - (b) in the case of a student who has turned 18 or who is a prescribed child, the student,

of each item to be supplied not later than 2 months before the beginning of the school year.

Clause 107

Page 76, line 19 — After "charges" insert —

" , contributions and costs ".

Question put and passed.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I move -

That the Legislative Council agrees to the substituted new amendments for amendments Nos 9, 10, 12, 15, 20, 33 to 35, 39, 40, 41, 52, 56, 58, 59, 65 to 74 and 99, 75, 86, 95, 96, 97, 101, 103 and 104 from the Legislative Assembly, as further amended.

The CHAIRMAN: We will now deal with the substituted amendments, as further amended, section by section, even though the amendments have been moved en bloc. The question is that substitution No 9 be agreed to.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I refer to substituted new amendment for amendment No 9, which deals with removal from the register of students' names in accordance with clause 21 of the Bill. This provision was dealt with by the Standing Committee on Legislation. Before a student's name is removed from the register, which can at times be done too easily and can lead to all sorts of problems, the minister should direct a government agency or school attendance panel appointed under section 39 to review the whereabouts of a child at a specified future time. The ALP does not want the system to give up on those students. In response to an earlier question, the minister said that the whereabouts of approximately 200 students were unknown. That is a fairly serious position as some of those students may be on the streets and creating havoc when they should be within the school system. For too long it has been argued that there must be a more cooperative approach between the key agencies involved, such as Family and Children's Services and the Police Service, to ensure that, through that spirit of cooperation, we maximise the chances of locating these missing students. It is a problem and it will be a growing problem. When asked why he had provided the substituted amendment and did not agree with the original amendment, the minister argued that it was beyond his capacity to direct other government agencies. That may well be the case and it might have needed to be followed through with legislation relating to other government agencies in order to achieve the original outcome. However, suffice to say that the Government had no appetite for this and it has undertaken to establish cooperative arrangements which can be achieved administratively.

I am not sure that what has been proposed goes far enough. The original amendment moved in this place clearly states that a principal of a school is not to remove from the register the name of a child of compulsory school age unless the minister has authorised the removal on the ground that inquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child have not been successful and the minister has directed a government agency or school attendance panel to review the whereabouts of a child at a specified future time. This amendment endeavoured to ensure that action was taken, by providing for the minister to direct a government agency. This amendment would have ensured that an inquiry took place and that other government agencies or a school attendance panel reviewed the whereabouts prior to the removal of the child's name.

The Opposition was after some action in terms of a ministerial direction. Unfortunately, the Government's amendment does not provide that. It is also considerably weaker than what we wanted because it requires that a person who exercises the power of authorisation conferred by clause 1(f) is to take reasonable, practicable steps to establish the child's whereabouts in each year of the child's compulsory education. That raises the question of how those reasonable, practicable steps might be defined. Some people may think making two telephone calls is sufficient to meet that criterion. Somebody else's interpretation may be different; it may well mean not only making telephone calls but also contacting other schools, the district office, the Police Department or the Department of Family and Children's Services. It is open to interpretation and to very little action by the person who is charged with carrying out the function.

The Labor Party has concerns regarding the proposed amendment. However, it is disappointed that the substantive amendment was not retained because it is clear that it is a much stronger amendment in its intent. However, we will accept the weaker version of amendment No 9. I am somewhat saddened that greater effort was not made by the Government to ensure that more positive and cooperative arrangements were not proposed to ensure that the key players have an impact and a responsibility to see that students are where they should be during the school week. The Australian Labor Party will agree to this proposed alternative. Although it is not our preferred model, it is considerably better than the clause in the original legislation. At least Labor, with the Australian Democrats and the Greens (WA), progressed this agenda and achieved a better outcome for all students and the school system generally.

Question put and passed; the Assembly's substituted amendment agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: We will now deal with substituted amendment No 10.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: This amendment deals with the very important area of attendance panels outlined in clause 26. From memory, this amendment was strongly supported by Hon Christine Sharp. I think the proposed alternative is nowhere near what was intended. However, it is again better than the clause in the original Bill. We have at least had some degree of success on this issue.

Progress reported and leave granted to sit again, pursuant to standing orders.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

HON N.F. MOORE (Mining and Pastoral - Leader of the House) [4.56 pm]: I move -

That the House do now adjourn.

Dunsborough, Commanage Road Development Site - Adjournment Debate

HON CHRISTINE SHARP (South West) [4.56 pm]: I draw to the attention of members a number of concerns that I and members in my electorate have regarding the development of a block designated as a new light industrial area for the town and district of Dunsborough. This is a short story, but it has a long history because it has caused considerable problems for the community since 1993 when the Shire of Busselton originally formed an advisory committee to recommend to the shire an appropriate new site for a larger, light industrial area for the town of Dunsborough. A year later in 1994 the advisory committee proposed that lot 6 in Commanage Road, Quindalup be the designated site. The committee, which comprises community volunteers, took a considerable amount of effort to develop a concept plan to ensure that the site, which is on a road that has considerable tourist traffic, should be developed in a manner that not only provided a significant area for the development of a range of industrial sites, but also was sympathetic to retaining some of its environmental values, including the retention of all the existing vegetation and creek lines. The committee also sought to ensure that the development provided significant, meaningful buffers for adjoining residences. All that was very good and showed community planning in action. The concept plan was then adopted by the Shire of Busselton as formal council policy.

However, the proposed structure plan submitted in 1997 for this development totally disregarded the planning principles developed by the advisory committee, the subsequent concept plan and the provisions within the Shire of Busselton rezoning document. Rather, the proponent intends to develop the entire site, remove huge areas of attractive and old-growth vegetation and more than double the number of sites proposed under the concept plan. In addition, the proponent proposes to move a creek and to make it a convenient buffer zone so that it doubles in purpose as a buffer to avoid the requirement for him to provide additional land for a buffer zone. This buffer will also be narrower than the buffer that was proposed originally and will incorporate the road reserve. When the Shire of Busselton received this proposed structure plan, it found it so inconsistent with the provisions of its town planning scheme that it refused to advertise it. It also noted that it was totally out of step with the Leeuwin-Naturaliste statement of planning policy.

One would think that was the end of the story. However, it was not. For some curious reason, the Western Australian Planning Commission stepped into the story and decided to advertise the structure plan on behalf of the proponent and to call for submissions on the proposal. The WA Planning Commission received 600 submissions, 300 of which, or exactly half, were from community members and local residents who objected to the proposal, and 300 of which were pro forma submissions in support of the proposal. As a result, some pressure has been placed on the Planning Commission to release copies of those submissions, because local residents have reason to believe that the signatures on the pro forma submissions in support of the proposal are not those of local residents. However, the Minister for Planning has refused to release those documents. On Tuesday of this week, I asked the Attorney General representing the Minister for Planning, in a question without notice, whether the minister would table the public submissions, and the answer from the Minister for Planning was that the minister considers it inappropriate to table those documents because he is considering appeals on this matter.

In February of this year, after this process had been initiated by the WA Planning Commission, the Planning Commission approved the proponent's proposal to shift the creek, knock down the trees, double the lots and completely disregard the Shire of Busselton and the local community. It made a few slight modifications to the proponent's proposal but basically left it intact. The proponent did not think that was good enough and lodged two appeals which are currently before the Minister for Planning. One appeal is against the Shire of Busselton for failing to adopt the structure plan, and the other appeal is against the WA Planning Commission for making minor modifications to the structure plan. This proponent is ambitious indeed!

The degree of frustration about this proposal is such that the Shire of Busselton is seeking legal advice on a Supreme Court injunction against the commission's decision, on the basis that the commission's decision does not comply with the provisions of the Busselton town planning scheme. Furthermore, in sheer desperation, last month the Shire of Busselton voted unanimously to investigate a totally new site for a light industrial area in Dunsborough. On 26 July, I had the opportunity of visiting this site and of speaking with dozens of people from the community of Dunsborough. I found that the community was absolutely disgusted with and desperate about this proposal. It believed that the Government was completely disregarding community views that had evolved into an extremely reasonable compromise to allow this site to be developed, but to be developed in a sympathetic way, and that the community views that had been canvassed carefully over a long time were being completely overthrown and ignored by the WA Planning Commission. This matter is currently before the Minister for Planning for his consideration, and I appeal to the minister, on behalf of those residents of Dunsborough who are so concerned about this matter, to take on board the concerns of the community and ensure that his final decisions reflect the desires of the community.

Diode Red Laser Pointers - Adjournment Debate

HON GIZ WATSON (North Metropolitan) [5.04 pm]: I wish to speak briefly about a matter that has been raised in the media recently and that I have raised by way of questions in this House over the past few days; namely, the diode red laser pointers that lecturers and other people use to point out things on slides, etc. Some members will be aware of the recent case in Denmark where a child who had one of these lasers pointed at his eye has unfortunately lost sight in that eye and is unlikely to regain that sight. This matter is of serious concern, because after I had received a telephone call from the mother of that boy, I did a bit of ringing around to investigate the incidence of this kind of event, and I was disturbed to hear that this is not an isolated incident and these laser pointers are being used by kids, particularly in the north west and the Kimberly, in play fighting activities, probably because they have seen movies like *Star Wars* in which laser devices are used. The problem is that people are not aware of the dangers that are associated with these laser pointers.

Hon Greg Smith: They can be bought pretty cheaply.

Hon GIZ WATSON: That is correct, and a lot of them are imported from Taiwan and Hong Kong and have a capacity of over three milliwatts, which is quite powerful. I have not yet ascertained whether the pointer that was used in Denmark was one of these more powerful pointers, but when I took it upon myself to speak to an ophthalmologist in Perth, Dr Mary Bremner, she told me that she has been trying to have something done about these laser pointers for some time and has experienced some degree of frustration in having this issue addressed. She told me that she is aware that other children have had their eyes damaged by those pointers. We need to ensure that an education campaign is conducted so that parents and teachers are aware of the dangers of pointing these devices at anyone's eyes, not just children. Secondly, I have been trying to seek some action, either by way of regulations in the newly proclaimed Weapons Act or under the Ministry of Fair Trading legislation, to ensure that the power of these laser devices is limited, because obviously people will still want to use these devices in a lecturing capacity, or for another legitimate purpose, but if their power were limited, that would reduce the danger. The case in Denmark was particularly acute, and it has served the purpose of bringing this matter to public attention. However, apparently even slight contact between these lasers and the eye can have a cumulative effect and cause damage that will not show up immediately. Members are probably aware that the function of the eye can be impaired even if the damage to the eye is not 100 per cent, and these lasers can impair the function of the eye.

I raise this matter to urge members to ensure that some action is taken. I am heartened by the answer that I received to my question this afternoon that the Ministry of Fair Trading is considering issuing a mandatory order or regulation restricting the sale of the more dangerous categories of laser pointers, and undertaking an education campaign, with the cooperation of the Education Department. In the meantime, we can assist by doing whatever we can to alert people to the dangers of these devices. I ask members to encourage the Ministry of Fair Trading to take action on this as soon as possible. It would be tragic if other children suffered permanent eye damage because action was not taken quickly enough.

Hon Greg Smith interjected.

Hon GIZ WATSON: Sure, but many parents are not aware that these things are dangerous. That is probably the key. Parents also may not necessarily know that their children have these pointers. They have been available in things such as show bags, they have been provided like they were toys. It is not unreasonable for parents to think the pointers are safe. That is why I hope the Ministry of Fair Trading will take action quickly to ensure that these laser pointers are not sold in an inappropriate way and also that they are sold with some sort of warning on the package. The warning needs to make it clear to whoever is using these pointers that they should not be used for any other purpose. I would appreciate any support members could provide in having action taken to have this matter resolved.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.11 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

CYCLONE VANCE, COST OF RESTORATION OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES

38. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

Will the Premier table a break-down of the costs associated with the emergency response and restoration of essential services such as water, electricity and roads in the towns of Onslow and Exmouth since Cyclone Vance?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

Approximate costs are as follows:

	Onslow	Exmouth
	\$	\$
Water Corporation	48,000	2,180,000
Western Power	67,500	1,817,000
*Main Roads	1,397,500	400,000
*(Figures relate to flood damage to roads within the Shires of Ashburton and Exmouth)		

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, YEAR 2000 COMPLIANCE

50. Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH to the Leader of the House representing the Government:

I refer to the Year 2000 Industry Awareness Campaign coordinated by the Department of Commerce and Trade. For each department or agency in each Minister's portfolio can the Minister please provide the following information -

- (1) How many of their business systems are at risk to the Millennium Bug?
- (2) How many of their business systems have been recently converted, upgraded or replaced?
- (3) How many of their business systems have been certified and tested as Year 2000 compliant?
- (4) Is each department or agency in each Minister's portfolio treating the Year 2000 problem as an issue critical to their survival?
- (5) How many of their customers and suppliers are Year 2000 compliant?
- (6) How many of the companies awarded contracts by each department or agency in each Minister's portfolio are Year 2000 compliant?
- (7) Does each department or agency in each Minister's portfolio have a plan to manage their Year 2000 effort?
- (8) How much has been budgeted for the work to be done?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

- (1)-(8) Please refer to answers provided to questions in the range 143 to 186 inclusive.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS

65. Hon J.A. SCOTT to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Primary Industry:

- (1) Is the Minister for Primary Industry or his department aware of any genetically modified crops in Western Australia?
- (2) Will the Minister give details of these crops (ie. the types, location and size of each crop)?
- (3) What safeguards are in place to ensure that pollen or seed do not escape into the surrounding environment or contaminate other crops?
- (4) Have neighbouring farmers been informed of these crops and been made aware of possible impacts on their crops?
- (5) Do the crops require approval from Agriculture WA?
- (6) For what purpose will the harvested crops be used?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:

- (1)-(6) I understand the Member has recently received a briefing on these matters by staff from my Office and Agriculture Western Australia. I also issue a standing invitation to the Member for additional information and briefings as required.

GOVERNMENT VEHICLES, NUMBER LEASED AND OWNED

102. Hon NORM KELLY to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Primary Industry:

As of June 30, 1999, for all agencies under the control of the Minister for Primary Industry -

- (1) How many vehicles are leased or owned by those agencies?
- (2) Of these, how many are -
 - (a) passenger vehicles; and
 - (b) commercial vehicles?
- (3) Of the total number of vehicles, how many are -
 - (a) petrol or diesel powered;
 - (b) LPG powered; or
 - (c) powered by other means?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:

As at 30 June 1999

- (1) 826.
- (2)
 - (a) 335 (sedans and station wagons).
 - (b) 491 (utilities, 4WDs, trucks, buses, motorcycles).
- (3)
 - (a) 826.
 - (b)-(c) Nil.

GOVERNMENT VEHICLES, NUMBER LEASED AND OWNED

103. Hon NORM KELLY to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Fisheries:

As of June 30, 1999, for all agencies under the control of the Minister for Fisheries -

- (1) How many vehicles are leased or owned by those agencies?
- (2) Of these, how many are -
 - (a) passenger vehicles; and
 - (b) commercial vehicles?
- (3) Of the total number of vehicles, how many are -
 - (a) petrol or diesel powered;
 - (b) LPG powered; or
 - (c) powered by other means?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:

- (1) 104 vehicles.
- (2)
 - (a) 49 passenger vehicles.
 - (b) 55 commercial vehicles.
- (3) All are petrol or diesel powered (nil LPG).

SYDNEY 2000 OLYMPIC COIN PROGRAM

139. Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH to the Minister for Finance representing the Treasurer:

- (1) Can the Treasurer confirm that the Sydney 2000 Olympic Coin Program entered into a foreign currency hedge on June 25, 1997 to the value of US\$34m?
- (2) How much did the Sydney 2000 Olympic Coin Program commit to this hedge?
- (3) Were the overseas sales of US\$33m realised?
- (4) If not, why not?
- (5) If no to (3) above, what was the cost to the Sydney 2000 Olympic Coin Program of not being able to meet its commitment, and what was the share of this cost to Gold Corporation?
- (6) What was the US\$ and A\$ value of the hedge upon maturing on March 11, 1999?
- (7) At what exchange rate was the currency first hedged, and what is the current exchange rate of the contract if it has not been met?

- (8) Based on the exchange rate today, what is the potential profit or loss that could accrue to Gold Corporation if the contract was not met?
- (9) Which executive and non-executive directors of Gold Corporation were involved in the decision to hedge this currency amount and its timing?
- (10) If the sales equal to the outstanding \$US33m have not occurred, what is the total value of the foreign currency sales that have occurred since the start of the program?
- (11) When did the first currency sales occur?
- (12) What total US\$ sales were made in 1997/98 under the direction of each Gold Corporation international office listed on page 60 of the 1997/98 annual report?
- (13) How many countries has the Olympics allowed the Sydney 2000 Olympic Coin Program partnership to sell into and what is the total value of sales in each of these countries since the start of the partnership?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

For Gold Corporation and its subsidiaries:

- (1)-(2) The STOCP committed to deliver USD34 million over the life of the hedge.
- (3) The program has until 31 March, 2001 to run.
- (4) Forward USD sales contracts were established to protect AUD revenue to be generated through sales of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Coin Program (STOCP) over the period from September 1997 to March 2001. The STOCP business plan was predicated on a budgeted exchange rate of 0.7900 for the conversion from USD to AUD, and the partners followed the accepted prudent business practice of hedging the USD receipts against a widely expected increase in the AUD/USD exchange rate at that time.
- (5) There is currently no realised cost to this action, and no cost can be determined until the completion of the STOCP.
- (6) USD28,000,000.00 and AUD35,447,525.00. However, the hedge has been spread over the life of the program and does not mature on March 11, 1999.
- (7) The currency was first hedged at 0.7691, and the current exchange rate on the outstanding amount is 0.8094.
- (8) The program is on target to achieve the anticipated level of USD sales, which will result in neither profit nor loss as per the objective of the hedge.
- (9) The decision to hedge 60% of anticipated USD sales was taken by the STOCP partners and ratified by the Board of Gold Corporation.
- (10) The STOCP marketing plan anticipates that about 50% of USD sales will occur during the six-month period surrounding the Olympic Games themselves. USD sales to end June 1999 amount to USD10,820,179.
- (11) September 1997.
- (12)

	Sales in 1997/98	Sales to end June 99
Switzerland	USD5,240,282	USD6,793,184
Hong Kong	USD 907,481	USD1,051,022
Japan	USD1,551,669	USD1,648,949
America	USD 988,898	USD1,327,024
Thailand	USD nil	USD nil
- (13) The STOCP has secured the right to market its products in 44 countries. However, the break-up of world sales to date is best expressed on a continent-by-continent basis due to the fact that marketing programs have not yet commenced in some countries. The total value of sales up to end June, 1999 are:

Europe	USD 6,793,184
Asia	USD 2,699,971
America	USD 1,327,024
Australia	AUD29,493,958

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, YEAR 2000 COMPLIANT

152. Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Federal Affairs:

I refer to the Year 2000 Industry Awareness Campaign coordinated by the Department of Commerce and Trade. For each department or agency in the Minister for Federal Affairs' portfolio can the Minister provide the following information -

- (1) How many of their business systems are at risk to the Millennium Bug?
- (2) How many of their business systems have been recently converted, upgraded or replaced?
- (3) How many of their business systems have been certified and tested as Year 2000 compliant?

- (4) Is each department or agency in the Minister's portfolio treating the Year 2000 problem as an issue critical to their survival?
- (5) How many of their customers and suppliers are Year 2000 compliant?
- (6) How many of the companies awarded contracts by each department or agency in the Minister's portfolio are Year 2000 compliant?
- (7) Does each department or agency in the Minister's portfolio have a plan to manage their Year 2000 effort?
- (8) How much has been budgeted for the work to be done?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

Western Australian Government agencies have been required to report quarterly until August 1999, but are now required to report monthly to the Department of Commerce and Trade as to their Year 2000 readiness. These reports are web based and provide direct advice from the agencies and report the responses to specific questions. No modelling or derivation or weightings are applied to the results. Thus the Government is not altering in any fashion the responses of the agencies. Accountability for this issue lies between the Minister and the CEO through legal requirements and performance contracts.

- (1)-(3) Each agency is singularly responsible for its own Year 2000 remediation program. Agencies are not required to report at this level of detail.
- (4) The Premier has instructed all agencies to treat this as a priority and this aspect of agency activity is included in each Chief Executive Officer's performance agreement.
- (5)-(6) See (1)-(3) above.
- (7) In accordance with the Premier's direction, all agencies are developing Year 2000 remediation plans and reporting accordingly.
- (8) As of 30 June 1999 the across government budget for Year 2000 remediation totalled \$173.5 million.

The Minister for Commerce and Trade would be pleased to arrange a briefing from officers of the Department of Commerce and Trade who can explain the Government's approach to this issue in more detail.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, YEAR 2000 COMPLIANT

158. Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I refer to the Year 2000 Industry Awareness Campaign coordinated by the Department of Commerce and Trade. For each department or agency in the Premier's portfolio can the Premier provide the following information -

- (1) How many of their business systems are at risk to the Millennium Bug?
- (2) How many of their business systems have been recently converted, upgraded or replaced?
- (3) How many of their business systems have been certified and tested as Year 2000 compliant?
- (4) Is each department or agency in the Premier's portfolio treating the Year 2000 problem as an issue critical to their survival?
- (5) How many of their customers and suppliers are Year 2000 compliant?
- (6) How many of the companies awarded contracts by each department or agency in the Premier's portfolio are Year 2000 compliant?
- (7) Does each department or agency in the Premier's portfolio have a plan to manage their Year 2000 effort?
- (8) How much has been budgeted for the work to be done?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

Please refer to the answer given to question on notice 152.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, YEAR 2000 COMPLIANT

167. Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH to the Minister for Finance representing the Treasurer:

I refer to the Year 2000 Industry Awareness Campaign coordinated by the Department of Commerce and Trade. For each department or agency in the Treasurer's portfolio can the Treasurer provide the following information -

- (1) How many of their business systems are at risk to the Millennium Bug?
- (2) How many of their business systems have been recently converted, upgraded or replaced?
- (3) How many of their business systems have been certified and tested as Year 2000 compliant?
- (4) Is each department or agency in the Treasurer's portfolio treating the Year 2000 problem as an issue critical to their survival?

- (5) How many of their customers and suppliers are Year 2000 compliant?
- (6) How many of the companies awarded contracts by each department or agency in the Treasurer's portfolio are Year 2000 compliant?
- (7) Does each department or agency in the Treasurer's portfolio have a plan to manage their Year 2000 effort?
- (8) How much has been budgeted for the work to be done?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

Please refer to the answer given to question on notice 152.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, YEAR 2000 COMPLIANT

168. Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH to the Minister for Finance representing the Minister for Public Sector Management:

I refer to the Year 2000 Industry Awareness Campaign coordinated by the Department of Commerce and Trade. For each department or agency in the Minister for Public Sector Management's portfolio can the Minister provide the following information -

- (1) How many of their business systems are at risk to the Millennium Bug?
- (2) How many of their business systems have been recently converted, upgraded or replaced?
- (3) How many of their business systems have been certified and tested as Year 2000 compliant?
- (4) Is each department or agency in the Minister's portfolio treating the Year 2000 problem as an issue critical to their survival?
- (5) How many of their customers and suppliers are Year 2000 compliant?
- (6) How many of the companies awarded contracts by each department or agency in the Minister's portfolio are Year 2000 compliant?
- (7) Does each department or agency in the Minister's portfolio have a plan to manage their Year 2000 effort?
- (8) How much has been budgeted for the work to be done?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

Please refer to the answer given to question on notice 152.

LAND CLEARING APPLICATIONS

345. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Primary Industry:

- (1) How many land clearing applications have been received in the past two years?
- (2) Did the Minister for Primary Industry direct the Ministry or any person in the Minister's office either verbally or in writing, seek to change or modify in any way the Minister's recommendations on clearing applications, before being formally presented to the Minister?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:

- (1) Since 1 July 1997, 235 Notices of Intent to clear land have been registered by the Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation.
- (2) No.

BUFFELL GRASS, CONTROL TRIALS

348. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Primary Industry:

- (1) Is Agriculture WA conducting or assisting with trials of a biological control agent for Buffell Grass?
- (2) If so, what details are available in respect of the trials?
- (3) If the department is not directly involved in trials of this nature, is the Minister for Primary Industry aware of any Buffell Grass control trials that are being carried out in WA by any agency or company?
- (4) Is the Minister aware of any funding that has been provided by the mining industry, or any other private source, that supports or offers to support the development of a biological control agent for Buffell Grass?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:

- (1) Agriculture WA is not involved with trials of biological control agent for Buffel grass.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Advice provided to this office indicates that Dr Kingsley Dixon, Director of Plant Science, Kings Park and Botanic

Gardens, was sponsored by Western Mining to research the control of Buffel grass on Airlie Island off the Pilbara Coast in the mid 1990s. Dr Dixon should be contacted for more specific details.

- (4) Other than the work referred to in (3) above, Agriculture WA is not aware of any funding or proposal to fund research into the biological control of Buffel grass.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

KALGOORLIE-KWINANA RAIL LINE

162. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Minister for Transport:

Yesterday the minister acknowledged that he spoke to the Deputy Prime Minister last Wednesday concerning the future of the line from Kalgoorlie to Kwinana.

- (1) Does the minister deny that the Deputy Prime Minister, in that discussion or elsewhere, raised the possibility of the Commonwealth purchasing or leasing that line from the State Government, rather than having the line handed over to private interests?
- (2) If the minister denies it, what was the nature of his discussion with the Deputy Prime Minister?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:

- (1)-(2) As I said yesterday, I have had no official indication of any assistance from the Federal Government. I spoke to the Deputy Prime Minister about a whole range of issues, as members would expect when I travel to Canberra.

NATIONAL TRANSMISSION, REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Commerce and Trade:

I refer to the transfer of the responsibility for national transmission from the National Transmission Agency to NTL Incorporated and the difficulties this has caused for regional communities.

- (1) Is the Minister for Commerce and Trade aware that Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Leinster, Marble Bar and Port Hedland had difficulties gaining access to the old NTA sites?
- (2) Will the minister confirm that both the Denham and Menzies communities have pulled out of their original NTA sites and are looking at alternative sites?
- (3) Which other communities are experiencing similar difficulties?
- (4) Can the minister confirm that NTL has set aside funds to assist regional communities in setting up national transmission sites?
- (5) If so, which regional communities are seeking assistance, and what steps is the Government taking to ensure that these communities access these funds or otherwise to assist them?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)-(2) Yes.
- (3) The Office of Information and Communications at the Department of Commerce and Trade has been contacted by other communities regarding difficulties with NTL site sharing. The communities in the Kimberley region - Broome, Wyndham, Kununurra and Kununurra East - have reported difficulties. Lake Grace, Cue, Ravensthorpe and Mt Magnet are the only other communities of which the office is aware.
- (4) NTL has established a \$5m regional communications partnership fund.
- (5) Criteria for eligibility to the fund have not yet been established. The Office of Information and Communications is liaising with NTL and the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts regarding this issue and will offer assistance to communities as soon as arrangements have been finalised.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX, IMPACT ON STATE FINANCES

163. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Minister for Finance:

I am pleased to be able to rise at this stage! I refer to the Premier's statement on the goods and services tax, tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 7 September 1999, and ask whether the minister can inform the House of the impact of the Howard-Lees goods and services tax package on state finances in 2000-01 and 2001-02?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. In the short term the arrangements are expected to be largely revenue neutral for the State. The Commonwealth has guaranteed that, if necessary, it will provide top-up grants or loans during the

transitional period to ensure the state budget is no worse off. As part of the tax reform package, States will receive all of the revenue from the goods and services tax to replace current financial assistance grants from the Commonwealth, the franchise fee replacement revenues and, over time, a range of state taxes.

In addition, the State will take on a number of new expenditures; for example, funding the new first home owner scheme and the Australian Taxation Office costs for administering the GST, and reducing gambling taxes to make room for the GST on gambling. We get 15 per cent plus 1 per cent on the gambling taxes. Now one-eleventh will go, and we will get the balance of 6 per cent under the present arrangement.

The GST should help the State Government to meet rapidly growing demands for social services such as health, education and law and order. The GST should grow more rapidly than the commonwealth grants and state taxes that it will replace, giving the State more revenue in the long term. Over the first 10 years of the GST, it is estimated that Western Australia will receive additional revenues of up to \$1.5b if state business stamp duties are not removed; however, even if some of the GST revenues are used to abolish state business stamp duties over time, there will still be an extra benefit of \$700m to the State over the first 10 years of its application. Treasury analysis of the original tax package estimated benefits for the state budget of \$1.6b over 10 years, or \$2.4b if stamp duty on conveyances of business real property is retained. The revised estimates of benefits from the final package largely reflect the lower GST revenues expected as a result of the exclusion of basic food and changes to the timetable for abolition of state taxes. Reduced benefits under the revised package were advised to Parliament on 3 June.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Ed Dermer had better provide to the Hansard reporter the name of the person to whom he was speaking on the telephone in the Chamber, because I think she may have recorded his conversation, although she could not get the other half of it!

GOLD CONFERENCE, KALGOORLIE

164. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Does the minister support the decision of the Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia and the Australian Gold Council to hold the gold conference in Perth for the second consecutive time, rather than in Kalgoorlie-Boulder?
- (2) What steps has the minister taken to support the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder to have the conference in Kalgoorlie, rather than Perth?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

- (1)-(2) I do not support the decision to hold the conference in Perth. It was held here last year and the organisers knew my views very well at that time, as they do now. I acknowledge that the people who organise conferences are entitled to decide where they are held. The member will suggest that I tell the Labor Party that it should have its next conference in Kalgoorlie, rather than in Perth, because it will be good for Kalgoorlie. Of course, if I did that, he would say to me, quite rightly, that it is none of my business. The Chamber of Minerals and Energy and the Gold Council are entitled to say the same thing: It is their conference and they can have it where they wish. Although they have made a decision which I do not accept, I also accept that they are entitled to make their own judgment.

ATLAS WASTE SITE, ANAEROBIC DIGESTER

Hon J.A. SCOTT to the minister representing the Minister for the Environment:

I refer to the anaerobic digester at the Atlas Tip in Mirrabooka.

- (1) How much methane gas has been produced?
- (2) How much of this gas has been used by the brickworks?
- (3) How much gas has been flared off into the environment?
- (4) Has the tip or digester been closed down; and, if so, why?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) I am advised that in excess of 90 000 cubic metres of gas was produced from the anaerobic digester.
- (2) None.
- (3) All of the gas from the anaerobic digester was flared to the environment.
- (4) The landfill has not closed down. The anaerobic digester was decommissioned after the sorting plant, producing the feedstock for the digester, ceased operation in April 1999.

GAMBLING LEGISLATION

165. Hon NORM KELLY to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

- (1) Apart from the fixed odds betting and Totalisator Agency Board betting Bills currently before the other place, does the Government intend to introduce any further gambling Bills into the Parliament this session?

- (2) If so, what Bills are planned for introduction?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

- (1)-(2) Wagers and gambling are two different things, and are involved in horseracing and the operations at the Burswood International Resort Casino. I cannot think of any forthcoming legislation to do with gambling or betting. If the member puts the question on notice, I will check.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT, TOURIST ACCESS ROUTES

166. Hon MURIEL PATTERSON to the minister representing the Minister for the Environment:

How much funding has been allocated from the Department of Conservation and Land Management's budget towards the construction and maintenance of tourist access routes in the south west forest region?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

A total of \$727 000 of CALM's annual \$2m Main Roads tourist road grant has been allocated to the construction and upgrading of tourist access routes in CALM's three forest regions in 1999-2000 and a further \$210 000 has been allocated to routine maintenance grading. Additional funds have been allocated from the department's budget to the ongoing maintenance of public access routes in the south west region during the year, although the final amount is yet to be determined. In addition, \$1m has been allocated for the development of a tourist road and visitor facility around Pemberton as a commitment to the Regional Forest Agreement.

ONSLow TOURIST CENTRE

167. Hon TOM HELM to the Minister for Tourism:

- (1) Is the minister aware of reports that the Onslow Tourist Centre is to have a \$10 000 cut in its funding allocation?
- (2) What steps has the minister taken to ensure that the funding allocation to the Onslow Tourist Centre is restored so that the centre is not faced with the prospect of closure?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

- (1)-(2) The State Government does not fund tourist bureaux. The State Government funds regional tourism associations. If a regional tourism association then decides to use that money to fund tourist bureaux, that is its decision. Therefore, if the Onslow Tourist Centre is to have its funding cut, it has nothing to do with the State Government. It is a matter that the member should take up with the Pilbara Tourism Association.

Hon Tom Stephens: You probably didn't give enough to the regional tourism association.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The regional tourism associations received a 30 per cent increase last year. I would have thought that was a big enough increase. They are very well funded by the State Government and they do a good job. They are making decisions about tourist bureaux on the basis of how important they are in the overall scheme of things. We are also seeking to give tourist bureaux an opportunity to make more money. Members would be aware that the Tourism Commission's Internet site can be accessed by tourist bureaux, which can sign up local businesses to be placed on the site, for which the tourist bureaux get a rebate of 50 per cent of the cost of joining the site.

Hon Tom Stephens: Is that www.westernaustralia.com?

Hon N.F. MOORE: Nobody should look at that site. The Tourism Commission's site is www.westernaustralia.net. However, this demonstrates that players on the Internet can get themselves into trouble as I believe they are being asked to pay a very large sum of money to extract information from that other Internet site, which is a very nasty type of business.

However, to come back to the point, we have provided an opportunity through the web site for tourist bureaux to make money and, by doing that, assist their local businesses to be part of a very successful web site.

WORKERS COMPENSATION SYSTEM, INSURANCE COMMISSION OF WA

168. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance:

Is the Government's workers compensation system under the Insurance Commission of Western Australia experiencing the same cost blowouts as the private sector system? If it is, what are the problems?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I will give a general answer to that question. The Government has a self-insurance scheme like that run by Broken Hill Proprietary Co Ltd and mentioned in debate yesterday. Two or three years ago we looked at our insurance policies from a risk management viewpoint. Agencies might have made a claim and then their insurance premium was increased two years later, therefore the agencies never knew where they stood. They are now assessed by a rate which goes into a fund for each agency. Some are below and some are up, but none of the rates is affected as the rates committee is self-funded. I do not know if any other claims are driving up premiums. I know that compulsory third party insurance claims are higher. One of the reasons for that is workplace agreements, some providing increases in wages of between 6 per cent and 15 per cent. Therefore, actuaries make calculations on our liabilities based on people's wages today. Compulsory third party insurance

and workers compensation insurance also increase in the same way. Last year Hon Derrick Tomlinson asked a question about a \$2m debit figure in the Insurance Commission as the actuaries had projected that claims would continue to increase like that. However, they actually levelled out and so have the claims. I do not have a specific figure for workers compensation self-insurance but I can find out for the member.

LIGHT VEHICLE FLEET, FUNDING

169. Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH to the minister representing the Minister for Works:

I refer to the funding facility for the Government's light vehicle fleet.

- (1) Will the minister table the following information for the years 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999 -
 - (a) How much was spent by the Government on repairs to restore vehicles to the state of fair wear and tear required under the funding agreement;
 - (b) what was the total amount spent by the Government on detailing vehicles; and
 - (c) what was the total amount spent by the Government on providing the State Government Insurance Office Autochecks?
- (2) Why does the Government incur these costs given that it does not own the vehicle fleet?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)
 - (a) Government vehicles are maintained by the fleet managers during the period of the lease. At the end of the lease the fleet managers prepare the vehicles to an agreed standard before sale. The costs of preparing these vehicles for sale are borne by individual agencies and no centralised records are kept.
 - (b) 1996, 1997 and 1998, nil; from May 1999 onwards, \$189 420. Prior to May 1999 these costs were met out of sale proceeds.
 - (c) 1996, 1997 and 1998, nil; from May 1999 onwards, \$94 350. Prior to May 1999 these costs were met out of sale proceeds.
- (2) The Government has an obligation under the fleet funding contract to prepare the vehicles to an agreed standard before sale. It is in the State's interests to maximise the sale prices realised for the vehicles.

DIODE RED LASERS

170. Hon GIZ WATSON to the minister representing the Minister for Fair Trading:

I refer to diode red lasers and reported incidents of their misuse around the State.

- (1) Can the minister advise the action he intends to take to ensure that diode red lasers over class 1 classification are treated as dangerous goods?
- (2) Can the minister advise the outcome he expects his actions will have on retail sales of these laser pointers?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

- (1) Actions to ensure that classes of laser pointers are treated as dangerous goods will include -
 - (a) The Ministry of Fair Trading is examining this matter with a view to issuing a mandatory order or regulation restricting the sale of more dangerous categories of laser pointers in Western Australia.
 - (b) It is proposed that this restriction will apply to pointers able to project more than one milliwatt of radiant power; that is, class 3A and above. Details of the most appropriate standard to apply are being investigated.
 - (c) The ministry will contact possible retailers and importers of laser pointers to advise of requirements.
 - (d) Attention will also be placed on weekend markets and agricultural shows.
 - (e) It is also proposed to seek a child education campaign through the Education Department to alert children through schools of the dangers of laser pointers.
- (2) It is expected that retailers will comply with the law, and sales will reflect that compliance.

DERBY-WEST KIMBERLEY TIDAL POWER PROJECT

171. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the Derby-West Kimberley tidal power project.

- (1) Is the minister aware that the fully refundable grant requested from the Federal Government is directly related to the proposed power tariff of the proponent and that a grant of only \$90m will ensure a tariff well below the current

business tariff?

- (2) Is the minister aware that the grant requested by the proponents for the Derby tidal power project is sought on the basis of its being fully refundable?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) No. The minister is aware that the project proponents have sought grants of at least \$120m to support their proposal for supply to Western Power.
- (2) Yes.

PRISON AND REMAND CENTRE INMATES, HEPATITIS C

Hon HELEN HODGSON to the Minister for Justice:

- (1) Are new adult and juvenile inmates antibody and antigen tested for the hepatitis C virus on incarceration in Western Australian prisons and remand centres?
- (2) What percentage of these new inmates return positive antigen and antibody results to the hepatitis C virus?
- (3) Are both hepatitis C positive and negative inmates regularly tested for infection with the hepatitis C virus during their term of incarceration; and, if so, how frequently are they tested?
- (4) In the past two years, how many inmates who were tested on admittance and found not to be infected with the hepatitis C virus have subsequently tested antigen and/or antibody positive to the virus?
- (5) What steps is the Ministry of Justice taking to minimise the risk to inmates of exposure to the hepatitis C virus while incarcerated?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) All new adult and juvenile inmates are offered testing for hepatitis C on admission to prison. Testing is not compulsory but is encouraged.
- (2) The percentages of prisoners testing positive to the hepatitis C virus on arrival is difficult to estimate. The rate has been estimated at between 20 per cent and 40 per cent of all new arrivals. A survey completed by Health Services in February 1997 showed approximately 13 per cent of prisoners were positive to hepatitis C, but these results need to take into account that within that sample 24.5 per cent of prisoners had not been tested for blood borne viruses.
- (3) Hepatitis C positive inmates are followed up by the prison doctor and offered regular blood tests. This is necessary to monitor the infection, and the frequency is determined by the treating doctor on a clinical needs basis. Hepatitis C negative prisoners can request confidential testing during their sentence or following an identified exposure to blood or body fluids. Blood testing is routinely offered at annual health assessments.
- (4) This is not known because of the window period of up to six months with hepatitis infection. A prisoner may test negative on arrival to prison, but may be in the process of sero converting and on a later date may test positive. A policy requiring that testing for hepatitis C be actively encouraged was introduced in February 1998. A number of prisoners are not tested at all as testing is not compulsory.
- (5) The ministry provides education to all newly arrived prisoners through its Keeping Safe program. This educational program provides information on risk factors both inside and outside of prison and advises on aspects related to the disease process, precautions to prevent infection and changes required to live healthier for those affected with the virus. All prisoners are reviewed on arrival by a doctor and nurse and provided with appropriate counselling and advice on hepatitis C. Written information is available in waiting rooms, and the ministry's leaflet "Protect Yourself" is issued to all new arrival prisoners, and other written information is provided. Prisoners' access to condoms is currently available at Canning Vale Prison and Wooroloo Prison Farm and is being expanded progressively to all adult prisons.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT FUND

172. Hon B.K. DONALDSON to the minister representing Minister for Local Government:

Will the minister advise the outcome of the application for funding under the local government development fund by the Shire of Mt Marshall on behalf of the Shires of Koorda, Mt Marshall, Mukinbudin, Nungarin, Trayning, Westonia and Wyalkatchem?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The Minister for Local Government recently announced almost \$1.5m in specific grants to the local government sector under the local government development fund. The project submitted by the Shire of Mt Marshall on behalf of the North Eastern Wheatbelt Regional Organisation was approved for \$42 000. It will review the structures and operations of the shires in the region and is particularly timely given the recent advice to the Minister for Local Government about the extent of dependence upon grants of councils in Western Australia.

Of the seven councils in the project, six have an autonomy ratio equal to or less than 50 per cent. That indicates that more than half of their revenue comes from grants. Those councils and their dependence on grants are Koorda 53 per cent, Mt Marshall 57 per cent, Nungarin 69 per cent, Trayning 50 per cent, Westonia 58 per cent, and Wyalkatchem 54 per cent. The shires are commended for their willingness to undertake an objective assessment of alternative service delivery models.

WATER LAW REFORM, TRIP TO EASTERN STATES

173. Hon KEN TRAVERS to the minister representing Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Did the minister or his department arrange a visit for coalition backbenchers to the eastern States in relation to water law reform proposals?
- (2) What was the purpose and cost of this trip?
- (3) Who went on this trip?
- (4) Will the minister table a copy of the itinerary for this trip; and, if not, why not?
- (5) Has the minister given consideration to recommending that the water law reform proposals be referred to a parliamentary committee to allow all interested members to be fully informed on their implications?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The purpose was to review the New South Wales approach to several key water law reform issues. The cost incurred by the Water and Rivers Commission is approximately \$9 500. Parliamentary members met their own costs associated with accommodation and flights to and from New South Wales.
- (3) The trip was attended by the member for Geraldton, the member for Murray-Wellington, Hon Barry House, the member for Vasse, Hon Murray Montgomery and Mr Tim McAuliffe of the Water and Rivers Commission. Mrs Carolina Masters also accompanied the party at her own expense.
- (4) Yes. I table a copy of the itinerary. [See paper No 147.]

MUJA POWER STATION, COAL HANDLING CONTRACT

174. Hon J.A. COWDELL to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the contract to operate the coal handling facility at Collie's Muja Power Station.

- (1) How many tenders were received?
- (2) Which companies tendered for the contract?
- (3) Has the contract been awarded?
- (4) Who was the contract awarded by?
- (5) Who is the winning tenderer?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) Two. A specification was issued to four companies, but only two submitted tenders.
- (2) Integrated Power Services Pty Ltd and Barclay Mowlem Construction Ltd.
- (3) No.
- (4)-(5) Not applicable.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT, INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF PLANTATION MANAGEMENT

175. Hon CHRISTINE SHARP to the minister representing Minister for the Environment:

I refer to the minister's commitment to establish an independent review of future management of the Department of Conservation and Land Management's plantations.

- (1) Who will carry out this review?
- (2) How will the minister ensure that it is independent?
- (3) Will it include a stand-by-stand audit of softwood volumes and growth rates?
- (4) Will it include volumes for all radiata stands of 30 years old or older and 40 years old or older pinaster pines?
- (5) Does the minister intend to include private radiata stands to determine the availability of resource?

- (6) When does the minister expect the report to be finalised and will the results be made public?
- (7) Will the minister involve the Office of the Auditor General?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)-(7) An independent review will be conducted. The consultancy will be publicly tendered and evaluated. The review will consider the extent to which the current and future plantation resource matches the current commitments and future needs of the industry. The review is planned for completion by the end of the current calendar year and, subject to issues of confidentiality, results will be made public. The issues raised by the member will be considered.

CABLE STATION RAMP

176. Hon RAY HALLIGAN to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

- (1) Is the ramp running down from the car park to the beach at Cables station part of the artificial surfing reef project?
- (2) What is the purpose of the ramp?
- (3) How much does the ramp cost?
- (4) Which agency is responsible for the construction of the ramp?
- (5) When will the ramp be completed?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) Yes.
- (2) To provide emergency, disabled and pedestrian access to the beach at Mosman Park as well as access for surfers to the Cables surfing reef.
- (3) \$260 000.
- (4) The Town of Mosman Park.
- (5) The Town of Mosman Park is currently finalising design and planning issues and has advised that the ramp will be completed by summer.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, RM AUSTRALASIA PTY LTD CONTRACT

177. Hon E.R.J. DERMER to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Education:

Will the performance review of the contract between the Education Department of Western Australia and RM Australasia Pty Ltd include assessment of the adequacy of software provided under this contract for teachers to use in their day-to-day recording of student outcome data?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

The Education Department will undertake a performance review of the contract with RM Australasia Pty Ltd at the conclusion of the pilot phase. This will include the tools for ongoing and summative assessment of student data in relation to an outcomes focused approach.

CULTURE, LIBRARIES AND THE ARTS BILL, SECRECY AGREEMENTS

178. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Minister for the Arts:

Has the minister required any of his agency heads to sign secrecy agreements concerning the Culture, Libraries and the Arts Bill 1998?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

My answer to the question is no. Before an Act is made public - that is, before it has been to Cabinet, the party room and Parliament - I insist that people regard the legislation as confidential. When I was Minister for Health I had a problem after sending a piece of legislation to the Australian Medical Association. I would have thought that the Australian Medical Association consisted of people with greater than normal intelligence. I sent a copy to the AMA for comment. The legislation had the word "confidential" written on it. It also said, in quite a lot of detail, that it was provided on a confidential basis and should not be discussed publicly, instead comments should be addressed to me.

Hon Helen Hodgson interjected.

Hon PETER FOSS: Like all my consultations. There was a time when people knew that the word "confidential" written

on the top of a Bill before it came into the House meant exactly that. It means that if one provides a copy of legislation to people prior to the Bill coming into the House, it is confidential. One is allowed to read it and comment on it, but one is not allowed to publicise it. People understood that for years. All of that information was on the front of the Bill, with a letter saying that I was providing it for the Australian Medical Association's comment. Next I had something like 2 000 doctors faxing me a standard form of protest. I thought, this is strange. They were sending the protest to every member. The really funny thing was that they got the member for Cottesloe's fax number wrong, and a lady in Nedlands started receiving 2 000 faxes at her home. She rang up the Australian Medical Association and told it to stop it. The people at the AMA said they would send her a roll of paper. The poor woman had faxes coming through every minute and their solution was to send her a roll of fax paper.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: What year was this?

Hon PETER FOSS: This torrent of lobbying occurred after I sent out the Bill in confidentiality. I rang the Australian Medical Association and said that the Bill said "confidential" on the front. It was for the Australian Medical Association to comment, not for general publication. The people at the AMA replied that I had wanted comment so they sent the Bill to everybody. If people who manage to get the tertiary entrance score required for admittance to university to become doctors could not understand the word "confidential" or the words underneath that said it was for them to comment on and let the minister know, perhaps in future -

Point of Order

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Would this be a convenient time for me to rise to remind the minister of the question, which was whether he had required his agency heads to sign a secrecy agreement? I am unable to connect the answer and the question.

Hon Max Evans: At least he is speaking slowly.

The PRESIDENT: Order! First, there is no point or order. Secondly, the Leader of the Opposition has assisted me because I had forgotten what the question was. This is the last question of the day. However, if the Minister for the Arts, having advised us of various happenings during his ministerial career could now advise us of the question, I would be obliged, as would the Leader of the House.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Hon PETER FOSS: We are now coming to the crunch of this question. I thought that if intelligent people did not understand what was written on the front of the Bill, perhaps prior to a Bill becoming public, when I send people confidential documents for comment, I would ask them to sign something to say that they understand that it is confidential and they will not make it public. They will actually treat it like a confidential document. I do that with all my legislation. Having been once bitten by the Australian Medical Association, I am twice shy.

Several members interjected.

Hon PETER FOSS: A confidentiality agreement, as a matter of law, applies only while it remains confidential. Once it is in Parliament it is public knowledge. I have a great respect for Parliament. I know how Parliament gets upset if matters are made public before the House knows about them. Once it is in Parliament and the Bill has been introduced there is no further obligation of confidentiality. Even without that authority the law is that the document should remain confidential.

Hon Tom Stephens: So the agency heads can start talking about the Bill now?

Hon PETER FOSS: Obviously I was not explaining it very well. The answer is that they have always been able to talk about the Bill from the moment it was introduced into the House. This has historically been the case on every bit of legislation that has been submitted to people for comment. It is only when a Green Bill is put out that people have to sign an agreement for confidentiality.
